



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE  
TO NORWAY, ICELAND, FINLAND,  
DENMARK AND SWEDEN

## FAREWELL CEREMONY FROM ICELAND

### ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Airport of Reykjavik-Keflavik*  
*Sunday, 4 June 1989*

*Dear Friends,*

1. As I prepare to leave Iceland, I wish to express once again my *gratitude for the gracious hospitality* which you have extended to me. I am particularly grateful to Her Excellency the President, the Prime Minister and the other civil authorities for all their help in making this visit possible. It is my heartfelt prayer that my *pastoral journey may serve as a stimulus to a renewed spiritual vigour for all Iceland's people.*

2. During my stay I have borne witness to the message of God's love as revealed in Jesus Christ. I have sought to confirm my Catholic brothers and sisters in the faith, and I have lifted up my heart in prayer together with many others who believe in Christ. In all that has been said and done, I have recalled the *evangelical values* that Christians hold in common and offer to mankind. We are firmly convinced that those values are a *beacon of hope for a world that increasingly longs to know true peace and authentic human fulfilment.*

Anchored in the message of the Gospel, Christian values form an integral *part of Iceland's culture and spiritual heritage.* Throughout your history, you have grown in unity as a people through your shared belief in the dignity of each human person, in the respect which is due to human life, and in the nobility of the human soul in its quest for peace. Likewise, you have sought to promote those values within the family circle, among your youth, and in civic life. The modern Republic of Iceland was founded upon those values, and your continued well-being as a society depends upon the

extent to which they do not cease to offer you inspiration for the future.

3. Dear friends: as I leave Iceland, I am grateful for the many ways in which I myself have experienced Iceland's spiritual riches. *The strong faith and ready love of my Catholic brothers and sisters* made me feel fully at home among the members of the household of God (Cfr. *Eph. 2, 19*). The warmth of the *welcome* which I received from my *Lutheran brothers and sisters at Thingvellir* served as a vivid reminder not only of the great common heritage that we continue to share as Christians, but also of the power of the Holy Spirit, who even now urges us all to a deeper unity in the fellowship of faith and love. From all of Iceland's people, from those who believe and those who profess no belief, I was shown respect and given a hearing that bespoke a hospitality that comes from the heart.

4. I thank God for all that I have received from you, and I pray that the message which I have brought will help all of you to discover greater happiness, peace and fulfilment. The many blessings which God has poured out upon Iceland in the past are a pledge for the future well-being of your country and her people. In him who is the author of peace and the source of all goodness, may you come to a clearer understanding of yourselves, your nation, and the calling which you have received within the larger community of the nations. As you work for peace in your own hearts, in your families, and in your Churches and communities, may you continue to know the abiding strength and lofty vision which faith alone can give.

May God bless Iceland and all her people!

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