



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO SARAJEVO (APRIL 12-13, 1997)
**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY**

13 April 1997

Mr President of the Jewish Community in Sarajevo,

*Dear Friends and Brothers,*1. I bless the Lord, the God of our Fathers, and I thank all of you for this meeting, at which I have been given an opportunity to share with you my hope for peace. In offering my cordial greetings to you here present, I wish to address all your brothers and sisters in faith living in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The great spiritual patrimony which unites us in the divine word proclaimed in the Law and the Prophets is for all of us a constant and sure guide on the path of peace, harmony and mutual respect. In fact, it is God who proclaims peace to his people and who guarantees the good things which come from it. He evokes in us a powerful commitment to bring it about, for peace is his design for the People of the Covenant.2. Shalom! Peace is a gift of the Most High, but it is also a task given to man. We must therefore invoke peace and, at the same time, commit ourselves to making the divine initiative bear fruit through concrete choices, attitudes filled with respect, fraternal undertakings. This is a commitment that requires of every individual conversion of heart. God assists this conversion with the abundance of his blessings: "Return to the Lord your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you this day, with all your heart and with all your soul; then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes, and have compassion upon you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you" (Dt 30:2-3). Let us therefore go forward courageously as true brothers and heirs of the promises, on the path of reconciliation and mutual forgiveness. This is the will of God: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart; you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18). We, the witnesses of the Ten Commandments, know well that perfect observance of the precept "Thou shalt not kill" is possible only through generous acceptance of the commitment to love.3. It is on this path that we wish to walk, supported by God's help, in order to build a society in which sorrow and tears are no longer caused by the evil actions of man. A society in which all will contribute to the construction of a new civilization, the foundations of which should be none other than those established by true love of others. Let us turn our eyes and thoughts to the Lord and praise him for this happy

meeting today, in the hope that, also thanks to this meeting, there may break the new dawn of a human community that has as its foundations the perennial values of justice, solidarity, cooperation, tolerance and respect. And to one another let us say: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures for ever" (Psalm 136:1).

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