



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE NATIONAL JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE OF GUATEMALA**

Saturday 7 October 2000

Dear Sons and Daughters of Guatemala,

1. It is a joy for me to meet you who have come to Rome to celebrate the Great Jubilee and so to share, as brothers and sisters in faith, this profound experience of reconciliation with God and neighbour. With the significant act of entering through the Holy Door, the Church invites her faithful to leave behind every trace of sin, to taste God's infinite mercy and, thus encouraged by his grace, to turn their gaze to Christ, the only Saviour of the human race. For this reason the Jubilee strengthens and gives new ardour to our hope by freeing us from the burden of past slavery and allowing us to raise our eyes to the heavens where, as in the starry sky shown to Abraham, we see the immeasurable greatness of the divine promises and the authentic future of liberated humanity.

2. You wished to experience this in your hearts as children of the Church and as a national community that wants to walk in solidarity with all the people of Guatemala. I therefore cordially welcome Archbishop Víctor Hugo Martínez Contreras, Archbishop of Los Altos-Quetzaltenango-Totonicapán, President of the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala, as well as the other Bishops and the many people who have made their Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome in order to visit the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul. I invite them to be inspired by the example of these great Gospel witnesses, who were faithful to the point of shedding their blood for it, so that they can face the demands of the new evangelization of your country with renewed energy.

I would also like to extend a cordial greeting to the Ambassador to the Holy See, who has done so much to make this national pilgrimage possible, as well as to the other representatives of Guatemala in Rome and the Guatemalans living in Italy who have wanted to celebrate the Jubilee with their compatriots. I urge them to make the most of their legitimate patriotism, in order to promote the common commitment to building a better future for all the people, free from internal tensions and discrimination, concerned for the needs of every individual or group, strong in adversity and creative of new areas for the civilization of love. This will be a precious fruit of the Jubilee, for it will open the door to new hopes of

transforming the world so that, by the grace and power of God, "swords will be beaten into ploughshares and the clash of arms give way to songs of peace", as the Prayer for the Jubilee says.

3. May God abundantly bless your commitment of fidelity to God and to the Church, and may the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Assumption, with her motherly care watch over the graces you have received and the good intentions of this pilgrimage. From my heart I call upon her to protect and accompany you, as I gladly give you my Apostolic Blessing.

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