



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE JOHN PAUL II
CULTURAL CENTER IN WASHINGTON**

Tuesday, 6 November 2001

*Your Eminence,
Dear Friends,*

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican for the first time since the inauguration of the new Cultural Center in Washington. I thank Cardinal Maida for his kind words and his report on the progress of the Center's mission of advancing the Church's dialogue with the various forms in which the universal human quest for truth and meaning is expressed.

The tragic events which have shaken the international community in the past two months have made us all aware once more of the fragility of peace and the need to build a culture of respectful dialogue and cooperation between all the members of the human family. I am confident that the Catholic community in the United States will continue to uphold the value of understanding and dialogue among the followers of the world's religions. As you know, the Church's commitment to this dialogue is ultimately inspired by her conviction that the *Gospel message has the power to enlighten all cultures and to act as a saving leaven of unity and peace for all humanity*. In a world of growing cultural and religious pluralism, such dialogue is essential for overcoming tragic conflicts inherited from the past, and for ensuring that "the name of the one God become increasingly what it is: *a name of peace and a summons to peace*" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 55).

The Cultural Center has its own contribution to make to this important undertaking. Once more I take this opportunity to thank you and the many benefactors of the Center for your continued commitment to its mission of making the Church and her teachings more widely known. Invoking upon you and your families the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding (cf. Phil 4:7), I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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