



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

RETURN TO ROME FROM JOURNEY TO MEXICO

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Thursday, 1 February 1979

I was very happy, Mr Prime Minister, to hear the courteous words of greeting and good wishes that you kindly addressed to me, also on behalf of the Italian Government.

At the end of this first apostolic journey, which took me over the Ocean to the noble and dear land of Mexico, one feeling prevails over the others that fill my anxious and stirred heart: the feeling of gratitude.

I am grateful, in the first place, to the Lord and to the Holy Virgin of Guadalupe for the constant assistance with which they sustained me in these days; allowing me to crown happily a delicate and important initiative, undertaken in fulfilment of the universal mandate which Christ himself entrusted to me, calling me to the responsibility of his Vicar in Peter's See.

I think next, with deep gratitude, of the many demonstrations of thoughtfulness, devotedness, and affection, on the part of the people that I met in the course of my pilgrimage; and, in particular, on the part of my revered brothers in the Episcopate, gathered in Puebla in representation of the whole Catholic Hierarchy of Latin America. My heart was able to beat in unison with theirs: I rejoiced, suffered and hoped with them; above all, I prayed with them, imploring from our common Father the advent of a world made more peaceful, just, and human by sincere adherence to the message of love of his Son incarnate. And now, on my return to this Roman See, in which the Catholic world recognizes the centre and the source of its own unity, a new and great emotion is aroused in me by this welcome of yours, so spontaneous and cordial. I greet, therefore, with

respect and gratitude, the Cardinal Secretary of State and the other ecclesiastical personalities, the Italian political, civil, and military Authorities, the members of the Diplomatic Corps, and all of you who have disregarded inconvenience in order to be able to welcome me personally. May God reward you for such courtesy, and may he lavish his favours on you and on all, those who have made every possible effort to ensure the success of the journey; beginning with the executives, pilots and personnel of the Air Companies, to whom I owe an agreeable and comfortable flight. In confirmation of these wishes I am happy to impart to you present here, to the beloved city of Rome, and to all those who followed me in thought and in prayer, a special comforting Apostolic Blessing.

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