



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II IN DEPARTURE FOR LATIN AMERICA

Fiumicino Airport

Thursday, 25 January 1979

With all my heart I express to you my sincere thanks for your presence in this place, at the moment when, for some days, I am leaving my beloved diocese and Italy to go to Latin America. This gesture of yours, so delicate and thoughtful, gives me comfort and is a serene augury for the success of the journey, which—as you know—wishes to be first and foremost a *pilgrimage of faith*. The Pope is going to kneel before the marvellous image of the Madonna of Guadalupe, in Mexico, to invoke her motherly assistance and her protection on his pontifical service; to say to her again, with a force increased by his immense new tasks: "Totus tuus sum Ego!", and to put in her hands the future of evangelization in Latin America. The Pope, furthermore, is going to other areas of the New World as a *Messenger of the Gospel* for the millions of brothers and sisters who believe in Christ. He wants to know them, embrace them and tell them all—children, young people men, women, workers, peasants, professionals—that God loves them, that the Church loves them, that the Pope loves them, and also he wants to receive from them encouragement and example of their goodness, their faith. Ideally, therefore, the Pope follows in the wake of the missionaries, the priests, all those who, from the discovery of the New World, spread the message of Jesus with sacrifice, abnegation and generosity in those immense lands, preaching love and peace among men. The Pope, finally, is carrying out this journey to take part, together with his brother bishops, in the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate which will take place in Puebla. The Conference will deal with important problems concerning the pastoral action of the People of God, which, in the light of the Second Vatican Council, must keep in mind the complex local socio-political situations in order to instil in them the fruitful ferments of the proclamation of the Gospel. The Pope will go to Puebla to help, to "strengthen" (cf. Lk 22:32) his brother bishops. As I am preparing to undertake the flight, after greeting the Cardinal Secretary of State and the other cardinals who are here with him, I express my grateful appreciation to the Prime Minister of the Italian Government and to the civil and military authorities; I greet the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps to the Holy See and the Ambassadors of Latin America, and all those who have come to wish me a good journey. I willingly bless you all. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
