



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT IN NEW ZEALAND

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS****

Wellington (New Zealand), 23 November 1986

Your Excellencies,

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*1. It is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to greet you, the members of the Diplomatic Corps during my visit to New Zealand. As you know, New Zealand is a land of great variety, a land of different races and cultures. Your presence here as representatives of many countries brings to mind the vastly greater diversity of the nations which make up the human family. This diversity, whether within a society like New Zealand or between nations, comes from the different historical, cultural, linguistic and religious heritages of peoples. It enables each group to make its own unique contribution to the common good, but it can also be an excuse for separation and division. It can add to the richness and depth of our humanity or, as we all know too well, it can be used to promote hatred, violence and war. At the same time we also recognize that there is an even more fundamental unity which transcends all differences. It is the unity which springs from the fact that we are all children of God. Our common humanity is a gift of God. It finds expression in the universal longing of all people for life and freedom, and for spiritual and material well-being for themselves and their loved ones. All people, moreover, share a desire for peace.2. In my message for the last World Day of Peace, I said that "Peace is a value with no frontiers. It is a value that responds to the hopes and aspirations of all people and all nations, of young and old, and of all men and women of good will". In a world in which distance is overcome by modern means of transport and communication, in a world which is increasingly interdependent despite its diversity, there can only be one peace if there is to be any peace at all. To the extent that any one people or nation closes itself against all others or against the legitimate aims of another people or nation, there can be no peace in the world. Excessive self-interest leads only to strategies of injustice, repression and violence, whether within a nation or between nations.3. Ladies and gentlemen; as one who serves as a religious shepherd for people of many races, cultures and nations, I appeal to you and to the Governments that you represent to promote peace by focusing on the things which unite the human family, rather than on the things which divide it. I appeal to you to help the world to see diversity as a source of blessing and peace rather than a source of discord. We would be naive to think that all conflicts and disagreements will be abolished. But may we not hope for wise and human leaders who have the courage to transcend ideologies, narrow interests, and purely political ends, and who are willing to bear witness to the unity of mankind? May we not hope, ladies and gentlemen, that the different peoples and nations of the world will grow in their humanity by

seeking a deeper understanding of the diversity of others, a greater appreciation of the point of view of others, and a more generous respect for the legitimate hopes and aspirations of people who are different from themselves? May we not hope that we ourselves, people of different lands and beliefs, will help to foster one peace for all by greater understanding, appreciation and respect for one another in our daily lives? This is possible only if we are willing to take the path of dialogue. In the Day of Peace message to which I referred a moment ago I spoke in this way: "Dialogue brings human beings into contact with one another as members of one human family, with all the richness of their various cultures and histories... The path of dialogue is a path of discoveries, and the more we discover one another, the more we can replace the tensions of the past with bonds of peace".⁴ It is my conviction that the hopes I have expressed are not vain hopes. They are the goals towards which every person and nation must work with courage and perseverance. I am confident that you who devote yourselves to diplomatic service also share these hopes for a more peaceful world, for yourselves and your children, your families and friends, your neighbours and fellow citizens. In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your presence here today and for this opportunity to share with you some of the thoughts which are of particular importance to me in fulfilling my ministry. I assure you of my very best wishes as you fulfil your own important duties, and I pray for God's blessings on you and your loved ones.

* *Insegnamenti IX*, 2 pp.1553-1555. *L'Osservatore Romano* 24.11.1986 p. XIII. *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n. 48 p.4. © Copyright 1986 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
