



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO THE LEADERS OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS IN ASSISI *Wednesday, 26 October 1986*

Respected Leaders of the World Religions,

1. THROUGH YOUR spokesman you have beautifully expressed your feeling on the celebration which we all held at Assisi two days ago. I thank you most cordially for having accepted my invitation to come to the city of Saint Francis of Assisi to fast and pray for peace in our world.

You have made many sacrifices in order to accept this invitation. You have travelled long distances. And now before you leave for your homes, you have desired to come to Rome to meet me in this city so significant to Christianity. I thank you. I welcome you. Through you I greet the millions of people who share your respective religious beliefs.

2. We went on pilgrimage to Assisi because we are all convinced that the various religions can and should contribute to peace. It is a part of most religions to teach respect for conscience, love of neighbour, justice, forgiveness, self-control, detachment from creatures, prayer and meditation.

Jesus Christ, whom we Christians believe and proclaim to be our Lord and Saviour, reminded us of the golden rule: "Treat others as you would like them to treat you". Your various religious creeds may have a similar injunction which meets an imperative of every human conscience. The observance of this golden rule is an excellent foundation of peace. Peace needs to be built on justice, truth, freedom and love. Religions have the necessary function of helping to dispose human hearts so that true peace can be fostered and preserved.

At Assisi we have all committed ourselves anew to making our specific contribution to the building of peace. Let us strive to live in the spirit of that solemn pledge. Let us spread this message among those who share our respective beliefs. In the words of the prayer attributed to Saint Francis, let us commit ourselves to be instruments of peace among all people.

3. May I take this opportunity to repeat what you know already: that the Catholic Church wishes to have dialogue with other religions. Yesterday it was exactly twenty-one years since the Second Vatican Council published its Declaration on Relations with Non-Christian Religions, "[Nostra](#)

Aetate". A special department of the Vatican, the Secretariat for Non-Christians, is charged with the promotion of this dialogue. I thank you for your cooperation with this Secretariat and with the Catholic Church in your home countries, so that in mutual respect we can together do much good in an increasingly materialistic and unbelieving world.

You are about to return to your various homes and centres. I thank you again for coming and I wish you a safe journey. Let us continue to spread the message of peace. Let us continue to live the spirit of Assisi.

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