



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO A DELEGATION OF CANADIAN WAR VETERANS

*Castel Gandolfo
Thursday, 19 September 1991*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be able to meet you, Canadian War Veterans, during the course of your visit to Rome. Some of you are returning to places where you were personally involved in the tragic events of the Second World War. May this be a time of serene reflection for you, in which you recall the experience of those years in the light of the progress which has been made since then in building a more just and peaceful world.

We all rejoice at the changes that have taken place in relations between East and West in recent years, and especially during recent months and weeks. A great hope has filled our hearts that Europe and the world might finally enter an era of firm and stable peace. It seemed that the Second World War had at last come to an end! And yet we are constantly reminded how fragile are the institutions which ensure peaceful relations between peoples who, with the onset of freedom, are also rediscovering ancient hostilities and prejudices. Although - as you well know - individuals are capable of great and noble acts of service and human solidarity on the battlefield, war itself with its accompanying evils and sufferings is a reality which the human family is called to reject as a means of pursuing political objectives. You who have seen its cost in human suffering will surely agree that other, more just, ways must be found to meet whatever challenges to peace may arise now and in the future.

At this time, the process of peace and cooperation between peoples which has been built up with great effort over the years - especially through the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, of which Canada is a member, and in particular since the signing of the Helsinki Accords - is gravely threatened by the events taking place in Yugoslavia. I have already appealed on a

number of occasions to political leaders, and in the first place to the Governments of Europe, to do all in their power to stop the killing and destruction, and to provide a structure of dialogue between the parties involved. Such an international effort to solve the present crisis cannot be seen as interference but as a logical application of the spirit and intent of that Conference. I am confident that you will join me in praying to Almighty God that this terrible tragedy will soon end, and that the equality of peoples and their right to self-determination will be effectively respected.

On each one of you and on your families I invoke God's abundant blessings. May his love be with you on your present journey, and may he guide and protect the beloved people of Canada.

© Copyright 1991 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana