



The Holy See

LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE BISHOPS OF LATIN AMERICA

Beloved Brothers in the Episcopate,

The intense work of the third General Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate, which I had the privilege of inaugurating personally and which I followed with particular love and interest with regard to the Church of this Continent in the different stages of its development, is condensed in these pages which you have laid in my hands.

I remember vividly and with great pleasure my meeting with you, united in the same love and solicitude for your peoples, in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and then in the seminary of Puebla.

This Document, the fruit of assiduous prayer, deep reflection, and intense apostolic zeal, offers—as you intended—a rich set of pastoral and doctrinal guidelines on questions of supreme importance. It must serve, with its precious criteria, as a light and permanent stimulus for evangelization in the present and future of Latin America.

You can feel satisfied and optimistic at the results of this Conference, carefully prepared by CELAM with the jointly responsible participation of all the Episcopal Conferences. The Church of Latin America has been strengthened in its vigorous unity, in its own identity, in the determination to meet the needs and the challenges attentively considered throughout your assembly. It really represents a great step forward in the essential mission of the Church, that of evangelizing.

Your experiences, rules, concerns and aspirations, in faithfulness to the Lord, to his Church and to Peter's See, must become life for the communities which you serve.

For this reason you will have to propose in all your Episcopal Conferences and Particular Churches plans with concrete goals, at the corresponding levels and in harmony with CELAM in

the continental sphere.

God grant that all ecclesial communities will soon be informed and penetrated by the spirit of Puebla and the directives of this historic Conference.

May the Lord Jesus, the Evangelizer *par excellence*, and himself the Good Tidings, bless you abundantly.

May the Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Church and Star of evangelization, guide your steps in a renewed evangelizing impulse of the Latin-American Continent.

The Vatican, 23 March 1979, on the commemoration of St Toribio de Mogrovejo.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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