



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY

TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,

MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO THE EPISCOPATE OF

CENTRAL AMERICA AND ANTILLES

Beloved Brothers, Before leaving the soil of Mexico I feel the necessity of sending a fatherly greeting to you and, through you, to all the faithful entrusted to your pastoral care. A greeting marked by the sign of sorrow at not having been able to visit these beloved sons, although so near your countries. A sorrow that is manifested in a deeper expression of love. Tell them that the Pope, during the days he lived in the New Continent, thought of them a great deal and prayed a great deal for them. The material closeness, due to my visit to Mexico, has made me feel more vividly my affection and interest in the whole of Latin America, and in particular, during my brief stay in Santo Domingo I remembered with special love the whole archipelago of the Antilles. Now that my thought and my affection are closer to you, there comes to my mind, in a special way, the memory of the material calamities that not long ago befell some countries, particularly Guatemala and Nicaragua. We thank God that the process of reconstruction is continuing in a satisfactory way. If you could understand how much the Pope desires that the peoples of these countries should be understood in their whole dimension as human beings, and that those who have in their hands the possibility and the power should exercise it in complete justice, which is the condition of peace and development among peoples! The Pope returns to Rome, but his word remains with you: may it be a constant stimulus to you to continue to work every day with renewed effort, in order that the great love for your countries may be manifested through your commitment in favour of the welfare and brotherly life of this great family which is made up by one and all of the countries of the American continent. Imparting his blessing to the bishops, and through them to all the peoples of these lands, the Pope wishes to consolidate, increase, and deepen these ties that have been established thanks to his pastoral mission. Praise to almighty God who has permitted us, on account of the Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, to make the centre of the Church in American lands for some days, days that are all important for the present and the future of evangelization in this great and beloved continent.

