



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS\***

*New York*

*Tuesday, 2 October 1979*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to extend my greetings to the representatives of the Intergovernmental and Non-governmental Organizations who are present here, and to thank you for your cordial welcome.

Your presence at the centre of the United Nations' activities is a consequence of the growing awareness that the problems of today's world can only be solved when all forces are joined together and directed towards the same common aim. The problems that the human family faces today may seem overwhelming. I for my part am convinced that there is immense potential with which to face them. History tells us that the human race is capable of reacting and of changing direction every time it perceives clearly the warning that it is on the wrong course. You are privileged to witness in this building how the Representatives of the nations endeavour to chart a common course in order that life on this planet will be lived in peace, order, justice and progress for all. But you are also aware that every individual must work towards the same end. It is individual actions put together which bring about today and tomorrow the total impact which is either beneficial or harmful for humanity.

The various programmes and organizations that exist within the framework of the United Nations Organization, as well as the Specialized Agencies and other intergovernmental bodies, are an important part of that total effort. In the area of its own specialization—be it food, agriculture, trade,

environment, development, science, culture, education, health, disaster relief, or the problems of children and refugees—each one of these organizations makes a unique contribution not only to providing for people's wants, but also to fostering respect for human dignity and the cause of world peace.

No organization, however, not even the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies, can alone solve the global problems which are constantly brought to its attention, if its concerns are not shared by all the people. It is then the privileged task of the non-governmental organizations to help bring these concerns into the communities and the homes of the people, and to bring back to the established agencies the priorities and aspirations of the people, so that all the solutions and projects which are envisaged may be truly geared to the needs of the human person.

The Delegates who drafted the Charter of the United Nations had a vision of united and cooperating governments, but behind the nations, they saw also the individual and they wanted every human being to be free and to enjoy his or her fundamental rights. This fundamental inspiration must be preserved.

I wish to express my best wishes to all of you here who work together to bring the benefits of concerted action to all parts of the world. My cordial greeting goes to the Representatives of the various Protestant, Jewish and Moslem associations, and in a particular way to the Representatives of the International Catholic Organizations. May your dedication and your moral sense never become blunted by difficulties, may you never lose sight of the ultimate aim of your efforts: to create a world where every human person can live in dignity and loving harmony as a child of God.

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\*AAS 71 (1979), p. 1160-1161.

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