



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE OPERATORS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

*Washington  
Sunday, 7 October 1979*

*My dear friends of the communications media,*

Here we are together again at the end of another journey—a journey which this time has brought me to [Ireland](#), to the United Nations and to the United States of America. The purpose of this journey was to permit the Pope to exercise his function as a herald of peace, in the name of Christ, who was referred to as the Prince of Peace. This message of peace was announced especially in those places and before those audiences where the problem of war and peace is perceived with particular sensitivity and where there exist the conditions of understanding, of good will and of the means necessary to building peace and cooperation among all nations and among all peoples.

The word "peace" is a synthesis. It has many components. I have touched on several of these during this journey, and you have diligently reported on these reflections. You have commented on them: you have interpreted them: you have performed the service of stimulating people to think about how they might contribute to a firmer foundation for peace, for cooperation and for justice among all persons.

Now we find ourselves at the moment of parting, in this capital city of one of the most powerful nations in the world. The power of this country, I believe, comes not only from material wealth but from a richness of spirit.

In fact, the name of this city and of the tall monument which dominates it recalls the spirit of

George Washington, the first president of the nation, who—with Thomas Jefferson, for whom an imposing memorial also exists here, and with other enlightened individuals—established this country on a foundation which was not only human but also profoundly religious.

As a consequence, the Catholic Church has been able to flourish here. The millions of faithful who belong to the Church testify to that fact, as they exercise the rights and duties which flow from their faith with full freedom. The great National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in this city testifies to that fact. The existence in this capital city of two Catholic universities—Georgetown and the Catholic University of America—testifies to that fact. I have observed that the people of the United States of America proudly and gratefully pledge allegiance to their republic as "one nation under God".

This one nation is made up of many members—members of all races, of all religions, of all conditions of life—so that it is a type of microcosm of the world community and accurately reflects the motto *E pluribus unum*. As this country courageously abolished the plague of slavery under the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, may it never stop striving for the effective good of all the inhabitants of this one nation and for that unity which reflects its national motto. For this reason, the United States of America gives to all cause to reflect on a spirit which, if well applied, can bring beneficial results for peace in the world community.

I sincerely hope that all of you have profited from this journey, and that you have had the opportunity to reflect anew on the values which have come from Christianity to the civilization of this new continent. Most of all, however, we can draw hope for a peaceful world community from the example of persons of all races, of all nationalities, and of all religions living together in peace and in unity.

As we prepare to part, my dear friends, I am consoled by the fact that you will continue to inform and to form world public opinion with a profound consciousness of your responsibility and with the realization that so many persons depend on you.

Finally, I say good-bye to you and to America. I thank you again, and with all my heart I ask God to bless you and your families.

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