



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO A DELEGATION OF CONGRESSMEN
FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

Friday, 21 January 1983

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to comply with your request for a meeting this morning. Your presence here today gives me yet another opportunity to extend through you my cordial greetings to your fellow-citizens of the United States of America.

As Representatives of the United States Congress you are entrusted by your office with the task of promoting and enacting legislation which serves the best interests not only of your individual constituencies but likewise those of the whole American people. This sacred charge, confirmed by your nation's Constitution and Bill of Rights, calls you to work for the benefit of all your fellow citizens, respecting the will of the majority of your people while at the same time protecting the rights of the minority.

You come here as members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and are led by your distinguished Chairman, the Honourable Clement J. Zablocki. In general terms, your duty as such is to safeguard the welfare of your own nation as it interacts with the other nations of the world. However, in a broader sense, it is also your task to respect the interests of the entire international community in its quest for the promotion of those higher human aims that deserve the attention of all men and women of good will. These include: peace, the progress of peoples, human development, harmony among nations - all those noble endeavours that call out the best in man and are the goals to which he always legitimately aspires.

As elected officials of a people that holds as self-evident the truths that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with the inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness, you cannot fail to see that "the more closely the world comes together, the more widely do people's obligations transcend particular groups and gradually extend to the world".

I urge you, therefore, to uphold the ideals proclaimed in your Declaration of Independence and to rededicate yourselves to those sound moral principles formulated by your Founding Fathers. I make this appeal to you not only in your role as leaders of a truly prominent nation in today's world, but also as persons committed to those same truths which inspired your forefathers' struggle for freedom and which remain a treasured legacy of your country's tradition.

I invoke God's blessing upon you, your families and your loved ones.

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