



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SIXTY-FIRST CLASS
OF THE NATO DEFENCE COLLEGE***

Monday, 31 January 1983

Dear friends,

1. I am pleased to welcome here today the members of the sixty-first class of the NATO Defence College. Your participation in this programme has permitted you to study the fundamental principles and organisational structures of your Alliance. But it has also allowed you to recall the primary aim for which it was founded - an aim that is the aspiration of all men and women of our time: the *building of a true and lasting peace*.

2. As your sessions of study and reflection draw to a close, you are no doubt conscious more than ever of the usefulness, indeed the necessity, of *dialogue* for any fruitful interaction between individuals or between representatives of different nations. Furthermore, as people committed to the preservation of peace you understand the importance of the theme which I chose for my message on the occasion of the celebration of this year's Day of Peace, namely: "Dialogue for Peace, a Challenge for our Time".

Yes, to adopt an attitude of dialogue is truly one of the most significant factors in attaining lasting peace. Patiently introducing the mechanisms and phases of dialogue whenever peace is threatened or already compromised is indeed a *pre-eminent means* for the establishment of union and harmony among peoples.

3. As I have outlined in the Peace Day Message, a dialogue for peace is *not merely a utopian ideal*. Peace is a basic desire of man, rooted in the depth of the human person. As a man of hope and a Christian I have confidence in our capacity as human beings for being reasonable and for engaging in fraternal dialogue.

On the international level, dialogue between nations must be based on the strong conviction that the good of one people cannot be finally accomplished at the expense of another people. Peace must be born of *mutual trust between nations* rather than imposed on them by fear of one another's weapons.

4. So in extending a cordial greeting to you and your familiar today I ask Almighty God to give you the strength to go forward with perseverance and courage in the work of building a peaceful world. As agents of security and freedom on behalf of your individual nations, you can make a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace. By doing so you will perform *a work of supreme love for mankind*.

May God bless you and sustain you in this urgent task.

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