



The Holy See

***RADIO MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA*** Friday, 28 August 1987

Dear People of the United States of America,

I greet you all with joy and affection: Catholics, Protestants and Jews; all believers and non-believers alike. I greet you all in the love of God, and I look forward to being with you again. Eight years ago I made my first pastoral visit to your country. How vividly I recall the warmth and kindness with which you welcomed me! How eagerly I anticipate returning to your great land! An important theme has been proposed for my second visit: Unity in the Work of Service. It leads us to consider the ways in which the followers of Jesus Christ can serve the world by selfless deeds. For, as the Second Vatican Council reminds us, the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men and women of our time - "especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted" - are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of all the followers of the Lord. This theme also leads us to consider another reality: I mean the growth in unity which takes place among Christ's followers precisely through the service which they render to others. The Church's identity as a community of faith and love shines forth in the loving deeds of her members. Through their ministries and apostolates the Church's unity is built up and made stronger.

The Apostle Paul shares this vision with us when he speaks in this way of the community of followers of the Lord: "It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God's Son..." (Cfr. *Eph.* 4, 11-13).

In this spirit, then, I return to you and your beloved land-a pilgrim Pope, who wishes to join with you in celebrating these noble works of service, and in building up our unity in the Lord. May God, who is the Father of us all, bless the United States richly now and in the days to come. May he bring us together once again in truth and peace, in justice, love and service.

