



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY

TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA WELCOME CEREMONY ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS

JOHN PAUL II International Airport of Miami

Thursday, 10 September 1987

Mr President, dear Friends,

Dear People of America,

1. It is a great joy for me once again to be in your country, and I thank you for your warm welcome. I am deeply grateful to you all.

I express my special thanks to *the President of the United States*, who honours me by his presence here today. I thank *the Bishops' Conference* and *all the individual bishops* who have invited me to their dioceses, and who have done so much to prepare for my visit. My cordial greetings and good wishes go to *all the people of this land*. I thank you for opening your hearts to me and for supporting me by your prayers. I assure you of my own prayers. 2. To everyone I repeat on this occasion what I said on that memorable day in 1979 when I arrived in Boston: "On my part I come to you – America – with sentiments of friendship, reverence and esteem. I come as one who already knows you and loves you, as one who wishes you to fulfil completely your noble destiny of service to the world" (Ioannis Pauli II, *Allocutio in aëronavium portu Bostoniense habita*, die 1 oct. 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II/2 [1979] 509) . Today, like then, I come to *proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ* to all those who freely choose to listen to me; to tell again the story of God's love in the world; to spell out once more the message of human dignity, with its inalienable human rights and its inevitable human duties. 3. Like so many before me coming to America and to this very city of Miami, I come as *a pilgrim*: a pilgrim in the cause of justice and peace and human solidarity - striving to build up the one human family. I come here as *a pastor* - the pastor of the Catholic Church, to speak and pray with the Catholic people. The theme of my visit, "Unity in the Work of Service" affords me the welcome opportunity to enter into ever deeper communion with them in our common service to the Lord. It also enables me to experience ever more keenly with them their hopes and joys, their anxieties and griefs. I come as *a friend* - a friend of America and of all Americans: Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants and Jews, people of every religion, and all men and women of good will. I come as a friend of the poor and the sick and the dying; those who are struggling with the problems of each day; those who are rising and falling

and stumbling on the journey of life; those who are seeking and discovering, and those not yet finding, the deep meaning of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". 4. And finally I come *to join you as you celebrate the Bicentennial* of that great document, the Constitution of the United States of America. I willingly join you in your prayer of thanksgiving to God for the providential way in which the Constitution has served the people of this nation for two centuries: for the union it has established, the tranquillity and peace it has ensured, the general welfare it has promoted, and the blessings of liberty it has secured. I join you also in asking God to inspire you—as Americans who have received so much in freedom and prosperity and human enrichment—to continue to share all this with so many brothers and sisters throughout the other countries of the world who are still waiting and hoping to live according to standards worthy of the children of God. With great enthusiasm I look forward to being with you in the days ahead. Meanwhile, my prayer for all of you, dear people of America, is this: "The Lord bless you and keep you!
The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace" (*Nu. 6, 24-26*).
God bless America!

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