



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO A DELEGATION FROM THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Wednesday, 5 July 1989

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to have this opportunity of meeting this *Delegation from the United States Congress* during your visit to Rome. I greet you most cordially, a greeting which I extend to your spouses and staff members.

I have learned with much pleasure that you are involved in foreign assistance programs, and so I take this occasion to encourage you in this work of providing material and financial aid to those who have suffered as a result of war or civil strife. And I thank you for the generosity you have shown to date.

There is a fundamental truth about humanity which is self-evident for a Christian but nonetheless worth repeating frequently: *we are one human family*, irrespective of race, culture, language or history. This truth calls us to recognize the underlying solidarity and interdependence of the human family as the basis for peaceful co-existence. When we see our brothers and sisters in need there is a spontaneous desire to reach out and help those who are affected by natural disasters, war or famine. The human spirit can and does respond with generosity to the plight of the suffering and the less fortunate. The call to solidarity and assistance impels us to do all we can to break down the barriers which prevent us from reaching out with love and trust to all who need our help. True human solidarity does not recognize political or ideological boundaries. It has an ethical dimension which is all-embracing.

I hope that our meeting today will strengthen our common resolve to work for a world where human dignity is properly respected and effectively safeguarded. I pray that Almighty God will continue to grant you the gifts of wisdom and understanding, so that in your noble office you will

give inspiring leadership and ever more generous service according to the best aspirations of your people and on behalf of the genuine good of men, women and children everywhere.

God bless you all.

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