



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE INNU PEOPLE OF QUEBEC AND LABRADOR
FROM CANADA**

Friday, 17 November 1989

Dear Friends,

It is a great joy for me to greet you, the Innu people of Quebec and Labrador in Canada, on the occasion of your visit to Rome. You have wished to meet the Pope and to share with him your concerns for the future of your way of life.

Your presence here today calls to mind the words I spoke at Fort Simpson during my brief visit to Canada in 1987: "As native peoples you are faced with a supreme test: that of promoting the religious, cultural and social values that will uphold your human dignity and ensure your future well-being. Your sense of sharing, your understanding of human community rooted in the family, the highly valued relationships between your elders and your young people, your spiritual view of creation which calls for responsible care and protection of the environment – all of these traditional aspects of your way of life need to be preserved and cherished" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Homilia in loco v. d. Fort Simpson*, die 20 sept. 1987: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3 [1987] 694).

The Church is greatly concerned that these valid aspects of your way of life be defended and strengthened for the good of your people. But she also realizes that you yourselves are the principal agents of your own development, a development which springs primarily from the spiritual and moral fibre of the people themselves. The Church accompanies you in this task and supports you in seeking just and equitable solutions to the situations that threaten your well-being and the future good of your communities. As persons created in the divine image and likeness, and as God's sons and daughters by Baptism, each of you is dear to the Church and to the heart of the Pope.

May our meeting today strengthen your resolve to be faithful followers of Christ and courageous

witnesses to the Gospel. I invite you to have an ever greater compassion and solidarity with all those who, like you, struggle to ensure for themselves and their loved ones a future filled with spiritual and material blessings, and who yearn for a world marked by greater justice, love and peace.

I pledge my continued prayers that Mary, the Mother of God, will intercede for you and for all the members of your communities. With affection in the Lord I cordially impart to you and your families my Apostolic Blessing.

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