



The Holy See

Discours au Président d'ARGENTINE,

S.E.M. Carlos Saul MENEM 19 octobre 1990 [...] Argentina is a country which is distinguished by its culture, its nobility of spirit, its faith in God and in Christian ideals. The Argentine people, throughout their history, have made the Gospel message their own and have placed its stamp on their lives and customs. In this regard the Preamble to your Constitution invokes God as «the source of all reason and justice». This is a kind of calling for the leaders of the country, that they may never fail to take inspiration for their action in these principles as they carry out their duties as citizens invested with authority. During my apostolic visits to the countries of Latin America, I have been able to perceive what I would call a growing moral uneasiness, which is manifesting itself at times in forms of social crisis or in other phenomena, such as violence, unemployment, and marginalization, which provoke instability and threaten the peace. Not even Argentina escapes this problematic which affects large sectors of the population and which demands greater social responsibility on all levels and a more decisive commitment to the common good. In this respect, the Argentine Bishops, out of pastoral concern, have not shrunk from indicating the existence of such situations, in an effort to propose solutions in a way proper to their ecclesial mission. They said in a recent joint document: «We have often characterized the complex situation through which Argentine society is now passing as a fundamentally moral crisis» (n. 37). The challenges of the future are, in effect, numerous and represent undeniable obstacles which are not easily overcome. But this should not be a cause for discouragement or frustration, since you can count on the greatest treasure which a people can possess: solid Christian values which must provide the thrust for constructing a more just, fraternal and prosperous society. That society is one where a work ethic, honesty and a spirit of sharing reigns on all levels; a society which bears the mark of moral and transcendent values as the strongest factor of social cohesion; a society in which fundamental rights, civil liberties and the rights of all citizens within society are always protected and preserved; a country in which youth and children can be raised in an atmosphere of moral clarity and where the least advantaged find support and encouragement for taking a full part in the common task of building a better future. Argentina is a Catholic nation. May the Argentines never allow their legitimate pride in this fact to weaken nor allow the responsibility which it entails to diminish. Face the unrelenting problems in which you are involved with clear-sightedness and a spirit of fraternity, with responsible participation by all and with your eyes fixed on God whose help cannot fail you. My message today seeks to be an encouragement and an expression of hope. I know that the wounds and antagonisms of the recent past have still not disappeared, and that causes a problem in terms of bringing society together and fulfilling the legitimate hopes for progress. Thus a renewed effort to overcome all forms of confrontation and to foster increasing solidarity among all Argentines is needed. Herein lies the important role that spiritual values play. For that reason the call of the Argentine Bishops to be on guard against secularism which directly affects faith and religion takes on its proper dimensions. Mr. President, in carrying out the mission which belongs to her, the Church reaffirms her vocation to serve the great causes of mankind as citizens and as children of God. Christian principles which have shaped the life of the nation of Argentina

throughout its history must infuse a lively hope and a new dynamism which will lead your country to occupy the place which belongs to it within the concert of nations. In this perspective, the Holy See cannot but support the efforts which are being carried out to give greater vigour and effectiveness to the principle of Latin American unity and integration. This is a noble ideal which requires the generous contribution of all in order to find the remedies for the evils which afflict so many people on your continent. Since the celebration of the fifth centenary of the Evangelization of the New World is near, may I express the wish that all Latin American peoples, faithful to their most noble traditions and to their Christian roots, may walk down the path of reconciliation and brotherhood in a common effort to overcome divisions and reach the goal of unity. In conclusion, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate my warm thanks for this visit, and in your person I render Argentina, while I invoke upon it God's

blessings.

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