



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE CARDINALS PRESENT IN ROME

Consistory Hall

Thursday, 1 February 1979

Lords Cardinals,

1. At the moment when my first missionary journey ends, I raise my deepest thanks to God for the great experience he has granted me of living in the fullness of an apostolic work which occupied, with particular intensity, every hour of the past days.
2. I considered it my duty to undertake this journey (connected with the work of the third General Assembly of the Latin-American Episcopate in Puebla, announced some time ago), following, in this, the example of my predecessor Paul VI of venerated memory, who wished to inaugurate this new form in carrying out the papal office in the Church.
3. It is difficult to speak fully of this unforgettable experience while the thousand voices I listened to still re-echo in my mind, and while the memories of what I was able to see, of the persons that I was able to meet, and of the subjects I had occasion to tackle, are still so immediate and alive.
4. It will be necessary to return to all that for a long time in prayer, reflection, and in my heart. But I can say right now that this journey, after the short but significant stop at Santo Domingo, was an exceptional meeting with Mexico in its human and Christian reality, a meeting with the people of God of this country, which responded with a great act of faith to the presence of the Pope. This meeting, which started in Guadalupe, the heart of the Mexican Church, extended to reach the stages of Puebla in Oaxaca, Guadalajara, and Monterrey.
5. With the riches of its contents and the multiplicity of its manifestations, this meeting offers, in a certain sense, a living context for the tasks which, together with the Bishops of Latin America, we

tackled within the third General Assembly of that episcopate. The latter, which, as you know, opened on 27 January last with the solemn concelebration at the Sanctuary of the Virgin of Guadalupe, continues at Puebla, on the subject "Evangelization in the present and future of Latin America", until 12 February next, when it concludes.

Introducing its work on 28 January, I addressed to the South-American Church, with great hope and confidence, a message which was made concretely universal by the presence of the media of social communications, and by that of the professionals of information (who gave great coverage to every stage of my short but intense journey). It will certainly be necessary to speak more than once of the significance of the work of Puebla and of the individual problems tackled there, examining the various subjects again.

6. Now, returning to the Apostolic See after seven days, I feel the need to thank heartily all those, at every level, who helped to prepare and organize this journey, it has been a great success, although it took place in such a short time. I would like to thank also all those who bore with me the weight of this journey: Their Excellencies Caprio, Casaroli, Martin, Marcinkus, Mons. Noè, and all the other persons of the suite, press, radio and television, and all the lay people who followed me throughout the whole journey.

7. Finally, for the welcome you have given me, allow me to express my thanks particularly to you and to the whole College of Cardinals, whom I felt so close in prayer and in their hearts in the course of these unforgettable days; especially to the Cardinal Dean who has interpreted so well the sentiments of you all, and to the Cardinal Secretary of State for the precious work he carried out so generously in the days of my absence. May the Virgin of Guadalupe, to whom I have prayed so much in these days, through her intercession, give strength to our commitment in order that the hopes raised by the apostolic journey that I have concluded today, will not be disappointed.

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