



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Forida College, Mexico City

31 January 1979

Dear friends from the world of information,

On many occasions during these days that the enthusiasm of the Mexicans has made feverish and moving, moments, full of beauty and religious significance, spent in unforgettable places and environments, I have had the opportunity to observe you as you went from one place to another, full of the determination and commitment that distinguishes your task of information.

I am now on the point of returning to Rome, having attended the beginning of this important ecclesial event, the Puebla Conference

—marvellous because of its deep significance of unity and creativity for the future of the Church—and having made a pilgrimage through the unforgettable lands of the Virgin of Guadalupe. I am grateful to Providence for granting me at this moment the hoped-for opportunity of meeting the professionals of information, who have wished to accompany me on this journey.

Many of you will remain here, to continue to bring the Puebla event to public opinion, others will accompany me on my return, while still others will be claimed by further tasks. In any case it is worth taking some minutes from our crowded timetable to be able to be together, to reflect and chat a little, this time face to face. For once, we do not have as intermediary any means of transmission nor do we have the task of making distant audiences present spiritually. Let us enjoy, without more ado, the joy of being together.

Of course, I do not forget that behind the cameras there is a person, that it is a person speaking over the microphone, that it is a person who corrects and perfects every line of the article that tomorrow's newspaper will publish. I would like, at this short meeting, to offer my gratitude and respect to everyone, and address each one by name. I feel the desire and the necessity to thank each of you for the work of these days, which will continue in Puebla. It will reflect a Church that welcomes all cultures, lifestyles, and initiatives, provided they aim at the construction of the kingdom of God.

I understand the tensions and difficulties in which your work takes place. I am well aware of the effort that the communication of news requires. I can imagine the labour involved in transferring all this complicated equipment of yours from one place to another, putting it up and taking it down. I also realize that your work calls for long journeys, and separates you from your family and friends. It is not an easy life, but, in return, like all creative activities, especially those that signify a service for others, it is particularly rewarding. I am sure that you all have experience of this.

I remember now a similar occasion, a few weeks ago, when I had the opportunity to chat with the professionals who had come to give information on my election and on the inauguration of the Pontificate. I referred to this profession as a vocation. One of the most important documents of the Church, that on social communications, declares that "modern man cannot do without information that is full, consistent, accurate and true" (*Communio et Progressio*, 34); and it proclaims that when such information is furnished through the media of social communication, it makes "every man a partner in the business of the human race" (*Communio et Progressio*, 19).

With your talent and experience, your professional competence, the necessary inclination and the means at your disposal, you can facilitate this great service for humanity. And, above all, like the best of yourselves, you wish to be seekers of truth, to offer it to all those who wish to hear it. First of all, serve truth, that which is constructive, that which improves and dignifies man.

To the extent to which you pursue this ideal, I assure you that the Church will remain at your side, because this is also her ideal. She loves truth and freedom: freedom to know the truth, to preach it and to communicate it to others.

The time has come to say goodbye and to express to you again my gratitude for the service rendered to the diffusion of the truth which is manifested in Christ, and which is being expressed in these days in acts of utmost importance for the life of faith in these American countries, so close to the Church. We take leave of each other with respect and friendship, ready to be consistent with our best ideals. The Pope is happy to greet you and bless you

—remembering the media you represent: newspapers, television networks, broadcasting stations—and also your families. I frequently offer my prayer for you yourselves and for them. May the Lord accompany you.

