



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS*

La Guardia Airport, New York

Tuesday, 2 October 1979

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I reply with deep gratitude to the greetings of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization. I have looked forward to this moment since the day he extended to me, immediately after the beginning of my pontificate, the invitation to address the Thirty-fourth General Assembly. Your kind initiative, that honours me greatly, was thus at the basis of the journey that has taken me first [to Ireland](#) and that I shall continue in the United States of America.

Your Organization has a special significance for the whole world, for in it the needs and the aspirations of all the people of our planet come together. The supreme international forum that it is brings together the efforts and the determination of all men and women of good will, who have resolved to honour the pledge that the Founders of the United Nations made thirty-four years ago and inscribed in the first Article of the Charter: to work together to harmonize the actions of the nations in the attainment of international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve international cooperation, and to promote respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The very first day after the solemn beginning of my ministry as Supreme Pastor of the Catholic Church, in addressing the representatives of the States and the International Organizations, I took the opportunity to express my esteem for the important role of the International Organizations, and of the United Nations in particular. Here I wish to state again how greatly I value your Institution.

For as I stated on that other occasion: "You are the first to be convinced that there can be no true human progress or lasting peace without the courageous, loyal and disinterested pursuit of growing cooperation and unity among peoples" (23 October 1978).

Yes, the conviction that unites us in this common service of humanity is that, at the basis of all efforts, there must be "the dignity and worth of the human person" (Charter, Preamble). It is likewise the human person—every individual—who must make the aims of your Organization come true in the concrete realities of friendly relations, of tolerance, of freedom and harmony for all. Decisions and resolutions can be adopted by the representatives of the nations, but their true embodiment will have to be brought about by the people.

Through you then, Mr. Secretary-General and distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, at the beginning of my visit to the United Nations, I greet all the men, women and children of the countries that are represented at the United Nations. May the hopes that they place in the efforts and in the solidarity that link us all never be disappointed. May they experience in the achievements of the United Nations the fact that there is only one world, and that it is the home of all.

Thank you, and may God sustain you in your high ideals.

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