



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WELCOMING CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II*

*Washington*

*Saturday, 6 October 1979*

*Mr. Vice President,*

*Dear friends,*

*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,*

I wish to express my sincere thanks for the gracious words of welcome that have been extended to me on my arrival at the nation's Capital, the last stage of my first apostolic journey to the United States. I wish to say once more how grateful I am for the invitation of the Episcopal Conference and of President Carter to come and visit the United States.

I extend a cordial greeting to all those who have come to welcome me here: to you, Mr. Vice President, and to the other civil authorities, in whom I greet the whole American people and in a particular way all the citizens of the State of Maryland. A fraternal greeting to you, Cardinal Baum, Pastor of the Archdiocese of Washington, and through you to all the clergy, religious and laity of the Catholic community. I am most happy to greet at the same time the President, Officers and Staff of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that has its headquarters in this City, as well as all those who in the United States Catholic Conference provide all the indispensable services to the whole Catholic community of this country. To all my brother Bishops, a greeting and a blessing from the Bishop of Rome in the See of Saint Peter, for you and your dioceses.

In am looking forward to meeting the leaders of this young and flourishing country—in the first place, the President of the United States. I shall also be honored to visit the headquarters of the

Organization of American States to bring to this deserving body a message of peace for all the peoples they represent.

It will give me a special pleasure, during these last days of my visit and pilgrimage, to come into contact with the Catholic community of this area, and to learn about their pastoral efforts, programs and activities.

May the blessings of Almighty God descend in abundance on all the people of this nation's Capital.

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