



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE STUDENTS OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY**

*Washington
Sunday, 7 October 1979*

Dear students of The Catholic University,

My first greeting on arriving at this campus is for you! To all of you I offer the peace and joy of our Lord Jesus Christ! I am told that you have held an all-night prayer vigil to ask God's blessing on my visit. Thank you most cordially for such a wonderful expression of communion with me, and for such a beautiful gift. I would like to talk to you at length: I would like to listen to you and know what you think about yourselves and the world. But the time I have been given is so short.

One thing you have told me already: by choosing to welcome me with the offering of your prayers, you have demonstrated that you understand what is most important in your lives—your contact with God, your searching for the meaning of life by listening to Christ as he speaks to you in the Scriptures. I am pleased to know that reflection on spiritual and religious values is part of your desire to live fully this time of your lives. Materialistic concerns and one-sided values are never sufficient to fill the heart and mind of a human person. A life reduced to the sole dimension of possessions, of consumer goods, of temporal concerns will never let you discover and enjoy the full richness of your humanity. It is only in God—in Jesus, God made man—that you will fully understand what you are. He will unveil to you the true greatness of yourselves: that you are redeemed by him and taken up in his love; that you are made truly free in him who said about himself: "If the son frees you, you will be free indeed" (Jn 8:36).

I know that you, like students all over the world, are troubled by the problems that weigh on society around you and on the whole world. Look at those problems, explore them, study them and accept

them as a challenge. But do it in the light of Christ. He is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14 :6). He put all human life in the dimension of truth and of authentic love. True knowledge and true freedom are in Jesus. Make Jesus always part of your hunger for truth and justice, and part of your dedication to the well-being of your fellow human beings.

Enjoy the privileges of your youth: the right to be dynamic, creative and spontaneous; the right to be full of hope and joy; the opportunity to explore the marvelous world of science and knowledge; and above all the chance to give of yourself to others in generous and joyful service.

I leave you now with this prayer: that the Lord Jesus will reveal himself to each one of you, that he will give you the strength to go out and profess that you are Christian, that he will show you that he alone can fill your hearts. Accept his freedom and embrace his truth, and be messengers of the certainty that you have been truly liberated through the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This will be the new experience, the powerful experience, that will generate, through you, a more just society and a better world.

God bless you and may the joy of Jesus be always with you!

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