



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO VENEZUELA,
ECUADOR, PERU, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

WELCOME CEREMONY IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

Piarco

Tuesday, 5 February 1985

*Mr President,
Archbishop Pantin,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. With profound gratitude to God for being able to set foot on the soil of this nation, Trinidad and Tobago, I offer warmest greetings of love and peace to you all. And I thank you for your most cordial welcome.

In the course of this pastoral journey which has taken me to Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru, I am pleased that it has been possible to include this visit to you. I come in a spirit of brotherhood and friendship, and I wish to assure you of my deep respect and esteem for you all. I am in a special way grateful to God that I shall have the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist with my brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church. With joyful hearts, we shall offer praise and glory to the Most Holy Trinity, and our faith will be strengthened by the word of God and Eucharistic Communion.

2. I want to tell you of my admiration for the way in which people of different races, religions and traditions live together in harmony in your country. While so many places in the world suffer tragic conflicts due to bigotry and prejudice, you are a sign of hope. Your fraternal understanding makes possible fruitful cooperation between greatly diverse groups, and this cooperation is mutually enriching. I commend you highly for insisting on the recognition of the equal human dignity of each

man, woman and child.

3. Permit me to say a few words to the youth of Trinidad and Tobago. When I think of you and of all the other young people round the world, I feel a deep sense of gratitude and hope. I see in your eyes the bright promise of tomorrow, for the future of society belongs to you. And you begin to shape that future now, by the choices you make, by the attitudes you form, by the values you choose to live by - or to ignore. As you step forward to assume responsibility, let your hearts be brave. Put your confidence in God who made you and who loves you. Dare to reach out to others in hope and in trust, and, joining hands and hearts in friendship, help to build a better world.

4. I also want to take this opportunity to extend a very special word of greeting to those living on the island of Tobago. While the limitations of time do not enable me to come to you as I would like, be assured that I am with you in spirit and in prayer.

Upon all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago I invoke God's gifts of peace and joy. May the Lord bless you all.

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