



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO COLOMBIA

(July 1-7, 1986)

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS*Wednesday, 2 July 1986

1. I am gratified to be able to have this meeting in the Apostolic Nunciature with a group of distinguished people like the diplomatic corps accredited to the Colombian government. Above all, I want to offer you my most respectful greeting, which I extend in you to all the governments and people that you represent. On various occasions the Holy See has shown its great esteem for the work carried out by diplomatic representatives, above all when it is put at the service of the great cause of peace, closeness and collaboration among peoples and a fruitful exchange for the progress of the international community.² A common concern surely unites us and makes us work together: the good of humanity and the future of each people, especially those who try to see their dignity recognized and respected. This concern calls us to be creators of understanding among nations, to foster international security, as well as peace and harmony among all men. Human societies, national and international, will be judged in this area of peace by the contribution which they have given to the development of man and respect for his basic rights. If every society ought to seek and guarantee the right of each individual to a worthy existence, this right cannot be separated from another requirement, also essential, which we could call the right to peace and security. Actually, every human being aspires to a peace which allows him his full personal fulfilment, without any type of violence which can come from terrorist activity, which leads to social instability and even to armed conflict.³ So all the means which can lead to peace should be tirelessly sought. I said before on my journey to Ireland, and I repeat it here, "that violence is an evil, that violence is unworthy of man" (Drogheda, 29 September 1979, no. 9). Just as then, here also I want to be a tireless messenger of an ideal which excludes violence, an ideal - peace - based on a fraternity which has its origin in God. In this perspective I feel the duty to reaffirm, at the same time, that an authentic peace has to have its roots well planted in the dignity of man and in his inalienable rights. True peace cannot exist if there is no serious, decided commitment to apply social justice. In effect, justice and peace cannot be separated: a peace which did not take justice into account would only be an illusion. To work for peace means, therefore, to be dedicated to fostering justice and the defence and safeguarding of the basic rights of man, mutual respect, brotherly love. Permit the Pope, pilgrim of peace on the paths of Colombia, to tell you with an open heart: do not hesitate to commit yourselves personally to peace by means of actions of peace, each one in his place and within his sphere of responsibility. Give life to bold initiatives which manifest respect, fraternity and justice. In this way you will offer all your personal and professional abilities to serving the great cause of peace. I assure you that on the path of peace you will always find God who accompanies you.⁴ In this way man will affirm himself, and not by means of ambition for an illusory, fragile power. Man also has a right that the State, responsible for the common good, educate him in the practice of the means for peace. The Church has always

taught that "the fundamental duty of power is solicitude for the common good of society... Precisely in the name of these premises of the objectively ethical order, the rights of power can only be understood on the basis of respect for the objective and inviolable rights of man... The lack of this leads to the dissolution of society, opposition by citizens to authority, or a situation of oppression, intimidation, violence, and terrorism, of which many examples have been provided by the totalitarianisms of this century" (Redemptor Hominis, 17) . .5. All this, together with the a fair distribution of the fruits of progress, seems to me to constitute the conditions for a more harmonious growth and development of this land which I am visiting these days with so much joy, as well as Latin America. May God deign to support the efforts of those responsible, both at the national and international levels, so that all nations of this great continent can fulfil the role which corresponds to them in the great Latin American family and in the international community.

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