



# The Holy See

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***DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II  
AL PRESIDENTE DELLA NAZIONE ARGENTINA,  
S.E. IL SIGNOR RAÚL RICÁRDO ALFONSIN***

*Venerdì, 11 dicembre 1987*

That journey was a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the Lord for the gift of peace, re established and assured, between the two neighbouring countries of Argentina and Chile, whose relations had become very strained on account of the problem in the south.

The people of both countries, who during those days accompanied me on my pilgrimage throughout the length and breadth of the southern cone, gave eloquent witness to the firm desire for peace which the people possess and which was expressed in the present treaty of peace and friendship.

2. Moreover, in Argentina the process of re-establishing the institutions of democracy had already begun, as I had occasion to point out in my meeting with the political world at Casa Rosada – «This is an ideal occasion for Argentinians to be ever more aware of their duty to participate responsibly in public life, each one according to his or her own position» (n. 3). For their part, the bishops of Argentina, out of their pastoral concern, continued to support, in the way that is proper for them, the collective and solidary work being done to overcome the difficulties which stood in the way of building a community that would have as its foundation the search for truth, love for justice, vocation to freedom. They stated in a recent document: «We must recognize that the present state of law; in which we have to move forward, favours a greater appreciation of freedom, respect for legitimate authority, an effective participation at different levels, the opportunity to promote authentic modernization and the exercise of solidarity in a people which still looks for and still has not found the definitive paths of reconciliation».

3. The future, certainly, comes as a great challenge to the creative capacity and understanding of the people of Argentina. Therefore, it is more necessary than ever that, inspired by the moral

values characteristic of their history, they should be able to see their own origins in a new light, and make progress along the way that is ever open to hope.

This hope has even greater value if we consider the goals achieved against the background of the past history of the Republic. Indeed, Argentina right from its birth was inspired by a decided openness towards all. The Argentinian leaders gave birth to a great and generous nation, in which every citizen could have a worthy human existence. They were moved by hope founded in God, «the source of all right and justice» (preamble to the Constitution), to build a national community, prosperous and just.

4. Today it is particularly necessary to have a collective consciousness founded on the same principles. Indeed, the present world, troubled by so many tensions and imbalances, seeks models of civil society, and sure and tested principles that are capable of keeping the human family united. On the national level, Argentine set itself from the very beginning to create this kind of society among races and peoples; hence its original project is fully up to date and is worth the trouble for everybody, in one single effort, to do all in their power to produce in our time the experience of citizenship begun in the last century.

We are conscious that such a noble commitment is now going through moments of particular difficulty. For that reason, there is need for a great sense of social responsibility at all levels; it is necessary for everyone to be aware of and work for the common good of the whole country.

5. In this regard, during my recent apostolic visit, on numerous occasions I wanted to speak of reconciliation among Argentinians. This was prompted by the conviction that, in order to overcome differences, points of common consent and understanding have to be sought. For her part, the Church in Argentina, as a result of her own mission, stands by and supports this process of reconciliation and fraternity at all levels. We cannot forget that many of the problems which affect social life and even political life find their origins in the moral order. Therefore the Church by her work in education and evangelisation, gives dignity to human relations, works to help people to live together and in freedom within the confines of justice and mutual respect.

Finally, I would like to point out that in opposition to this arduous task of construction there stands a secularist attitude that is taken for granted, which leads people to look exclusively to themselves, thus forgetting all transcendent dimensions. In this way an undeniable indifference is created both in regard to the common good and the historical and ongoing identity of the people.

A logical consequence of this is the fading of that original set of values which means that the future becomes uncertain and it becomes more and more difficult to set forth common goals capable of producing the participation of all.

Mr. President, before drawing this meeting to a close, I would like to express once again my

deepest gratitude for your visit, and through you I pay homage to the whole Argentinean Nation. At the same time, I ask God to pour out his gifts abundantly on all the people, especially the gifts of wisdom and prudence, so that their present way of life may shape the future for the good of all.

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*\*L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English 1988 n.1p.5.*

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