



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO MR RONALD REAGAN
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

Saturday, 6 June 1987

Mr President,

This is the second time that I have the pleasure of welcoming you to the Vatican. Although this visit is somewhat brief, I am grateful for the opportunity to assure you again of my great esteem for all the people of the United States of America. On the occasion of your previous visit, I spoke of the importance of building society on "*the strong foundation of moral and spiritual values*", and I expressed the hope that world peace might be fostered through greater trust between peoples and nations-"a trust that is manifested and proved through constructive negotiations aimed at ending the arms race, and at liberating immense resources that can be used to alleviate misery and feed millions of hungry human beings". I am confident, Mr President, that you share my continued concern about these issues. Whenever moral and spiritual values are rejected, or even given mere lip-service and not truly integrated into daily life, then we, as individuals or groups, as communities or nations, fall short of what we were intended to be as men and women created in the image of God. At the same time, the absence of trust, and an unwillingness to work together for the good of all, breed division in the world and become a great stumbling block to the pursuit of true justice and peace. In order to secure a brighter future and to overcome the obstacles to peaceful coexistence in the world, we must keep in mind a fundamental truth about human life, namely that together we make up *a single human family*. We are sons and daughters of one and the same God, brothers and sisters in a common humanity. As I stated in my Message for the 1987 World Day of Peace: "By simply being born into this world, we are of one inheritance and one stock with every other human being. This oneness expresses itself in all the richness and diversity of the human family: in different races, cultures, languages and histories. And we are called to recognize the *basic solidarity* of the human family as the fundamental condition of our life together on this earth" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius ob diem ad pacem fovendam dicatum pro a. D. 1987*, 1, die 8

dec. 1986: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IX, 2 (1986) 1886). The consequences of this important truth are many and profound. If taken to heart, this truth will *shape the attitudes of mind and spirit* which make it possible for peoples and nations to collaborate effectively for the good of all - to overcome strife and conflict, to promote authentic integral development and to assist refugees and victims of natural disasters. The oneness of humanity must have an impact on the policies and practices of governments, providing a solid foundation for international cooperation which reaches beyond political, racial, geographical and ideological boundaries and forges new bonds of trust and mutual service. Even those who have previously been labelled as enemies can be seen in a new perspective, as brothers and sisters in the one human family. Not long ago it became possible to establish full diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the United States. You view such relations as an important way of furthering mutual understanding and constructive collaboration. The Holy See has no political ambitions, but it does consider it part of its mission in the world to be vitally concerned about human rights and the dignity of all, especially the poor and suffering. Drawing its inspiration and guidance from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad tidings to the poor" (Cfr. *Luc.* 4, 18), the Holy See seeks to promote the highest spiritual values and ethical principles. In this regard, diplomatic relations are meant to facilitate a more fruitful dialogue on the basic questions facing the international community. In sharing these thoughts with you today, I also wish to say how I look forward to my forthcoming visit to the United States. Memories of my previous visit remain for me a source of joy. I am grateful for this further opportunity to travel to a number of cities in your country, and thus to be once again in the midst of the American people, so as to join my heart and voice with theirs in praise of the living God. May the Lord assist you, Mr President, in all your lofty responsibilities, and may his blessing be upon you and all the people of the United States of America.

*AAS 80 (1988), p. 15-17. *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. X, 2 pp. 1991-1993. *L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1987 pp. 458-460. *L'Osservatore Romano* 7.6.1987 p.5. *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n. 24 p.9.

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