



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MONS. WILLIAM KEELER
ARCHBISHOP OF BALTIMORE**

Friday, 30 June 1989

Dear Archbishop Keeler,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a great pleasure to meet this representation of the historic Archdiocese of Baltimore, as well as relatives and friends from other parts of the United States who have accompanied Archbishop Keeler for yesterday's ceremony of the conferral of the Pallium. I greet all of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, asking him to strengthen you in faith and to increase your love for his Body, the Church. A pilgrimage to Rome can be a privileged moment to grow in love of the Church, and I pray that the Lord will grant this special grace to each one of you.

The conferral of the Pallium is meant to be a sign of communion between the Bishop of Rome and the Metropolitan Archbishop who receives it. It manifests a special bond of fraternity in the Episcopal College. It is also a tangible reminder to all who see it worn by the Archbishop that the unity of faith and fellowship which characterizes the Church as truly Catholic extends beyond regional and national boundaries, precisely because it is a spiritual communion rooted in Christ himself. It is Christ who joins us together as one holy people, hierarchically distinguished by our particular ministries and services but always united inseparably in our love and service of him.

Dear friends: as you return to the United States I urge you to help your brothers and sisters at home to come to know and experience ever more profoundly this mystery of the Church's unity and catholicity. Treasure this ecclesial gift, and assist Archbishop Keeler by your prayers as he proclaims this mystery by his preaching and by his living witness of communion with the Bishop of Rome and with all his brother Bishops throughout the world.

May the bicentennial celebrations in Baltimore be a moment of intense ecclesial communion for each member of the great Archdiocesan family – priests, men and women religious and the thousands of lay faithful who witness daily to the love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ.

Invoking upon you the guidance and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, I willingly impart to you and to your families and loved ones my Apostolic Blessing.

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