



# The Holy See

---

Apostolic Journey to Brazil (October 12-21, 1991)

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS\***

*Monday, 14 October 1991*

1. With great satisfaction I address you, members of the diplomatic missions accredited to the Brazilian government, because I see in you people who are fulfilling a noble but complex task of finding an ever greater understanding among the Nations. With sincere good will the Holy See follows your mission and wants to support it, sharing your desire for peace and dialogue, the heart of all diplomatic activity.

In thanking your Dean, Archbishop Carlo Furno, for his cordial welcome, I feel I can interpret it as the manifestation of the support of all of you ladies and gentlemen, and of your governments as well, for an ever closer relationship in your diplomatic relations with the Apostolic See as well as the friendly understanding of the activity which the Catholic Church conducts in international relations, constantly inspired by the supreme values of goodness, truth and justice.

2. Expressing my most cordial greeting to you, I want to reach all the peoples of all the continents whose representatives you are with a friendly word from the Successor of Saint Peter and Pastor of the Catholic Church.

In this sense, I want first of all to tell you of the Holy See's great appreciation of your role, which is to contribute to safeguarding peace by seeking collaboration among various countries in seeking the common good and in social advancement. I have received great satisfaction from the accords which have been reached in regard to Latin America and the North, and those directed at a broader perspective, such as various kinds of contact with the European Economic Community in order to promote the development of global economic relations. The Church looks with interest on this rapprochement because it can open the way for a significant contribution to peace among

peoples as well as to an effective rescaling of political and economic programmes in countries in which there are obvious social imbalances. Thus the necessary commitment on the part of the South American nations in strengthening their bonds of friendship and unity assumes a special interest. All the nations of this continent are called to bear witness to Christian life and collaboration among nations.

The Church sees, and has always seen, dialogue among people as an indispensable tool so that people can recognize the Truth which, enlightened by Christ's message, has made them able to see their neighbour not only as a brother or sister but as a child of God. Therefore she will never stop calling the more industrialized nations to a greater understanding that they should examine their own responsibilities to help these countries which, unaided, could not reach a just and reasonable standard of development consonant with human dignity.

Recent events in Eastern Europe, with the ever more obvious failure of Marxism and, at the same time, the concentration of efforts for economic recovery in these countries, does not allow anyone to overlook the tragic situations affecting many Nations. This is what I wanted to clarify in my recent Encyclical *Centesimus annus*: "What is called for is a special effort to mobilize resources, which are not lacking in the world as a whole, for the purpose of economic growth and common development, redefining the priorities and hierarchies of values on the basis of which economic and political choices are made" (n. 28).

It was for this reason that at the beginning of this year I emphasized in my address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See that "if 1990 was the year of freedom, 1991 should be the year of solidarity" (*L'Osservatore Romano* in English, 14 January 1991).

3. Permeated by this spirit of collaboration, in order to participate in this urgent, beneficial task from which people hope to achieve an era of tranquility and prosperity, the Apostolic See sends its representatives to different countries where they collaborate not only in the development of the local Churches, but also for the civil and human good of the people. The Church, which is the depositary of a "new humanism", a "Christian humanism", is able to conduct a humanizing activity in harmony with her primary mission, which is to evangelize. The more faithful she is to her primary mission which is, and will continue to be, a religious one, the more effectively and efficiently she fulfils her humanizing functions, such as stimulating culture, human development, literacy campaigns and basic education, charitable assistance, consciousness raising.

It is in this perspective that the Church is present in every nation where she has diplomatic representatives, and hopes to institute them wherever this has not been possible.

The Holy See is sure of the good reception which the different countries have shown its work. Therefore it expresses its own confidence in activities pertaining to social welfare, in each nation, for the introduction of better living conditions not only at the national level, but for the whole human

family.

4. It is in the spirit of these ideas that I address the leaders of nations, as well as their representatives, that they may not cease promoting the authentic good of individuals and peoples in the context of the international community. Always promote peace and foster dialogue with an eye towards a harmonious international life for the construction of a more human, more peaceful world. Commit yourselves to applying a political ethic, which is more necessary than ever today because we have a greater availability of technical means which have great potential for the progress of the individual or for his destruction. The individual and the social rights of people are at stake. Human life cannot be manipulated through physical or moral coercion based on political or financial interests. "May there be total respect for the rights of the human person, in whom the image of God shines forth" (Message for Easter 1991; cf. *L'Osservatore Romano in English*, 2 April 1991).

Last of all, I want to renew my "urgent appeal to all who are in positions of public responsibility - Heads of State or of government, legislators, magistrates and others - to ensure by every means necessary the authentic freedom of conscience of all those who live within the limits of their jurisdiction, and pay special attention to the rights of minorities" (Message for World Day of Peace, 1 January 1991). Freedom of religion, which finds a worthy example in Brazil, whose guests we are, is the signal for the reawakening of peoples in search of true freedom.

Ever placing before ourselves this global mission of peace in justice and freedom, we will find the words and actions which will gradually build a world worthy of human beings, the world which God wants for mankind to whom he entrusts responsibility for it, while enlightening their consciences.

These are the wishes, desires and hopes which the Pope expresses to the distinguished representatives of the different countries who are gathered here. May God inspire you! May he bless your homelands and protect your families! May he guide the international community on the paths of peace and brotherhood!

---

\**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.43 p.3.