



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC VISIT TO TORONTO,
TO CIUDAD DE GUATEMALA AND TO CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

17th WORLD YOUTH DAY

ARRIVAL CEREMONY

ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

Toronto International Airport, Tuesday, July 23, 2002

*Dear Prime Minister Chrétien,
Dear Canadian Friends,*

1. I am deeply grateful for your words of welcome, Mr. Prime Minister, and feel greatly honoured by the presence here of the Premier of Ontario, the Mayor of the great city of Toronto, and other distinguished representatives of government and civil society. To all I say a resounding "thank you" *for welcoming the idea of holding the World Youth Day in Canada* and for all that has been done to make it a reality.

Dear People of Canada, I have vivid memories of my first apostolic visit in 1984, and of my brief visit in 1987 to the First Nations in the land of Denendeh. This time I must be content to stay only in Toronto. From here I greet all Canadians. You are in my thankful prayers to God, who has so abundantly blessed your vast and beautiful country.

2. Young people from all parts of the world are gathering for the World Youth Day. With their gifts of intelligence and heart *they represent the future of the world*. But they also bear the marks of a humanity that too often does not know peace, or justice.

Too many lives begin and end without joy, without hope. That is one of the principal reasons for

the World Youth Day. Young people are coming together to commit themselves, in the strength of their faith in Jesus Christ, to the great cause of peace and human solidarity.

Thank you, Toronto; thank you, Canada, for welcoming them with open arms!

3. In the French version of your national anthem, "O Canada", you sing: "Car ton bras sait porter l'épée, il sait porter la croix. " Canadians are heirs to *an extraordinarily rich humanism*, enriched even more by the blend of many different cultural elements. But the core of your heritage is the spiritual and transcendent vision of life based on Christian revelation which gave vital impetus to your development as a free, democratic and caring society, recognized throughout the world as a champion of human rights and human dignity.

4. In a world of great social and ethical strains, and confusion about the very purpose of life, Canadians have an incomparable treasure to contribute – on condition that they preserve what is deep, and good and valid in their own heritage. I pray that the World Youth Day will offer all Canadians an opportunity to remember the values that are essential to good living and to human happiness.

Mr. Prime Minister, dear Friends: may the motto of the World Youth Day echo throughout the land, reminding all Christians to be "salt of the earth and light of the world".

God bless you all. God bless Canada.