



The Holy See

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

ARRIVAL CEREMONY

ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

International Airport of Guatemala City
Monday, July 29, 2002

Mr President,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,
Distinguished Authorities,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

1. First of all I would like to express my great joy in coming to this beloved land of Guatemala for the third time as a pilgrim of love and hope. I thank God for permitting me to return here to celebrate the canonization of a figure you so deeply love and admire: Brother Pedro de San José de Betancurt, a son of Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands. Prompted by a great missionary spirit, he came to Guatemala and gave himself to the service of the poor and needy.

2. I am pleased to greet first of all President Alfonso Antonio Portillo Cabrera, to whom I extend my heartfelt gratitude for his kind words of welcome. I deeply appreciate the presence of the Presidents of the Sister Republics of Central America, of the Dominican Republic and the presence of the Prime Minister of Belize. I am also grateful to the Government of the Nation, to the other Authorities and to the Diplomatic Corps for their welcome presence at this ceremony and for their valued cooperation in the preparations for my Visit.

I greet with affection my Brothers in the Episcopate, particularly the Archbishop of Guatemala and

President of the Episcopal Conference, and the other Archbishops and Bishops. I also extend my fraternal greeting with great affection to the priests, deacons, men and women religious, catechists and faithful, to all Guatemalans, addressing with affection the indigenous peoples as well as those who have come from other Latin American countries and from Spain.

3. Tomorrow I will have the good fortune to canonize Brother Pedro de Betancurt, who embodied God's love for his people. This celebration should be a true moment of grace and renewal for Guatemala. In fact, the example of Brother Pedro's life and the eloquence of his message are a valuable contribution to building society, which is now opening to the challenges of the third millennium. I fervently hope that the noble Guatemalan people, who thirst for God and for spiritual values, who are anxious for peace, solidarity and justice, may live and enjoy the dignity which is theirs.

4. Entrusting myself to the protection of the Holy Christ of Esquipulas, and closely united to the beloved sons and daughters of all Guatemala, I begin this Apostolic Journey. I cordially bless you all, particularly the poor, the indigenous people and the campesinos, the sick, all the marginalized, and most especially those who are suffering, in body or in spirit. My cordial greeting goes to you all.

Praised by Jesus Christ!