



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO MEXICO

(12-18 FEBRUARY 2016)

***FAREWELL GREETING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE HOLY MASS IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ***

Area of the Fair of Ciudad Juárez

Wednesday, 17 February 2016

[Multimedia]

Dear Bishop José Guadalupe Torres Campos of Ciudad Juárez,

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

Distinguished Authorities,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your kind words. Now is the moment to give thanks to Our Lord for having granted me this visit to Mexico, which always surprises, for Mexico is a surprise!

I do not want to leave without giving thanks for the efforts of all who made this pilgrimage possible. I thank all the state and local authorities for your attention and solicitous assistance that have contributed to the smooth running of this pastoral visit just as I also thank wholeheartedly those who have offered their contribution in different ways. To all those anonymous helpers who quietly gave their very best to make these days a great family celebration: thank you. I have felt welcomed and warmly received by the love, the celebration, the hope of this great Mexican family: thank you for having opened the doors of your lives to me, the doors of your nation.

The Mexican writer Octavio Paz says in his poem *Hermandad*: "I am a man: I only last a brief while, and the night is vast. / But I look up: the stars are writing. / Without grasping I understand: I am also the writing / and in this very instant someone is spelling me out" (*Un sol más vivo*).

Antología poética, Ed. Era, México 2014, 268).

Taking up these beautiful words, I dare to suggest that the one who spells us out and marks out the road for us is the mysterious but real presence of God in the real flesh of all people, especially the poorest and most needy of Mexico.

The night can seem vast and very dark, but in these days I have been able to observe that in this people there are many lights who proclaim hope; I have been able to see in many of their testimonies, in their faces, the presence of God who carries on walking in this land, guiding you, sustaining hope; many men and women, with their everyday efforts, make it possible for this Mexican society not to be left in darkness. Many men and women lining the streets as I went by, lifted up their children, showing them to me: they are the future of Mexico, let us look after them, let us love them. These children are tomorrow's prophets, they are the sign of a new dawn. And I assure you that on some occasions, as I passed by, I felt I wanted to cry on seeing so much hope among people who suffer so much.

May Mary, Mother of Guadalupe, continue to visit you, continue to walk on your lands — Mexico which cannot be understood without her — may she continue helping you to be missionaries and witnesses of mercy and reconciliation.

Once again, thank you very much for this warm, so very warm, Mexican hospitality.