



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL I

TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS*Hall of Benediction*

Friday, 1 September 1978 Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Sons and Daughters: We are happy to welcome a group from the communications world—a group so qualified and indeed so numerous—in this, the first week of our Pontificate. You have come to Rome for a dual event which has had deep meaning for the Catholic Church, deep meaning for the whole world: the death of our lamented predecessor, Pope Paul VI, and the recent Conclave in which the heavy burden of ecclesial service as the Supreme Pastor has been placed upon our humble, fragile shoulders. This welcome meeting allows us to thank you for the sacrifices and the hard work that were yours during the month of August as you served the public opinion of the world. The service you offer is also a most important one as you offer your readers, listeners and viewers the possibility of sharing in these historic events both in their religious significance and in their profound connection with human values and the expectations of today's society. You do so with the speed and immediacy demanded in your responsible, demanding profession. We wish to thank you most especially for having so effectively presented and having made better known to the world the person, the teaching, the works and example of Paul VI. In your many dispatches, your wide coverage, just as the many pictures that you transmitted from Rome, you have tried in a sensitive way to gather together and to communicate the hope of this City, of the Catholic Church and of the entire world—the hope for a new Pastor who would assure the continuity of the mission of Peter. The sacred heritage left us by the Second Vatican Council and by our predecessors John XXIII and Paul VI, of happy and holy memory, contains the pledge of a special concern for a frank, honest and effective working together with the communications media, represented so ably by you. It is a promise that we willingly make, realizing that the means of social communication assume in the life of modern man a function that becomes ever more important. We are mindful of the risks of "massing" and "levelling" that the "mass media" contain, the consequent threats to the interiority of the individual, to his capacity for personal reflection, and to his objectivity in judgment. But we also are aware of the new and joyous possibility that they offer to the man of today—the possibility of better knowing and of drawing closer together, the possibility of more closely understanding the desire for justice, for peace, for brotherhood, indeed for building up with one another deeper bonds of sharing, of understanding, of solidarity in view of a more just and humane world. We know, in a word, the ideal goal towards which each of you, despite difficulties and illusions, direct your own energy. You wish to arrive through "communication" at a true and satisfying "communion". As you well know, this is the goal towards which the heart of the Vicar of him who taught us to call God the unique and loving Father of every human being, aspires. Before giving each of you and your families our special blessing—a blessing we wish to extend to your co-workers and the information organizations represented here—whether agencies, newspapers, radio and television—we wish to reassure you of the esteem we have for your profession. We assure you as well of our desire to facilitate your important and difficult mission. We will do so in the spirit of the directives of the Conciliar decree *Inter mirifica* and the

pastoral instruction *Communio et progressio*. When there are special events or the publication of documents of the Holy See that are of greater importance, you will often have to present the Church, to speak about the Church—at times you will have to comment on our humble ministry. We are confident that you will do so with a love of truth and with a respect for human dignity, because such is the scope of every social communications. We would also ask you to be willing to contribute to the safeguarding in today's society of a deep respect for the things of God and for the mysterious relationship between God and each of us. It is this that constitutes the sacred dimension of human reality. Please understand the profound reasons for which the Pope, the Church and its Pastors, in accomplishing their apostolic service will often have to ask for a spirit of sacrifice, of generosity, of renunciation in order to build up a world of justice, of peace and of love. Certain of maintaining in the future the spiritual bond initiated with this meeting, we grant you from the depth of our heart, our Apostolic Blessing.