



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS
CONGRESS IN NASHVILLE - USA**

*Dear friends assembled in Nashville
for the Religious Communications Congress.*

I recall with joy the warm welcome that I received from the citizens of the United States during my visit last October. I feel the need to express again my gratitude to all the people of the mass media, for everything they did on that occasion. They gave so generously of themselves, and rendered such great service to the world community.

Personally I have long been convinced of the special power of the media to gather people around one event or one idea. Through the use of new technology - like the satellite - communication between people who are separated by oceans or continents can be instantaneous and fully personal. This is indeed a powerful tool to be placed at the service of humanity. Its power must be used, not to limit, but rather to expand the horizons of individuals and peoples who are seeking to fulfil their human destinies.

With power comes responsibility. To North America, with its extraordinary advances in communications, falls a large share of this responsibility. So I am heartened that, at the beginning of this new decade, journalists and producers like yourselves - Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and Jews - are confronting the crucial questions of "Ethics in Communication". By bringing religious principles to bear on these questions, you can greatly influence for good the minds and hearts of the next generation. For the pursuit of truth - the full truth of the human person created in the image and likeness of God, and called to a transcendent destiny - hastens the triumph of love and peace. The proclamation of this truth defends human dignity against the forces that would reduce human beings to mere consumers of material goods, or to pawns of national interests or of divisive ideologies.

I am also heartened by the desire on your part to hear the voices of those beyond your own boundaries. And not just my voice, but the voices of many nations, particularly those of the third world.

Such listening will not only enrich North America, but it will enable other nations to take their rightful place in the world forum of ideas and to have a fair share of the use of the airwaves. Communications technology makes the world ever smaller. When properly used, it can make the world much better - a place where everyone can live peacefully together as brothers and sisters under the Fatherhood of God.

As you continue your deliberations, may I say to you what I said to the journalists at the United Nations: "Be faithful to the truth and to its transmission, for truth endures; truth will not go away.

Truth will not pass or change".

And I say to you... that the service of truth, the service of humanity through the medium of truth - is something worthy of your best years, your finest talents, your most dedicated efforts. As transmitters of truth you are instruments of understanding among people and of peace among nations.

May God bless your labours for truth with the fruit of peace.

16 May 1980