



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE MAYOR OF ROME

Sunday, 12 November 1978

Mr Mayor!

I am sincerely grateful to you for the noble expressions you have just addressed to me; and I thank with you the whole civil Administration, to which I am happy and honoured to extend my cordial greeting.

This first meeting with those on whom it falls to interpret, protect and serve the interests of a city like Rome—whose glorious and mysterious destiny is so closely interwoven with the events of the Church of Christ, which has here, by providential disposition, her visible centre—arouses in me a surge of feelings, of memories, of solemn and weighty thoughts, difficult to restrain. In this City, which was the sovereign ruler of peoples, an admirable teacher of civilization, an unequalled maker of wise laws, there once arrived the humble fisherman of Galilee, the Apostle Peter. He was ill-equipped and defenceless on the human plane, but inwardly sustained by the strength of the Spirit who made him the courageous bearer of the Glad News, destined to conquer the world. In this same City there has now arrived a new Successor of Peter, also marked by so many human limitations, but trustful in the indefectible help of grace, and coming from a country of which you, Mr Mayor, have kindly spoken with sympathy and cordiality.

Today the new Pope officially begins his ministry as Bishop of Rome and Pastor of a diocese which has no equal in the world. I feel deeply the responsibility deriving from the complex problems that the pastoral care of a community, which has expanded at a bewildering speed in the last few years, brings with it. And I cannot but look with sympathy on those who, bearing the honour and the weight of the civil administration of the City, are doing their utmost to improve the environmental conditions, to overcome inadequate social situations, and to raise the general living standards of the population.

Hoping that these goals, at which this important service of the citizens aims, will be successfully reached, I also express the wish that the Administration, adopting a view of the common good which includes all true human values, will give open and cordial attention also to the requirements raised by the religious dimension of the City, which, owing to the incomparable Christian values which characterize its features, is a centre of attraction for pilgrims from all over the world.

With these sentiments, I invoke God's blessing on this City, which I now feel mine, and I wish to you, Mr Mayor, to your Collaborators, and to the whole large family of the Roman people, serene prosperity and civil progress in hardworking concord, mutual respect and sincere aspiring to a peaceful, harmonious and just society.

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