



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
MEXICO AND BAHAMAS
(JANUARY 25 - FEBRUARY 1 1979)

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE CHRISTIANS OF THE BAHAMAS

Thursday, 1 February 1979

I AM GRATEFUL to you for this welcome. Is it a great joy for me, on my return to Rome, to be able to stop in Nassau – a great joy to be with the beloved people of the Bahamas.

My first greeting goes to the authorities of this young, recently independent nation. You have kindly facilitated my visit, and I wish to assure you of my cordial gratitude. You have, moreover, my prayers for the faithful fulfilment of the lofty tasks that you are called to perform at the service of all the men and women of this nation.

Being here this evening in your midst, I have the opportunity to formulate my best wishes for the entire population of the Bahamas. My hope for everyone is that there may be constant progress along the path of authentic and integral human advancement. With the profound conviction of the surpassing dignity of the human person, may all the people of these islands make their individual and unique contributions to the common good that takes into account the personal rights and duties of all citizens.

To be with you is also to share the hope that, as a sovereign nation within the family of nations, you will make your own special contribution to society: that you will help build the edifice of world peace on the solid columns of truth and justice, charity and freedom. And may God bless all your efforts and help you to fulfil this important role for the benefit on this generation and of those to

come.

On this wonderful occasion I wish to extend a particular word of greeting to all the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church. I assure you all of my love in our Lord Jesus Christ, and I trust that my presence is a real indication to you of the great bonds of faith and charity that link you with Catholics everywhere throughout the world. I pray that you will find strength and joy in this solidarity and fellowship, and that you will constantly give witness to your belief by the genuineness of your Christian lives. The words of Jesus constitute a perpetual challenge for all of us: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"^[1].

With deep respect and fraternal love I wish also to greet all the other Christian brethren of the Bahamas – all who confess with us that " Jesus Christ is the Son of God"^[2]. Be assured of our desire to collaborate loyally and perseveringly, in order to attain by God's grace the unity willed by Christ the Lord. My expression of friendship goes likewise to all the men and women of good will residing in this region of the Atlantic ocean. As children of one heavenly Father we are united in the solidarity of love and in promoting to the full the incomparable dignity of the human person.

At this moment then, during this short stop, I sense the hope that is in all of you, the people of the Bahamas – a hope for your future that is vast like the ocean that surrounds you. It is my privilege to share this hope with you and to give expression to it now, being confident that it will sustain you in all your worthy endeavours as a united people. I ask God to lead you to the full achievement of your destiny. May he give to the people of the Bahamas rich and lasting blessings. May he assist the poor, comfort the sick, guide the youth, and bring peace to every heart.

God bless the Bahamas, today and for ever!

^[1] *Matth.* 5, 16.

^[2] *1 Io.* 4, 15.