



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WELCOME CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

*Logan Airport, Boston
Monday, 1st October 1979*

Praised be Jesus Christ!

It is a great joy for me to be in the United States of America, to begin my pastoral visit to the Catholic Church in this land, and at the same time to greet all the American people, of every race, color and creed.

I am grateful for the cordial welcome given me on behalf of President Carter, whom I thank most sincerely for his invitation to the United States. I am looking forward to meeting the President after my visit to the United Nations.

My thanks go also to the Cardinal Archbishop of Boston, who in this historic city offers me the first hospitality of this country. I am grateful to the Episcopal Conference and to all the individual Bishops who have so kindly asked me to come. My only regret is that I cannot accept all the invitations extended to me by religious and civil officials, by individuals, families and groups.

From so many quarters—Catholics, Protestants and Jews—America has opened her heart to me. And on my part I come to you—America—with sentiments of friendship, reverence and esteem. I come as one who already knows you and loves you, as one who wishes you to fulfill completely your noble destiny of service to the world. Once again I can now admire firsthand the beauty of this vast land stretching between two oceans; once again I am experiencing the warm hospitality of the American people.

Although it is not possible for me to enter into every home, to greet personally every man and

woman, to caress every child in whose eyes is reflected the innocence of love—still, I feel close to all of you, and you are all in my prayers.

Permit me to express my sentiments in the lyrics of your own song: "America ! America ! God shed his grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood, From sea to shining sea".

And may the peace of the Lord be with you always—America!

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