



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE 29th ANNUAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE ATLANTIC TREATY ASSOCIATION\****

*Saturday, 19 November 1983*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my great pleasure to welcome today you who have taken part in the 29th Annual Assembly of the Atlantic Treaty Association. I am pleased to have this occasion to greet you, together with the members of your families. As distinguished personalities of your respective Nations you have gathered to discuss a matter of grave importance for the world at large. Your deliberations and reflections on the topic of peace augur well for the future of your activities, and shed a ray of hope on a subject which all too often remains over-shadowed by discouragement and dismay.

While Nations are naturally preoccupied with the requirements of their own defence, the seemingly endless instances of discord and unrest in the world, and especially the frightening spectre of nuclear holocaust, are powerful incentives to continue the unrelenting search for practical and enduring means of achieving peace.

The Holy See continually seeks out opportunities to cooperate in the urgent task of promoting peace, not only because it occupies a special place within the international community, but also because of its role in accomplishing the very mission of the Church, which is that of proclaiming the saving message entrusted to her by Jesus Christ.

In order that this divine message may be effectively made known, the Church fosters the conditions which enable all men and women to attain their integral development; and thus she strives to participate in and to encourage those endeavours which correspond to one of the highest aspirations of the human spirit, namely, the establishment of true and lasting peace. The Church engages in this pursuit, furthermore, not in a secondary or extraneous way, but in faithful

compliance to the exhortation of the Lord himself, who said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (*Matth 5, 9*).

The Church, and the Holy See in particular, looks to every competent international organism, as well as to humanity as a whole, to bring to bear the vast resources of intelligence and will for the effecting of carefully measured, concrete steps towards fulfilling that universal desire of people everywhere: peace and security in a well-ordered world.

I wish to encourage you to be steadfast in this quest. And be assured of my constant prayers, so that one day we may all come to the lasting joy of that peace which surpasses all understanding.

God bless you.

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*\*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. VI, 2 p.1126-1127.

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