



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA MEETING WITH THE STUDENTS AND STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II Columbia (United States)

Friday, 11 September 1987

Dear Dr Holderman,

Dear Friends,

1. Thank you for your thoughtful words of greeting and for the cordial welcome which you have extended to me. I am most grateful. For many months I have looked forward to my visit to South Carolina. It is a great joy for me finally to be here. At the same time, I come to this State in response to a solemn duty. Indeed is it not the duty of every follower of Christ to work for the unity of all Christians? To desire anything else would be not only a scandal, but a betrayal a betrayal of the Lord who himself prayed that his disciples would be one, and who died on the Cross in order "to gather into one all the dispersed children of God" (Jo. 11, 52).

I pray that the ecumenical initiative which we are undertaking today will be pleasing in God's sight and bring us all closer to the full union of faith and love in our Saviour.

2. It is a pleasure for me to come to the campus of this major university. As you know, I myself have had a long and happy association with the university world in my homeland. I know how important universities are for the *advancement of research and for the development of knowledge and culture*. I offer all of you my personal encouragement for the educational programme which you carry out here in Columbia and for the contribution that you are making to the future of society. To place human knowledge at the service of humanity is a great task.

3. I wish to add a special word of greeting and support for the students of the University of South Carolina. Before you lies the *wonderful world of knowledge and the immense challenge of truth*. Here you can come to a much greater understanding of yourself and of the universe. You can delve into the wealth of literature handed down from the past. You can explore the vast fields of the sciences and the arts. You can engage in research and future planning. Here in this centre of higher education you must prepare yourselves to make your own contribution to society.

My special hope for you is this : that you will always have a great love for truth--the truth about God, the truth about man and the truth about the world. I pray that through truth you will serve humanity and experience real freedom. In the words of Jesus Christ: "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free"? (*Io. 8, 32*).

May God, the source of life and truth, bless all of you at the University of South Carolina.

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