



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II DURING HIS VISIT TO THE TOMB OF ST. JOHN NEUMANN

St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia

Thursday, 4 October 1979

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have come to Saint Peter's Church to pray at the tomb of Saint John Neumann, a zealous missionary, a dedicated pastor, a faithful son of Saint Alphonsus in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia.

As I stand in this Church, I am reminded of the one thing which motivated Saint John Neumann throughout his life: his love for Christ. His own prayers show us this love; for from the time he was a child he used to say: "Jesus, for you I want to live; for you I want to die; I want to be all yours in life; I want to be all yours in death" (Nicola Ferrante, *S. Giovanni Neumann, CSSR, Pioniere del Vangelo*, p. 25). And at the First Mass he celebrated as a priest, he prayed in these words: "Lord, give me holiness".

My brothers and sisters in Christ: this is the lesson we learn from the life of Saint John Neumann, and the message which I leave with you today: what really matters in life is that we are loved by Christ, and that we love him in return. In comparison to the love of Jesus, everything else is secondary. And without the love of Jesus, everything else is useless.

May Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help intercede for us ; may Saint John Neumann pray for us; and with the help of their prayers may we persevere in faith, be joyful in hope and be strengthened in our love for Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and our Lord.

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