



The Holy See

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO PRESIDENTS OF ECUADOR AND PERU***

*To their Excellencies
the Presidents of
the Republic of Ecuador and
the Republic of Peru*

I am pleased to be present in spirit at the solemn signing of the comprehensive, definitive agreement between Ecuador and Peru, which concludes the peace process begun with the Peace Declaration of Itamaraty on 17 February 1995.

I share in the joy of your noble peoples, so dear to me, who are united by many common bonds of Christian faith and culture, and who today see the close of a painful chapter in the history of their relations and the beginning of lasting prospects of peace.

The agreement is highly significant, both for the American continent, in search of ever greater integration, and for the entire international community.

I would like to offer my warm congratulations to President Jamil Mahuad of Ecuador and President Alberto Fujimori of Peru for what they have achieved.

I would also like to express special gratitude to the guarantor countries of the "Rio de Janeiro Protocol on Peace, Friendship and Borders" — Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States — and their Heads of State, who have shown constant willingness to help the parties and whose active collaboration, effectively co-ordinated by President Henrique Cardoso, was crucial in enabling this goal to be reached.

I am also thinking of the Catholic communities in Ecuador and Peru, who, under the guidance of

their Pastors, have been able with appropriate initiatives — e.g., the days of prayer for peace — to encourage an authentic “pedagogy of peace”. I have no doubt that they will continue on this path.

I earnestly hope that your sister nations will continue to advance with a firm and persevering will on the ways marked out by this agreement, as I entrust everyone to the intercession of St Marianita of Quito, St Rose of Lima and, especially, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, so deeply loved and revered by the peoples of both countries.

Mr Presidents, I cordially invoke almighty God’s blessing upon you, upon Ecuador and Peru, and upon all those present.

From the Vatican, 23 October 1998.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.44 p.5.*

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