



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO PILGRIMS FROM RIO DE JANEIRO**

Thursday, 17 September 1998

Your Eminence,

Mr Ambassador of Brazil to the Holy See,

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am particularly grateful to you for your presence here in Rome, because by this courteous act of Christian charity, you have wished to repay the visit that I had the joy of making to Brazil for the Pope's Second World Meeting with Families last year. I would like to give thanks to the God of mercy, imploring for everyone "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit".

You have come to the Eternal City to be with the Successor of Peter. You represent all sectors of society and those who worked for the success of that great meeting. I am pleased with the initiative of Cardinal Eugênio de Araújo Sales since it reminds me of all the different phases of those unforgettable days in October of the Pastoral Theology Congress on the Family, which culminated in the Holy Mass at the Flamengo Embankment. It was a great comfort for me to be able to see the precious fruits which had matured on that occasion. I ask the Lord, Giver of all good things, to increase their number in the heart of every Brazilian man and woman, from north to south and from east to west, so that the family will always be — as defined at the congress — "gift and commitment, hope for humanity".

2. May these wishes, which I offer in my prayers to the Almighty, also serve as an incentive to the leaders of your country so that they will continue to promote the common good of all Brazilians in an atmosphere of sound collaboration and mutual respect, constantly looking to the best interests of every citizen, and as promoters of justice and solidarity especially among the neediest. By God's grace we are rapidly approaching the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000; I would therefore like to renew my call, in view of this great event, to a "daily commitment to transform reality in order to make it correspond to God's plan" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 46), in an atmosphere of harmony and peaceful co-operation.

The presence here today of distinguished representatives of the Government, at the national, state and local levels, reinforces my firm conviction that these words will be duly reflected in every activity directed to promoting that same common good which, inspired by Gospel values, will benefit all the peoples of the beloved Brazilian nation.

For this reason I would like to tell you all that I hold you in my heart, and I ask you to return to Brazil in the certainty that the Pope was not only in Rio de Janeiro, but was and will continue to be in every home, in the streets, in the fields, in the hospitals, in the detention centres, on the hills and on the beaches of your immense country, to which I express my best wishes for peace and prosperity.

3. Through the intercession of Our Lady of the Apparition, let us ask God for the material and spiritual well-being of Brazil, of its people, of its families, of the young, the elderly and the sick, in a framework of ordered and sincere solidarity. Once again I thank those who helped organize the Meeting with Families: may almighty God bless you all, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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