



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BELLUNO EMIGRANTS

Sunday, 25 March 1979

Beloved sons of the land of Belluno,

I am happy to be able to grant today, at last, your desire for a meeting with the Pope, which my late revered predecessor and your illustrious fellow-countryman of happy memory, John Paul I, had already accepted joyfully, without, however, being able to grant it owing to his sudden and premature death.

I greet, therefore, with particular warmth of feelings, all of you gathered here in such large numbers. In particular, I wish to greet the Bishop of Belluno and Feltre, Mons. Maffeo Dúcoli, Mr Vincenzo Barcelloni Corte, President of the Association of Belluno Emigrants, and all the other numerous Authorities present here.

Dear friends, I thank you for your presence in this pontifical house and for the generous sum you have kindly put at my disposal for Third World emigrants. I assure you that I receive you with no less affection than beloved and unforgettable Pope John Paul I, like you a native of Belluno and a son of emigrants, and, like me, Peter's Successor on this Roman Chair, would have done in my place. The fact that I wished to maintain and continue the same name adopted by him, is an external sign of a deep harmony, and the indication of the same intention of pastoral ministry.

I would like to address you as he would certainly have done, with simplicity and wisdom, and with such spiritual joy. I exhort you, therefore, in the first place to be always proud of your generous land, in whatever part of the world you may find yourselves: not out of narrow parochialism, but with the affection that every living, though mortal, person must keep for his own earthly roots. But also, remember constantly that for us Christians "our commonwealth is in heaven" (Phil 3:20) and that therefore we must not be conformed to the mentality of this world (cf. Rom 12:2). Wherever

you are, therefore, you are always offered the opportunity for a testimony of limpid faith and genuine charity, which your native and recognized traditions of hard work and tenacity can make even stronger and more effective. I know that you, natives of Belluno, are scattered over the five continents and have an outstanding *esprit de corps*, fostered by opportune associative activities. Well, I cannot but encourage your specific initiatives, so that they may promote not only the indispensable human values, but also the typical ones of the Gospel, in which alone every man can find his own complete salvation.

Dear friends, you know that, even if the ways of the world along which you are journeying are so many and different, the final goal is the same for all. My wish is that your way may be made more joyful and easy every day by the comforting presence of our Lord. I recommend you to him paternally while I willingly grant the special Apostolic Blessing to all of you and to all your dear ones.

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