



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO PORTUGAL II, COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA I,
PANAMA, EL SALVADOR I, GUATEMALA I, HONDURAS, BELIZE AND HAITI

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE AUTHORITIES OF BELIZE

Belize, 9 March 1983

*Your Excellency the Governor-General,
My Brother Bishops,
Dear friends,
Dear citizens of Belize,*

1. I praise the divine Providence that has brought me to Belize! I give thanks to God for this opportunity to be in your midst today; for this opportunity to speak to you about God's love, his peace, charity; and for this opportunity to proclaim God's design for a world where justice, freedom and mutual respect are the authentic expression of a civilisation of love.

I am grateful to the authorities of this land for the invitation to come among you, and I am grateful to all of you, the people, for your manifestation of good will in my regard and for your wonderful welcome.

2. As a new nation in this part of the world, you rightfully place great emphasis on unity. Indeed, it is only by working together in close harmony that you will fulfil your destiny, build a lasting society and prepare a peaceful future for your children and your children's children. And today you have a right to have your hopes confirmed and all your worthy efforts and resolutions blessed.

3. As Pastor of the universal Church, I have come to visit *the Catholic faithful of Belize* and to encourage them to live their Christian lives according to the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I commend them all to the loving protection of the Mother of Jesus, under her well-beloved title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. But I have also come to proclaim *to everyone* the love of God. I have come to proclaim the dignity of the human person, and the hope that fills the world when

brothers and sisters of all beliefs and ethnic backgrounds live according to that pattern so clearly and forcefully laid down by Jesus Christ when he said: "Treat others the way you would have them treat you" (*Matth. 7, 12*).

With profound respect, with friendship and with love, I ask the Lord to guide the destinies of this land, so that life in all its aspects "may conform ever more to man's surpassing dignity and be rendered more human" (Cfr. Ioanni Pauli PP. II *Redemptor Hominis*, 13). God bless Belize!

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