



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FROM THE UNITED STATES**

Wednesday, 10 February, 1988

Dear Friends from the United States,

It is a pleasure to welcome you, distinguished members of the House of Representatives, together with the friends and family members who have accompanied you to Rome. Less than five months ago, I had the joy of making a second pastoral visit to your homeland, travelling especially to the regions of the American South and West. As I greet you today, I assure you that the vivid memories of those days remain a source of deep gratitude.

One of the striking features of your country is its pluralism, a rich diversity of ethnic origins and religious beliefs, of cultural traditions and customs. As members of the Congress of the United States, this feature of national life presents you undoubtedly with challenging opportunities and not a few difficult problems. For your public service is aimed at the unity and common good of all, and it demands that you make every effort to safeguard and enhance the rights and dignity of every human person, from the moment of conception until natural death.

As elected public officials, you fulfil an important and honourable service in American society. You help shape policies that have an impact not only on the quality of life of your fellow citizens but on the lives of people of other nations too. You have a particularly serious responsibility to promote justice and to overcome the scandalous inequalities that exist between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless. Belonging, as you do, to a nation which has been particularly blessed by Providence, your responsibility takes on even greater proportions, and in a certain sense is more urgent.

I know that your sense of dedication and duty makes you eager to play your part in building a world of true justice and peace. In this most worth while task, I assure you of my personal support and prayer. I likewise assure you of the readiness of the Church to offer spiritual and moral assistance.

Upon yourselves and your families, and upon all those whom you serve, I invoke God's blessings of joy and peace.

© Copyright 1988 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana