



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MARINES FROM THE "EMPIRE STATE" SHIP
FROM THE MILITARY MARINA
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Saturday, 16 June 1990

Dear Marines from the USS "Empire State",

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican. I trust that your visit to Rome, with its unique historical heritage and artistic beauty, will have a deeply personal and religious significance for each of you. Above all, may the presence in this City of so many reminders of the Christian faith, among which the tomb of Saint Peter takes pride of place, give you a better understanding of the Church and her role of service to the human family.

During my last visit to the United States, in 1987, I underlined this same aspect in relation to your country. In a speech to the President in Miami, I said: "Service to humanity has always been a special part of the vocation of America and is still relevant today" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio domino Ronald Reagan, Nationum Unitarum Americae Septemtrionalis Moderatori*, 5, die 10 sept. 1987: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3 [1987] 377). You carry on that noble tradition insofar as your professional activity is ultimately at the service of the cause of peace and the common good. By serving your country and by putting aside your own personal preferences and plans, even to the extent of placing your lives at risk, you inspire and promote the cause of peace in an exemplary way. People see in you not merely young men who have undergone a strict training program but people of integrity, capable of making sacrifices and ready to offer their service for the good of their country. The Marines' witness to loyalty, solidarity and perseverance can become a message for all young people seeking a way of life filled with higher meaning.

My dear friends: I ask the Lord to sustain you in strength so that you can respond generously to your personal and professional duties. Upon all of you here present and upon your loved ones at

home, I invoke God's abundant blessings.

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