



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO PILGRIMS FROM AUSTRIA

Monday, 27 November 1978

*Lord Cardinal,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I bid you a hearty welcome on your first visit to the new Pope in the Vatican. I complied with your wish for a meeting with particular joy, since a long-standing personal acquaintance and bonds of friendship tie me to Your Eminence and to the country which you all represent here. These natural, human relations have now become closer and deeper as a result of my being called to Peter's See.

You too on your side emphasize this special spiritual bond not only by this visit to the present Successor of St Peter, but also by having participated yesterday in the episcopal Ordination of Mons. Squicciarini, one of my close collaborators, who was active in the nunciature in your country for several years.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my esteem for your people, its culture and all the values which Christianity and the Church have given it. Therefore our common wish can only be that the Church may continue to take part in social life in your country as the Gospel "leaven", which gives the life of men and nations, families and social relations, a healthy taste. This is my wish for the Church in Austria, for your people and for your State. I still remember clearly the friendly participation of your President, Dr Kirchschräger, at the Mass of inauguration of the new pontificate.

This wish goes especially to you, Lord Cardinal, as Archbishop of Vienna, and to all your confreres in the episcopal ministry, who are working at home. Once more I would like to express here my thanks for everything that you did, Your Eminence, before the Council and during it, and are still

doing now in the post-conciliar period, in order to maintain relations between different local Churches and between Christians in different countries. I thank you also quite particularly for having accepted the direction of the Secretariat for non-believers, that difficult organism, which is, however, at the same time indispensable for the life of the Church today. My hope is that we will be able to have a great deal more help from your experience and wisdom in this field. There is much more I would say, if I followed my heart. If I stop here, you must be sure, Lord Cardinal, and your esteemed companions, that I like to remember in my prayers your personal concerns, the great concerns of the Church in Austria and of her faithful, and willingly bless you all.

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