



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO RIO DE JANEIRO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
2nd WORLD MEETING FOR FAMILIES
(OCTOBER 2-6, 1997)

FAREWELL CEREMONY ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II 5 October 1997

Mr Vice-President,

In leaving this blessed land of Brazil, a hymn of thanksgiving wells up in my soul to the Most High, who has enabled me to experience intense and unforgettable hours here, with my gaze turned to Christ the Redeemer, who dominates Guanabara Bay, and in the certainty of the motherly protection of Our Lady of Penha, who protects this beloved city from her nearby shrine.

My memory will be impressed for ever with the expressions of enthusiasm and deep piety of this generous people of the Land of the Holy Cross who, together with a multitude of pilgrims from the four corners of the earth, have given a vigorous demonstration of faith in Christ and love for the Successor of Peter. I ask God to protect and bless all the world's nations with abundant graces of spiritual comfort, and safety to guide those initiatives, which everyone expects, for the common good of the great human family and of all its peoples.

My final and grateful greeting is addressed to the President of the Republic, to the Government of the nation and of the State of Rio de Janeiro, and to all the other Brazilian authorities who have showed me so many kindnesses during these days.

I am also grateful to the members of the diplomatic corps, whose diligent work enormously facilitated the participation of their nations in these days of reflection, prayer and commitment for the family.

I address a special thought of fraternal esteem, with deep gratitude, to the Cardinals, to my

Brother Bishops, to the priests and deacons, to the religious and to the organizers of the Congress. They have all helped to enliven these days of the Second World Meeting with Families, filling all who have taken part with consolation and hope — *gaudium et spes!* — for the Christian family and for mission in society.

Be assured that I bear you all in my heart, from which I grant you a Blessing and extend it to all the peoples of Latin America and the world.