



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR ALVARO URIBE VÉLEZ,
PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA***

Thursday, 12 February 2004

Mr President,

I receive you with pleasure on this visit you have wished to pay me, renewing to me the demonstration of affection and esteem for the Pope that is a feature of Colombians. I am delighted with the collaboration that exists between the Church and your Country's Authorities. Colombia is very present in my mind and in my prayers; I pray that its people may journey on towards true social peace without giving in to discouragement, rejecting any form of violence and conceiving new forms of coexistence for the safe, firm progress of justice, fostering unity, brotherhood and respect for each person on a vast scale, reaching to every corner of the Nation.

It is time to lay firm foundations for the moral and material reconstruction of your national community, to rebuild a just, supportive, responsible and peaceful society.

I am grateful to you for your visit and renew my good wishes for the spiritual and material progress of the Colombians, for their coexistence in harmony and freedom, as I ask the Most High to pour out every kind of Blessing on the beloved sons and daughters of Colombia, the families, the Ecclesial Communities, the various public institutions and on those who govern them. Entrusting these hopes to the motherly intercession of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, Queen of Colombia, I impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

* *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English.*

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