



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO VENEZUELA, ECUADOR, PERU, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago)

Tuesday, 5 February 1985

Dear People of Trinidad and Tobago, dear Friends,

1. all too quickly, it seems, the time has come to say goodbye. As I would gladly stay with you longer so as to journey to the other communities, to visit the sick and the old, to meet the youth, to get to know all of you better. But the call of duty summons me away, and I must return to Rome to continue there my pastoral ministry. Before I go, however, I wish to thank you for your most cordial welcome and warm hospitality. I am grateful to His Excellency President Clarke, to the Government, to the security services - all those who have ensured the success and smooth running of these festivities. I extend a special word of thanks to all those who have worked so hard to prepare for my pastoral visit. May the Lord reward you for your generous service.

2. Historians tell us that, when the explorer Christopher Columbus first saw this island's three mountain peaks, he was reminded of the Most Holy Trinity, the mystery of the three persons in one God.

And thus he named the island Trinidad. Nearly five hundred years later, I too have had the joy of coming to these shores. While I readily acknowledge the beauty of your country, what most reminds me of the mystery of the Holy Trinity is not your majestic mountains but your cheerful faces, which reflect the glory of God. At the very beginning of the Bible, in the Book of Genesis, we are told: «God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and

female he created them» (*Gen. 1, 27*). Every human person is made in God's image, from the oldest among us to the unborn child in its mother's womb. Though this image of God can be darkened by sins such as prejudice and hatred, greed and pride, yet it shines forth brightly when the heart is filled with love and good will, when men and women reach out to their neighbours in friendship and service, with generosity and concern. It is these qualities above all which remind us of the mystery of God, of the Most Holy Trinity. May they always flourish in your country. May they be fostered in your homes and be passed on from one generation to the next.

3. I am now leaving you, but part of you will go with me and part of me will stay with you. I shall not forget the fresh enthusiasm of this young nation: the rich variety of your culture, the vigour of your youth, your spirit of openness and genuine hospitality. I am grateful for having been received so warmly by people of all religions, and I especially treasure the joy of having celebrated the Eucharist with my brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church.

I promise you my prayers for your future.

«May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace» (*1 Nu. 6, 24-26*).

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