

Papal Blessing

*To Their Excellencies the Presidents
of the Republic of Ecuador and
Of the Republic of Peru*

I am pleased to be spiritually present at the solemn moment of the signing of the comprehensive and lasting Agreement between Ecuador and Peru, which concludes the peace process begun with the "Itamaraty Peace Declaration" of February 17th, 1995.

I join in with the joy of your noble people, so dear to me, who am united by many common bonds of Christian faith and culture, which today see the closing of a painful chapter in the history of their relations and the opening of lasting prospects of peace.

The Agreement has a high significance, both for the American continent, in the search for ever greater integration, and for the entire international community.

I would like to warmly congratulate the President of Ecuador, Dr. Jamil Mahuad, and the President of Peru, Alberto Fujimori, for this achievement.

I would like to express special gratitude to the Guarantor Countries of the Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Borders of Rio de Janeiro" - Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States - and to their Heads of State, who have been continuously available to assist Parties, and whose active collaboration, coordinated by the Lord President Henrique Cardoso, has allowed for a decisive arrival at the goal.

My thoughts also turn to the Catholic communities in Ecuador and Peru, which, under the guidance of their Pastors, with timely initiatives - such as days of peace prayers - have been able to promote a genuine "pedagogy of peace". I have no doubt that they will continue on this path.

I strongly hope that your sister Nations do not cease to advance, with firm determination and perseverance, along the tracks drawn by this Agreement, entrusting all to the intercession of Saint Marianitas of Quito, of Santa Rosa of Lima and, above all, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, so loved and venerated by the people of both countries.

On your people, Presidents, and your collaborators, especially Ecuador and Peru, as well as on those who are present here, I cordially invoke the Blessing of Almighty God.

From the Vatican, October, 23rd, 1998.

John Paul II