



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr VECDI TÜREL,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF TURKEY TO THE HOLY SEE**

Monday, 4 December 1978

Mr Ambassador,

Today you are inaugurating your mission as Ambassador, which I hope will be a happy and untroubled one for you, fruitful for your country and for the Holy See. The memories of my predecessors, whom you recalled with delicacy, the good wishes you formulated for my Pontificate, echoing those of your President and your Government, are a homage which greatly moved me. Then, too, your remarks stress principles to which the Catholic Church attaches great importance. I thank you heartily for this.

With regard to the Turkish people whom you will now represent at the Holy See, I will willingly take up again the wishes you mentioned yourself: peace at home, among all those living on the soil of the Republic, seeking in its laws protection of their rights and making their original contribution to the national patrimony; peace abroad, with neighbouring countries, however different they may be, and with the international Community as a whole, in a spirit of mutual understanding. The establishment or strengthening of peace must seem all the more urgent to Turkey in that the latter is situated at the meeting point of two continents, at the door of the Middle East, which is still so unstable, at the crossroads of great civilizations. The Holy See expresses the wish that it will not only benefit from peace, the condition of happiness and prosperity, but also be able to make its positive and specific contribution to it itself. The Holy See is thinking in particular of the problem of Cyprus, for which it hopes, with all the peoples of the island, that a just solution will be found as soon as possible.

On its side, the Holy See wishes to serve—according to the criteria which Your Excellency has happily recalled—international understanding and cooperation. It is important, in fact, that relations

of power or of economic interests should not prevail to the detriment of minorities or of the weak, but that justice should always inspire the respect, esteem, and mutual aid to which everyone is entitled. The Catholic Church exerts herself particularly in order that moral and spiritual values may imbue all relations among peoples: it is one aspect of her mission, and she is convinced that it is a question of the happiness and progress of humanity. It is this spirit which animates the Holy See in its bilateral relations or its international activities. For that reason it relies on the understanding and support of men of goodwill, especially in countries which recognize its role by exchanging diplomatic representations with it.

In your country, Christians—connected with the communities and spiritual high-places of the very first centuries of our era—have shown their desire and their capacity to participate, as responsible citizens, in the cultural and social progress of their country. How could they fail to desire harmonious relations with all their Moslem compatriots, in the recognized and real respect of religious freedom, the importance of which Your Excellency has stressed and which is, in fact, when rightly understood, the touchstone of all other freedoms and the sign of real progress and, let us say so, of a modern State? Nor do I doubt that Catholic institutions, of education or charity, receive, from your Government and public opinion, the esteem, protection and encouragements that their service deserves, in the interest of all.

I beg you to thank His Excellency Mr Fahri S. Korutürk for his kind wishes and to assure him of those I willingly express, in prayer; for his person and for the whole people over whose destiny he presides. May the Almighty assist him, may He inspire those who share with him the heavy task of the common good, may He watch over all your compatriots, and may He help you yourself, Mr Ambassador, to carry out your noble mission here!

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