



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA  
TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Friday, 3 December 1982*

*Mr Ambassador,*

With great pleasure I welcome Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Holy See. I sincerely appreciate the kind message of good wishes that you have presented on behalf of His Excellency the President and of Her Excellency the Prime Minister, to whom I would ask you to convey the expression of my heartfelt gratitude.

Your presence here today is tangible proof of what you have called the “bonds of warm friendship and cooperation between the Holy See and India”. Your country, Mr Ambassador, is the cradle of one of the world’s oldest religious traditions, and the meeting-place in mutual acceptance and harmony of many different religious beliefs. Christianity has been preached and practised there for almost two thousand years. Now, as in the past, Christians and members of other religious traditions work hand in hand for the wellbeing and prosperity of the whole nation.

The Holy See considers that the basic and ultimate purpose of all economic and social development, a development which constitutes the activity and the aspiration of every nation, is the service of man: man in his totality, taking into account his material needs and the requirements of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life, and all men of whatever group, race or origin. In this respect the activity of the Holy See is directed to promoting those values that constitute the dignity of every human being and the progress of mankind.

Among these values, one of fundamental importance is that of the respect due to the right of every man and woman to follow the dictates of conscience in the search for truth, especially religious truth, and the right to profess this truth openly and without fear of discrimination.

The religious dimension of man's private and social life is an essential component of his search for fulfilment. It affects man as man. Consequently, the freedom to follow one's religious convictions, and the free flow of ideas contribute to development. Any attempt to serve the cause of human progress at the expense of one or other of man's fundamental freedoms is to invite assured failure and cause immeasurable harm.

It is my hope and prayer that the Republic of India will long shine among the nations of the world for its support of the ideals of religious and civil freedoms that mark its independent character. I ask Almighty God to bestow his abundant favours on you, Mr Ambassador, in the fulfilment of your duties as the worthy representative of India, and upon her leaders and citizens, so that she may progress in prosperity towards the highest objectives of social and international peace.

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\*AAS 75 (1983), p. 150-151.

*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. V, 3 pp. 1507-1508.

*L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1982 pp. 886-887.

*L'Osservatore Romano* 4.12.1982 p.1.

*L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.52 p.15.

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