



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 19 November 1982

Mr Ambassador

It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome Your Excellency as I accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. My satisfaction in extending this greeting derives, in great part, from my firm belief that the cordial diplomatic relations between your country and the Holy See enable us to join in a cooperative spirit of dialogue which, I feel, fosters deeper understanding and a genuine sense of esteem for one another.

I ask you to reciprocate the good wishes of His Excellency President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, whom I assure of my high regard for all the people of Pakistan.

I am grateful for your reference to my visit to your nation in February 1981. While admittedly my stay was brief, it nevertheless provided an excellent opportunity for me to experience the warm hospitality and animated vigour of your people. Having been in their midst, I am all the more conscious of their hopes and aspirations for the betterment of human life. These desires, which reflect the noble yearnings of the heart, must be cherished, aided and encouraged. At the same time, I also noted the deep commitment of various religious groups to the promotion of the material, as well as the spiritual, well-being of your country's citizens. This cooperation among the members of different faiths, founded as it is on a common belief in the love of Almighty God, serves as the basis of a common vision of society.

I am happy that you alluded to the initiatives that have been undertaken to achieve greater

harmony among the nations of the world. Global coexistence cannot be properly maintained without a firm dedication to peace. This is a labour that requires patient perseverance, as each gesture of conciliation and good will calls forth a positive response. Truly this is a challenge befitting man's highest dignity.

Your reference to the plight of the refugees who have taken asylum in your nation reflects an abiding and heartfelt concern of my own. I have followed the efforts which your Government has undertaken in assisting these displaced persons. I commend these actions, which have been prompted by a humanitarian concern for neighbour. I assure you that the Catholic Church will continue, to the extent that she is able, to collaborate with your Government in this work.

At the same time, Catholic institutions of education, health care and social assistance seek not only to advance the welfare of the Catholic population of your country, but intend also to be of benefit to the whole of society. As conscientious citizens who demonstrate concern for their own country, Catholics wish to do their part to promote honesty, integrity and courage of convictions throughout the social environment in which they live and work and pray. In this regard, I am hopeful that the Government will always safeguard religious freedom and ensure that those who labour for the wellbeing of others will not be impeded.

Your Excellency, I trust that your stay here will be an enjoyable and fruitful one. You will indeed receive the cooperation of the Holy See as you fulfil your mission. Upon you and upon the noble nation which you represent I invoke the abundant favours of Almighty God.

*AAS 75 (1983), p.70-72.

Insegnamenti Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol.V, 3 pp. 1335-1336.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1982 pp. 844-845.

L'Osservatore Romano 20.11.1982 pp.1, 2.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English 1983 n.1-2 p.16.

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