



# The Holy See

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## ***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE\****

*Saturday, 11 January 1986*

1. Your Doyen, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Amichta, as your spokesman, has just conveyed your respectful sentiments and good wishes at the beginning of the New year. He has done this with a warmth of expression, freedom of spirit and a precision and depth that we know he possesses and which we appreciate. I thank him wholeheartedly for this address which is to the honour of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See. Beyond being a noble tribute to the Church and a clear observation of world problems, it is a testimony of what you can perceive of the activity or intentions of the Holy See. I am happy to greet each of the Ambassadors here present, before meeting them personally at the end of this audience. I would like to extend a special welcome to those who are here for the first time in this assembly, since they have begun their missions here during the past year. Certain countries have begun or will soon begin their first diplomatic mission to the Holy See: Saint Lucia, Nepal, Zimbabwe, and Liechtenstein. I extend a cordial greeting to the wives of the heads of mission, as well as to all the members of the Embassies and their families. And I express my best wishes to each of the countries which you represent.

2. Peace! The United Nations chose this theme for the current year, 1986. The Holy See rejoices in this and is ready to make its own contribution. We hope that theoretical discussions or slogans used here or there will not be the only results from the choice of this theme. But we hope that humanity will make true progress in its desire for peace, in concrete initiatives for peace, and more profoundly, in a culture of peace, and in education for peace on the level of governments, on that of numerous responsible interventions, on the level of public opinion of peoples, and, I would say, especially on the level of consciences.

Today, in the presence of qualified representatives from so many nations of the world, I would like to centre my reflection on the need for expanding our horizons in our search for peace. I want to encourage peoples to be open to the problems of others, to become more aware of their

interdependence, and to live with a concern for a solidarity without frontiers. I said that in my Message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 1986: "All the nations of the world can fully realize their closely linked destinies only if, together, they pursue peace as a universal value".

Yes, the promotion of a just and lasting peace makes universal demands at least under three headings which will be developed in this allocution. True men of peace realize that peace must be sought for each and every member of the one human family, and they do not want to have any part in local conflicts. Still further, peace demands an awareness of a shared responsibility, and of a more extensive joint collaboration on the level of a region, a continent, the whole world, and beyond blocs or collective self interest groups. Finally, peace must be based especially on justice and respect for the rights of man which is something indispensable for all.

3. The global character of peace does not mean that it is sought only to avoid widespread conflicts. Since 1945, even though there has not been a world war, one can enumerate more than 130 local conflicts, which caused more than thirty million people to be killed or wounded, and which brought about enormous damage, ruined certain countries, and on all sides left serious after effects in consciences, especially among the new generations. Who would dare to take part in this? Peace definitely concerns all countries and all groups of human beings living together; if war affects one or another part of the human family, it wounds the entire family, which cannot resign itself in indifference to the massacre of its brothers. The human family is unique. Certainly, today, with the media, all people are informed and can be sympathetic. But, over and above a distant sympathy, the whole drama of war must arouse, at the same time as prayer for peace, the desire to lend assistance, and to offer one's services to help bring an end to this passion, often blind, so that negotiated solutions may get under way, and while awaiting this, the desire to contribute to the aid of the victims may be aroused. This role belongs eminently to the United Nations, but the United Nations itself has authority only through the adherence and active support of its members. It is here where they must decide at what point all nations must take to heart the lack of peace from which certain peoples are suffering.

4. Allow me to pause here and recall several countries or regions presently involved in conflicts, or regrettable tensions, which your Doyen has already mentioned.

We are always thinking of the dear Lebanese people. Some new signs and recent attempts underline their desire and will for peace, I am united with you in your wish that such a desire might be realized without further delay, with the help of all those who make up the Lebanese society and at the same time guaranteeing the honour, the rights, and the specific traditions of all the different parties and with the loyal support of the friends of Lebanon...

We also think with sadness of the continuing murderous and destructive combats between Iran and Iraq, always hoping that the parties involved will find a reasonable way for a just peace.

For the people of Afghanistan, each one of you knows in what conditions they have been living for the last six years, and moreover, the United Nations has underlined this on several occasions. We follow very attentively the present attempts which aim to resolve the problem in all its complexity. May we not be disappointed in this fragile hope!

The situation of Cambodia, which has been so dramatic, continues to be painful and difficult. The international community is anxious, and rightly so, about finding a solution which will permit the Cambodian people to enjoy a true independence, worthy of their cultural traditions.

South Africa continues to suffer from bloody racial conflicts and tribal opposition. Your Doyen was right when he stressed this scourge. The solution to the problem of apartheid and the beginning of a concrete dialogue between government authorities and representatives of the legitimate aspirations of the people are indispensable means for re establishing justice and concord, and banishing fear which today provokes so much inflexibility. As far as possible, it is necessary to avoid allowing internal conflicts to be exploited by others to the detriment of justice and peace. The international community can and must exercise its influence on different levels in a constructive sense, using the means guaranteed by law.

The situation in Uganda, despite the agreement signed by the government and representatives of the opposition, is still characterized by profound insecurity. With all my heart, I repeat my appeal of 22 December last for peace among the people in Uganda.

Chad is still far from having found an acceptable solution to the crucial problem of unity and national independence. Despite attempts at mediation, the continuation of internal conflicts, with outside interference, is causing the population to live an unending, bloody tragedy, while insufficient economic and social development is keeping the people in misery.

Who could remain uninterested in the outcome of the situation of the Ethiopian peoples for whom internal war and displacement of the population have increased the drama, already too well known, of drought, hunger, and lack of the care needed by them?

Add to all these dramas the Christmas Day episode of the conflict between Burkina Faso and Mali, because of disputes over their borders. This was not without its victims and great damage. We would like to hope that the ceasefire which began will be prolonged and that these two countries will find ground for entente so that they can devote their energies and their meagre resources to be the well being of their peoples.

In Central America, the outlook for bringing about peace remains very uncertain. The parties in conflict have not begun, or do not intend to be interested in opting effectively for dialogue as an appropriate means to determine the solution for their problems, either due to a poor understanding of what a true democracy involves, or because of the intervention of forces and powers that are

foreign to the situation of these countries.

In certain countries of the Latin American continent, we see a cruel escalation of guerrilla warfare, which aims, without discrimination, at institutions and persons. Such a recourse to violence, as well as tactics which consist in striking blindly, in order to kill, to make an impression, or to instil fear, deserve the most rigorous condemnations. Without any doubt, we could cite other examples of conflicts, guerrilla warfare, and tensions. In mentioning some of them, I evidently did not want to accentuate the sombre aspects of the international situation, nor to nourish additional fears, nor aggravate the burden of humiliating sufferings of countries which are very dear to me, but, on the contrary, I wanted to show my solicitude for their peoples, and understanding and encouragement for the positive efforts of their governments, convinced that there is hope for peace everywhere, and that we must oppose a certain internationalism of violence and guerrilla warfare with an internationalism of the will for peace.

Precisely - and this is the second stage of my reflection - peace is a value without frontiers because it can be established in a just and lasting manner only where there is growth in cooperation in a region, on a continent, and among the totality of nations.

5. The growth of cooperation does not mean that diverse initiatives for peace are negligible when taken by certain personalities, by certain interventions, by certain governments; nor must it await a global consensus of all the parties involved to map out the way for peace. On the contrary, the solution of situations that are apparently inextricable, or of conflicts and latent tensions, often comes from courageous personal initiatives, bold and prophetic, which break the sterile cycle of violence and hatred, and really change the situation by beginning dialogue and negotiation in a spirit of understanding and in respecting the honour of each partner. Persons who act in this way merit to be called, in the evangelical sense of the term, "peace makers". The originality of their action does not come from a position of force, but from a realistic, human conception of peace; it may be inspired by love, as Mahatma Gandhi said.

However, peace would unfortunately remain fragile and precarious if it were not sought by all the partners of the region, taking into account the rights and duties of each one; or if the other peoples of the earth were not interested and were not concerned about encouraging and consolidating this peace; or if the great powers continued to interfere and even oppose a just peace, depending on whether it suited their interests.

So, peace takes on a universal dimension, not only because various spheres of interdependence exist among peoples, on the political and economic level, but also by virtue of a higher and larger consideration of the common destiny of the peoples who make up the human family. It is difficult to see how most of the situations of which we have spoken could find a just solution only in bilateral agreements or in arrangements concluded solely with those directly concerned in the conflict. There would then be a great risk of arriving at an impasse or even at injustices. On the contrary, a

more extensive entente and disinterested mediation or agreement with other powers can offer better guarantees.

6 The extended solidarity of which we have been speaking is also verified on the level of all the countries which have many points in common due to neighbouring geographical positions, the proximity of their cultures, the convergence of their interests, and shared responsibilities for human and physical realities of a wider scope than states or nations. Continental solidarity is today a necessary step towards universal solidarity.

Such is the case, among others, of the Latin American continent. At Santo Domingo, on 12 October 1984, before my brothers of CELAM, I inaugurated the novena of years preparatory to the fifth centenary of evangelization. There I invited the countries concerned to recognize each other in the unity of one large Latin American family, free and prosperous, and founded on a common religious and cultural substratum. This can be grounded upon a natural dynamism marked by the Gospel to overcome together the injustices and self-interests of certain privileged parties, to thwart the seduction of certain ideologies and to reject the ways of violence, to avoid rivalries between nations, and the interference of foreign powers, in order to grow in respect for the identity of ethnic groups and for the good of all.

Likewise, as I said to the civil authorities of Cameroon and to members of the Diplomatic Corps at Yaounde on 12 August last, the African Continent must be respected and helped in achieving a certain number of common objectives to which your Doyen has given special attention: true independence, an economic autonomy rightly understood, the elimination of fratricidal wars and the setting aside of ethnic and regional rivalry, the struggle against drought and hunger, respect for man, whatever his race, and the development of human and spiritual values which are proper to the African nations.

I again had occasion to speak at a Symposium of the Europe; bishops on 11 October last of the common roots of their continent the Christian faith, and also of the necessity of dispelling the confusion that Europe permitted to extend over the metaphysical certitudes or ethical standards which had constituted its strength, so as to continue to bring to the world the witness of values that make up the finer part of the European heritage. That is a service which requires a certain unity, an effective solidarity, all the more difficult to realize the more history has accentuated the particular character of each culture and tradition. One can only rejoice to see this solidarity progressing. In Western Europe, the economic community, as of now, comprises twelve countries which on this point are committed to opening their frontiers. At Brussels, on 20 May last, at the headquarters of the Institutions of the European Communities, I praised the founders for not having resigned themselves to the breaking up of Western Europe. But there remains the great rupture which separates the peoples of the East and the West. Whatever may be the historical, political or ideological events that caused this to a great extent independently of the will of the peoples involved it remains "unacceptable for a conscience formed by human and Christian ideals

which presided over the formation of the continent", as I said to the European bishops. We continue to hope that the Helsinki process, which will have an important meeting in Vienna this year, will permit a further development of the spirit of mutual solidarity, free and fruitful communication of ideas and of persons, and cooperation between States. On the level of Christian communities, we intend to guard well and to foster fraternal bonds between the East and the West following in the path of Saints Benedict, Cyril and Methodius.

Our consideration obviously extends also to the great Asiatic continent where diversity is undoubtedly more accentuated and situations more complex, to the extent that this is a question of very vast countries, with very distinct antique traditions, and very dense populations. The human problems that these countries have to resolve are equally immense and the Church views their efforts with sympathy had occasion to express this while visiting Japan, and when I stopped in Thailand.

And I am happy that I shall soon be welcomed in India

Finally, I think of the vast world of Oceania, where I shall visit Australia and New Zealand this year.

Yes, each continent has its problems, its destiny, and its responsibilities, in regard to itself and to the whole human family World peace presupposes that consistency be maintained on each of these levels, respecting the personality of each people and its responsible participation

In this sense, I wish that regional or continental political organizations would help this process of cooperation and peace. I am thinking especially of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

7. The rupture of which I spoke between Eastern and Western Europe is spread over much of the continent. On the level of political economic and ideological systems, it has profoundly characterized these last forty years, and it continues to polarize attention on two blocs, with the threat of wars and a ruinous and dangerous race towards an arms build up. A hope arises each time that tension relaxes that dialogue will be resumed, that confidence will be manifested, and that a balanced and controlled process of general disarmament will be decided upon (cf. my Message to the UN, 14 October 1985). The Geneva Meeting of November last between the highest representatives of the United States of America and the Soviet Union, was an interesting step on the necessary path of dialogue. The mutual exchange of wishes directly to the people themselves at the beginning of this year contributes a certain note of humanity and openness. But these new relations will bring peace only if, beyond symbolic gestures, they are translated into a real willingness for disarmament, without continuing to cover up situations of injustice by other means. As your Doyen well said, the world waits with impatience for the fruits of these meetings.

In any event, our contemporary history should not be confined to the East West polarization.

A certain number of countries - and sometimes great countries - have shown this in choosing the way of non alignment, even though in different degrees and according to quite different forms. A difficult position, which does not prevent opportune reconciliation and even agreements, and which must not neglect solidarity on essential human problems, but which can also manifest a way of serving peace in the perspective of reaching beyond the opposition of the blocs. Above all, as I do not cease to say, North South relations should concern the partners of the human family as much as relations between East and West. There it is a question of taking part together, no longer in unrestrained competition in the arms race, but of meeting the essential needs of an immense portion of humanity. That is what I mean when, in my Message of 1 January 1986, I speak of peace as "a value with no frontiers, North South, East West"

8. Underdevelopment is, in fact, an ever increasing danger for world peace. Solidarity among all nations must always be more manifest there. Certainly, no country today is spared a certain economic crisis, which brings with it the social scourge of unemployment. But one must face squarely the primary needs of countries that have no solution at present for the daily problems of nutrition and health of their children; one must understand their difficulties for a better instruction of youth with a view to the future, to organize better their economic and social structures, with respect for the authentic values of their traditions. Some efforts along the lines of bilateral or multilateral cooperation are being pursued; some international moves tried to make progress in North South relations in the framework of UNCTAD or of the Convention of Lomé. It is true that the necessity of a new international economic order becomes more and more obvious wherein man will be the real measure of the economy, as I hoped in the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. But are not the reforms too slow or too timid to reduce the socio economic gap which is developing?

In regard to this, the problem of the global indebtedness of the Third World and of the relationships of dependence that this has created is a matter of concern to all men of good will, as Mr. Amichia has emphasized. Beyond economic and monetary aspects, it has become a problem of cooperation and of an economic ethic. It is necessary at any cost to escape from inextricable situations and humiliating pressures. There, as elsewhere, justice and the interest of all require that on the world level, the situation should be seen in its global aspect and in all its dimensions (cf. Message to the UN of 14 October 1985).

9. Peace is not only the fruit of an arrangement, a negotiation, or a point cooperation which is still larger. More profoundly, it is a universal value, because it must everywhere be based on justice and identical respect for the rights of man which are obligatory on all. The two demands go together: justice and peace. As Pius XII stated it: *Opus justitiae pax*, peace is the fruit of justice".

Every injustice puts peace in danger. It is a cause or a potential factor of conflicts. It is true in the interior of a country, when an elite formed by the wealthy or the powerful exploit other citizens. It is true between countries, when under new and subtle forms, there is a socioeconomic exploitation of one country by another, and likewise, when one country imposes its political system on another.

But man does not live by bread alone. It is a serious matter to endanger the dignity of man, his fundamental rights, his freedom of political opinion, his inalienable freedom of conscience, his freedom to express his faith while respecting the convictions of others. The enforced massive displacements of populations, the limits placed on the possibilities of disinterested help, torture, imprisonment and summary executions without the guarantees of justice, arbitrary restrictions imposed for motives of racism or apartheid, religious vexation and persecution, even carried out in secret, are so many inadmissible outrages to the ethical imperatives which are binding on every conscience to guarantee the dignity of man and to assure true peace among men. Such rights are not to be defined, bestowed or limited by a State. They transcend every power. Certainly the rights of the human person are inseparable from his duty to respect the rights of others and to cooperate for the common good. But the violation of fundamental human rights can never become a means for political goals. A regime which stifles these rights cannot pretend to be working for peace; a detente which would wish to cover up such abuses is not a true detente. Man must be sure of man and nations sure of nations (cf. Homily of 1 January 1986). There is today in our world a large number of prisoners for reasons which are solely matters of conscience. It is to be hoped that an international juridical document of the United Nations will remedy such abuses.

10. Among the obstacles to peace which I have just spoken of, there is one to which our present world is sadly exposed and which creates a climate of insecurity: terrorism within a country or international terrorism. We are faced with a dreadful network of people who do not hesitate to kill a great number of innocent victims, and that often occurs in countries which are foreign to them, and not involved in their problems, in order to disseminate panic and draw attention to their cause. Our reprobation cannot but be absolute and unanimous. We must condemn just as much the barbaric process of taking hostages for purposes of blackmail. This is a question of crimes against humanity. Certainly, situations exist where a just solution has been refused over a long period of time. Then there are feelings of frustration, hatred, and temptations to vengeance to which we must remain very attentive. But the reasoning or rather the behaviour ruled by passion is totally out of place when one uses means of injustice or the massacre of innocents to plead a cause; and when, moreover, they are prepared and carried out cold bloodedly, with the complicity of certain movements and the help of certain powers of the State. The UN must not tolerate that member States reject the principles and rules contained in its Charter by compromising themselves with terrorism. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is, first of all, a fundamental unchangeable principle of religion: those who honour God must be in the first rank of those who fight against all forms of terrorism. I expressed that in the prayer that ended my address to young Muslims, at Casablanca: "O God, do not permit us to invoke your name to justify human disorders" (19 August 1985).

Reprisals which also strike indiscriminately at the innocent and which continue the spiral of violence, merit, in our view, the same reprobation; they are illusory solutions and prevent the moral isolation of the terrorists.



Sporadic terrorism which rightly arouses horror in upright consciences (cf. Angelus of 29 December 1985), should not make us forget another form of systematic terrorism, almost institutionalized, which is based on a secret police system, and utterly destroys the freedom and elementary rights of millions of individuals, "guilty" of not bringing their thought into line with the triumphant ideology, and generally unable to attract the attention and support of international public opinion.

Dialogue and negotiation are finally the arm of the strong, as your Doyen expressed it. Moreover, while leading a concerted and firm action to ban terrorism from the human race, it is necessary, by negotiation, to seek, before it is too late, to get rid of everything, as far as possible, that would hinder the satisfying of the just aspirations of peoples.

In particular, do we not find here the noose of injustice that must be untied to arrive at a just and equitable solution of the entire question of the Middle East? One continues to build up hypotheses of negotiations, but one never arrives at the decisive point of truly recognizing the rights of all the interested peoples.

In my message to the United Nations on 14 October 1985, I said: "By its nature and vocation your organization is the world forum where problems should be examined in the light of truth and justice, while renouncing narrow egoisms and threats of recourse to force". Messrs. Ambassadors, your noble missions converge on this goal; despite the general bilateral character of the relations that you have to maintain, you are asked to have the same openness to the universal, to truth and justice.

11. In ending this discourse on the universal requirements of peace, do I need to make more precise the contribution that the Church wants to bring to peace in carrying out its specific mission, its spiritual mission? This enhances the importance of the ethical imperatives about which we have spoken, and which guarantee to the utmost the accomplishment of humanitarian and political tasks. You are at the Holy See to observe constantly its discourse and initiatives. Certainly, in history, the contribution of certain Christians, of certain "Christian nations" to peace was not always at the high level of the message of which they were the bearers. The universal vision was sometimes restricted by particular interests and egoisms. But the Christian message presented by the Church has not ceased to bring light and strength to establish a just peace.

Permit me to recall some doctrinal documents which are essential stakes along the path to peace. In the course of the last decades, the Church, strengthened by experience and animated by her solicitude for the human person, presented a teaching which is a real "education for peace". In his great messages of peace in a world ruined by war, Pius XII opened the perspectives for a solid construction of peace. John XXIII, in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (addressed to all men of good will), based a peaceful life of men together on the central place that the human person occupies in the order willed by God, that is to say, on the dignity of the person. The rights and duties of the

person correspond to the rights and duties of the community. "There is an immense task incumbent on all men of good will, namely the task of restoring the relations of the human family in truth, in justice, in love, and in freedom: the relations between individual human beings; between political communities themselves; between individuals, families, intermediate associations and political communities on the one hand and the world community on the other hand" (n. 163).

Paul VI, particularly in the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, developed the analysis begun by his predecessor on the disorders which reign in the world because truth, justice, love, and liberty are violated. He draws attention to the situations which prevent or wreck the integral promotion of man and the joint development of peoples, keeping humanity in a state of division and conflict. Paul VI presented the development of persons and of peoples as "the new name for peace" (n. 87).

In the same perspective, Vatican Council II, in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* said: "Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called 'an enterprise of justice'... 'and is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly'" (n. 78).

For my part, in the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, I emphasized the grandeur, dignity, and value which are proper to the human person. Man is "the path of the Church, the path of its life and its daily experience, its mission, and its labour". That is why the Church is attentive to the "situation of man" and to all that is contrary to the effort aimed at giving man "a human life which is always more human" (cf. n. 14; cf. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, n. 21).

12. In practice, the Church - that is to say the Holy See and local Churches in communion with it - are willingly committed to encourage all true dialogues for peace, all forms of sincere negotiation and loyal cooperation. She wishes to work so that there will be an end to passions that blind one's view, and in order to rise above frontiers, dissolve hatred, and draw men near to one another; to help them and to bring them hope in the very heart of their trials in the conflicts she cannot prevent. Recently, I entrusted to Cardinal Etchegaray the mission of visiting the Iraqi prisoners in Iran, and then the Iranian prisoners in Iraq. In the name of the whole Church, I wanted to bear witness that the Holy See never abandons hope that there will be found a political solution to usher in an era of peace. The Church also wants to lend its voice to the poor, to the abandoned victims of war, to the victims of torture, and to displaced persons. Above all, the Church wishes to educate consciences to an openness to others, to respect for others, to a tolerance which goes hand in hand with the search for truth, and to solidarity (cf. Discourse at Casablanca, 19 August 1985). Besides, she knows that the root of evil, of reliance on self alone, of hardness, violence, and hate, is in the heart of man; to cure it, she proposes the salvific remedies of Christ.

In this year when, we hope, all peoples will devote their attention and their efforts to the theme of peace chosen by the UN, the Church has a particular contribution to propose. She wishes to invite

men, her Catholic sons, but also all Christians and all believers who would like to do so, to a great movement of prayer for peace. This solidarity in prayer to the Most High which is made up of confident supplication, sacrifice and commitment of one's conscience, will be very efficacious in obtaining from God the inestimable gift of peace.

13. Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for the attention and good will that you show and will continue to show for the Holy See's work for peace. I assure you of the Holy See's attention and good will for all the efforts of your governments in the cause of peace.

We all hope that wherever there are still raging wars, guerrilla warfare, threats or situations of injustice, steps towards peace will at last be taken, for the benefit of the populations concerned. We would like strong hope to be given to populations that have been brought the humiliation, to those living in their own lands and to those who are deprived of, or driven from their land. We hope that attempts towards peace which are taking form in several places on the earth at this beginning of the New Year will be successful and will have sufficient guarantees.

But I also offer my wishes for peace to each one of you, and to your families. I have already presented them to the Lord in my prayer. I implore his blessings and protection on each one of you. Peace on earth to men whom the Lord loves, and to men of good will.

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