



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II
A S.E. IL SIGNOR JUAN CARLOS ENRIQUE KATZENSTEIN,
NUOVO AMBASCIATORE DELL'ARGENTINA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE****

Giovedì, 30 novembre 1989

Mr. Ambassador,

I am pleased to extend to you my cordial welcome today as you present your Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Argentina to the Holy See. It is a happy circumstance, for it allows me to note once again the sentiments of attachment that the people of your noble country have for the Successor of Peter, and it gives me likewise the possibility of expressing anew the sincere love that I have for all Argentinians.

I am very grateful for your kind words and particularly for the respectful greetings which the President, Dr Carlos Saul Menem, has wished to convey to me through your good offices. I would ask you kindly to convey to him my own greetings, together with my best wishes for peace and prosperity.

You have referred, Mr Ambassador, to the close ties that have existed, and continue to exist, between the Holy See and the Republic of Argentina, to my two pastoral visits to your country, and to the role of mediation - due also to my collaborators, and in the first place to the late Cardinal Antonio Samoré - that rendered possible, thanks to a frank and constructive dialogue. The solution of the dispute between those two sister nations in the Southern hemisphere, Argentina and Chile. For the signing of that Treaty of Peace and Friendship I give fervent thanks to the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:5) and to his Most Holy Mother, the Queen of Peace, who is venerated so filially on both sides of the Andes.

In your respectful words you also mentioned the contribution this Apostolic See has made towards a better understanding among peoples, so as to unite them in an international community where justice and equity may reign, and where all citizens may be respected. It is our continuing wish to pursue this objective, so that the human family may be increasingly inspired by those principles which render the relationship between nations more fruitful, solidary and fraternal, and which enhance the dignity of the human person, ever open to transcendent values.

A more perfect temporal order will only be achieved if material progress goes hand in hand with spiritual betterment (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 4). That is why, on contemplating the panorama of the Latin American continent and especially Argentina, I earnestly pray that that nation, true to its own values and with the collaboration of all social classes, may overcome the difficulties of the present hour.

It is true that, to achieve certain goals of progress and development, what is needed is, as I have noted in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, an attitude of solidarity, both nationally and internationally. The interdependence that characterizes and determines today the lives of individuals and of peoples should be a moral premise leading to «The firm and persevering option for the common good» (n. 38), which always avoids the temptation of dominating over the weakest. In this sense, and as far as the economy is concerned, it is necessary to promote initiatives at a regional and international level, which may be directed, following, principles of justice, equity and solidarity, towards the gradual solution of the problem of the external debt which greatly hinders the legitimate desire for progress in so many countries, not excluding those in Latin America.

To consolidate the efforts being made to surmount a period of no slight economic and social difficulties, and so achieve greater progress, Argentina can count not only on the rich resources of its land and people, but also on some great values: the Christian principles which have become a natural part of its identity, inspiring its virtues and shaping its very institutions. This gives solid grounds for hope, and it should also be an incentive to commit oneself anew, with decision and breadth of vision, to the common good, laying egoism aside and overcoming the antagonism and the wounds of the past which hamper social unity and the attainment of a better future for all Argentinians.

I wish to assure you, Mr Ambassador, of the resolute determination of the Church in Argentina to collaborate, within the bounds of her own mission and with due respect for pluralism, in promoting all those initiatives that serve the cause of man as a citizen and as a child of God. The Holy See for its part will spare no effort to promote a better understanding, particularly among the peoples of Latin America, who are so united by strong historical, cultural and religious ties. It will promote those moral and spiritual values which strengthen effective solidarity and eliminate the barriers which make understanding and dialogue so difficult at an international level.

Before concluding this meeting, I wish to assure you, Mr. Ambassador, of my esteem and support, together with my best wishes that the important mission you are beginning today may be rich in fruits and success.

I ask you once again to convey any hopes and sentiments to the Government and the other authorities of your country, and I invoke upon you, the members of your family, your collaborators, and all the beloved people of the noble nation of Argentina the blessings of the Most High.

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