



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 13 January 1994*

Your Excellencies,

In accepting the Letters accrediting you as the Ambassadors of your respective countries to the Holy See, I express my deep esteem for the peoples you represent and I send respectful greetings to your Heads of State. Coming as you do from the continents of Africa, America, Asia and Oceania, your presence here gives visible expression to the great diversity of the human family and also reflects the universal character of the diplomatic community attached to the Holy See.

As diplomats, you serve the interests of your nations by patiently exploring the avenues of understanding and dialogue which constitute the only sure and lasting means of promoting justice and peace in human affairs. At the same time, you support those juridical institutions which aim to consolidate and increase political and social cooperation between nations and to establish closer bonds of solidarity among peoples.

Unhappily, however, we are living in a world torn by painful conflicts, in which repeated calls to dialogue and negotiation are too often ignored, and the sufferings of innocent victims are daily multiplied. The need for peace and for solidarity leading to real development is felt in a particular way by the younger countries, especially in the southern hemisphere. They are seeking models of progress which will enable them to live in dignity, emancipated from the slavery of poverty, hunger and debt. They wish to build a future of freedom and self-determination in accordance with their own cultural and religious traditions. The need for peace is likewise felt by the more developed societies of East and West, as they look for a renewal of the moral and spiritual values necessary for just and peaceful relations at every level of their coexistence.

By its presence in the international community, the Holy See seeks, in a way consonant with the Church's specific nature and mission, to serve humanity precisely by promoting this much-needed culture of cooperation and solidarity, based on respect for the truths of the moral order, concern for authentic human development and the defence of human dignity. Likewise, the members of the Church, inspired by the message of the Gospel, wish to serve the common good by the educational, charitable and social works whereby they express their faith in Christ. They ask for and rightly expect recognition of their freedom to take a full part in the life of their respective countries, and to bring to the critical issues facing society the perspective of their Christian faith.

The Holy See therefore looks to you as partners in the service of the human family. *The Church encourages you in your noble work as artisans of peace!* She knows that peace is a gift of Almighty God which takes root not only in institutions and structures but most importantly in the depths of the human heart. For this reason, she is convinced that "the goal of peace, so desired by everyone, will be achieved through the putting into effect of social and international justice, but also through the practice of the virtues which favour togetherness, and which teach us to live in unity, so as to build in unity, by giving and receiving, a new society and a new world" (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 39).

Your Excellencies, I offer you my best wishes as you begin your mission. Upon yourselves and the peoples which you represent I cordially invoke an abundance of divine blessings.

* *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XVII, 1 p.80-82.

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