



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION
OF THE CREDENTIALS***

Thursday, 25 May 2000

Your Excellencies,

1. I am pleased to welcome you today and to receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries: New Zealand, Kuwait, the Republic of the Congo and Ghana. Your presence gives me the opportunity to convey my cordial greetings to your nations' authorities and to all your fellow citizens, and to tell them once again of my esteem and friendship. I am deeply grateful for the cordial messages you have brought me from your respective heads of State. Please return my respectful greetings to them and my warm wishes for them personally and for their lofty mission of service to all their compatriots.

2. You know the spiritual importance of the Jubilee Year for the Church, which has wanted at the same time to make a pressing appeal to the international community at the turn of the millennium, so that each nation and each people will be helped in its development, especially on the African continent, whose numerous peoples are harshly tried by the conflicts that tragically affect the civilian populations. The change of century, in fact, is a particularly appropriate occasion for envisaging further progress on the question of the debt of the poorest countries, in order to help them take an active part in international life. This step is a hand held out to nations living below the poverty line, so that they can renew their hope for a better future; it must be accompanied by deep reflection in order to take a new look at the organization of the world economy, which excessively burdens certain countries, to the detriment of those that produce raw materials and to the advantage of the wealthiest nations.

3. In order to restore a just and equitable balance, wealthy countries must combine the cancellation of the debt with human and material support, so that leaders will be trained who can take charge of their countries' future destinies in a disinterested way and make these countries more autonomous and less directly dependent on the more developed countries, by harmonizing their economies with their own specific culture. Creating the appropriate local infrastructures and measures for re-establishing the national economies will give the indigenous peoples the means to be the true protagonists in building their societies and full partners in international relations. Here we have an essential element for the construction of a fraternal society, to which each people can make its own contribution. This is also the way to establish peace and respect for human rights, which call for the recognition of each individual, along with his culture and spirituality, and for consideration to be given to each people's desire for a land of their own and a share in the riches of creation.

4. You know

of the Holy See's concern and commitment to the recognition of peoples and ever greater understanding among nations. More than ever, our contemporaries long for peace and brotherhood. The various World Youth Days, especially the one to be held this August, show that young people are calling on us to do all we can to make these aspirations a reality. As diplomats, I am certain that you are particularly sensitive to this request of young people, whom we cannot disappoint and for whom we must prepare a world where they will be able to lead their own personal, family and social life, so that they will find joy and happiness in the responsibilities they will be able to exercise.⁵ As you begin your mission, allow me to offer you my most cordial wishes. Upon you, your families, those who work with you and the nations you represent, I pray for an abundance of divine blessings, asking the Almighty to shower his gifts on each of you.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n. 22 p.4. © Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana*

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