



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Monday, 29 April 2002

Mr Ambassador,

Welcome to the Vatican, where I have the pleasure to receive you for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Angola to the Holy See. I am grateful for your kind words, and, in particular, for the greeting you bring to me from President José Eduardo dos Santos and from the Angolan Government. Kindly present in turn my esteem to the President and a special prayer to the Lord to sustain his efforts at this time when concrete hopes of peace are at last in sight.

In fact, I was very glad to hear you confirm that Angola has resumed the work of establishing nation wide harmony. I join in the nation's general joy at seeing its leaders opt for peace. May God help you to implement the agreements already reached allowing you to solve the nation's problems within the appropriate democratic institutions. As you begin to emerge from the long, devastating years of civil war which condition your life, your citizens have to support your work with a love of country that obliges them to serve the common good and to safeguard fraternity among all the sons and daughters of Angola. I ardently hope that thanks to a living sense of solidarity and common life, values that are an inherent part of African culture, the obstacles and resistance to the quest for the common good may be rapidly overcome and a peaceful and solidary national life may be established in which hostilities are put aside, the convictions of each person respected, and understanding among the various socio-political sectors is strengthened by the wise use of differences for the enrichment of the nation.

It is therefore important that public leaders do their utmost to encourage the building of a better future for their fellow countrymen, especially for the neediest. By winning their confidence in this

way, it will prove easier to respond to the people's just aspirations for a life corresponding to their needs. Indeed, "four successive decades troubled by the clash of weapons", as you rightly mentioned, Your Excellency, have given rise to enormous social imbalances. The way out of this situation requires the entire people to put into practice the concepts of brotherhood and cooperation for the establishment of justice, preventing the rich from wasting while they live alongside the poor who lack the basic necessities of life.

Here justice and solidarity come into play, social virtues that must guide the economic and political decisions of national and international organizations, to promote policies that deal with the problem of the distribution and sharing of available resources. Increasing solidarity is precisely one of the main goals of the Holy See's work in international diplomacy. Through its activity, it strives to foster reciprocal cooperation between sovereign States, a cooperation that aims at integral human development and the safeguarding of human dignity (cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 76). Therefore, Mr Ambassador, I can only wish every success to the Conference of Doadores that your government wants to organize for the "resurrection" of Angola! It is time that the true friends of the Angolan people come together, to help them create decent living conditions and effective security for all.

In your address, you expressed the hope of seeing the Church involved in this phase, the establishment of lasting peace and reconciliation among all Angolans. The tireless and generous action of the Church of Angola in furthering justice and peace is well known to all. I can assure you that the Catholic faithful and their pastors will continue to collaborate in the future with those who have the true good of the country at heart in the struggle for human dignity and the material and spiritual development of all. "The Church walks and lives intimately bound in a real sense to their history" (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 68), working to build a prosperous and just society, according to the means she has available. Through her educational institutions, she helps set people free from that serious form of poverty, the lack of cultural and religious formation. Through her health-care institutions, she encourages respect for human life and witnesses to God's concern for those who are suffering. Like other institutions for social assistance and advancement, she makes a contribution to the development of the nation and the progress of justice.

The Church enfolds in her caring embrace every man and the whole of man, giving a central place to his spiritual and religious dimension, opening the individual and society to the absolute of God. That is why proclaiming Christ involves revealing to people his inalienable dignity which is rooted in God himself, who created the human being in his image and likeness (Gn 1,26). Your accreditation to the Holy See testifies to the importance that your people attributes to the spiritual values and to the Gospel message. I am certain that your task, which officially begins today, will strengthen the bonds of collaboration and friendship between your country and the Apostolic See for the benefit of all Angolans.

Mr Ambassador,

At the time when your mission to the Holy See is beginning, I express the hope that you may fulfil it to your great satisfaction and profit. Rest assured that you will always find concern and cordial understanding here among my collaborators. I invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, Your Excellency, and upon your family, your direct collaborators, the Angolan people and its leaders.

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