



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO BOGOTA

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ACCREDITED TO COLOMBIA*

Friday, 23 August 1968

It is always a pleasure for Us, in the course of the journeys which Providence permits Us to undertake, to meet the distinguished audience made up of members of the accredited Diplomatic Corps in the countries to which We go.

In your persons, Gentlemen, We are paying honor to the Heads of State who have given you your mandate, and the nations which you represent and whose diversity calls up before Our eyes innumerable peoples of the old and the new world. This is a vision which is truly universal, truly «catholic», in the etymological sense of the term, and which seems to Us, to the present case, to be singularly in accord with the circumstances which brings us together. What is it, in fact, which has brought Us to Bogota? You know it, it is above all the celebration of a Eucharistic Congress. Now, what is the Eucharist, in the eyes of Christians. If not a mysterious and divine Presence which attracts them and brings them together, a powerful bond of love, an inexhaustible source of unity? Unity which seems, at first sight, to concern only believers, but which, in reality, radiates and diffuses its force of attraction well beyond the religious sphere and reveals itself to be salutary for all of society.

The great spectacle which we have before our eyes in those days is a proof of it. What We see – you, as well as We, are witnesses of it, and particularly qualified witnesses – is a wonderful and stirring spectacle of union between the most diversified peoples. All the continents, We think, are represented here, all the races, all the social classes. Barriers fall, differences are effaced, all are recognized as sons of the same God, brothers of the same Christ, who redeemed the whole world, and who continues, under the veils of the Eucharistic Mystery, His great work of bringing all humanity together in a total and perfect brotherhood (cf *John* 11, 52).

A celebration of this kind seems to Us to admit of, among other characteristic notes, a very particular reference to your persons and to your mission. You, Gentlemen, in virtue of the charge incumbent upon you, are precisely those who work – on the temporal plane which is yours – for unity among peoples. You are specialists in negotiations with a view to understanding, the technicians of good relations, of the gathering of men and nations into a happy and fruitful collaboration.

A difficult task, as daily experience teaches Us. A task which must be continued without growing weary, without ever giving up hope for man and for that which he is able to accomplish with the grace of God. A task which assumes, in our world of today, no longer one, but two aspects equally important, complementary, and conditioned by each other, in some way: peace and development.

In each of these respects, the Catholic Church works with you, on the spiritual plane which is hers. We will not recall to you the recent initiatives of the Holy See in favor of peace; world opinion has responded to them widely enough. Rather We say to you that apart from these more evident interventions, it is, in fact, by all her teaching, by all her educational and pastoral undertakings, that the Church works for peace. She aims at turning the heart of man – from which both good and evil can come forth (cf *Matt* 15, 19) – at turning the heart of man towards the good, and consequently towards peace, man's peace with God, peace with himself, peace with his own. She offers to all a new birth in Christ (cf. *I Cor* 6, 11. *1 Pet.* 1.3), and in this way renders them capable of overcoming their evil instincts and of becoming the «meek» and the «peaceful» proclaimed as blessed by the Gospel. The Church intends in this way to give a very useful service – although this is not her only nor her principal aim – to the cause of peace. It is more than evident, in fact, that without this interior conversion of souls, the progress of humanity towards unity and peace will always be unsteady and uncertain.

With regard to the development of peoples, which has very rightly been called, in a formula which We have made Our own, the «new name for peace», the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* and the establishment of the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax* show clearly enough what place it holds in the present preoccupations of the Holy See. Here, in Latin America, this word resounds like a cry of alarm, with a suppliant and almost agonizing accent. And all over the world, less favored peoples feel, with a keenness never before reached up to our day, that they have the right to have access to full development. And since none of them can arrive at this goal by themselves, their supplication re-echoes like a great and powerful appeal to international and world-wide solidarity.

It is up to us, Gentlemen, to listen to this appeal and to make haste to reply to it. We readily say to you: let us help one another reciprocally. You, delegates of the temporal power, We, representing the spiritual power, let us collaborate, in this sphere, in the same task. The purpose is identical, the means are different. From their harmonization must spring forth without delay that the world awaits.

In confidence, Gentlemen, We reveal to you these desires and these hopes. And from the heart
We call down upon you, upon your families and your Countries, an abundance of divine blessings.

*ORa n.23 p.9.

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