



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI TO THE EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA*

Monday, 9 November 1970

Your Majesty,

We thank you heartily for the noble and lofty words you have just addressed to Us. If Your Majesty is pleased to be here, rest assured that We are very happy to welcome you in Our home. We have been expecting you for a long time. When we met in Geneva last year, We personally expressed to you Our sincere hope of seeing you here.

Your presence is indeed significant in many respects. Ethiopia has ancient and very special ties with the Holy See. The foundation of the monastery and the Church of St. Stephen of the Abyssinians near the Vatican Basilica goes far back in the annals of Christian Rome. Because of its fidelity to a long tradition, Ethiopia is the only nation in the world that has an ecclesiastical college in the territory of Vatican City.

It was the wish of Pius XI that, at the time of the establishment as an independent State of the small territory demarcated by the Lateran Treaty, this community should have on the Vatican hill a modern college worthy of your country: the present Ethiopian College.

Pius XII was pleased to welcome a permanent representative of your country to the Holy See. He sent a representative to Addis Ababa in 1955 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Your Majesty's Coronation. Recently, the Representative of Ethiopia to the Holy See became an Ambassador, while the Apostolic Internunciature in Addis Ababa was elevated to the rank of a Nunciature.

This is sufficient to reveal the long and solid ties that unite your country with the Holy See. But We would fall short of the truth were We to omit here explicit mention of what Your Majesty has done

and continues to do on behalf of the Catholic Church and its institutions. We know in particular the generosity and the interest You showed in the University of Asmara and in so many other Catholic foundations of a religious or educational nature. This active benevolence of Your Majesty calls for sentiments of lively gratitude on Our part, and We are therefore happy to express this gratitude to you here and now. Such active benevolence is for Us a precious guarantee of an ever more widespread cordiality between the civil Authority and the Catholic Hierarchy in Ethiopia. For the Catholics in Ethiopia, it is also an assurance that the solution to questions they hold dear will eventually be solved, especially that of rapprochement with the Ethiopian Church.

Your Majesty's solicitude goes far beyond the frontiers of your country. It is joined to our own on a matter that interests all mankind today in a dramatic way: the great cause of peace among nations and the speedy advance of development in countries of the Third World. Since the opportunity presents itself, may We be permitted to render homage here publicly to the contribution made by Your Majesty time and again to this twofold cause. Your Majesty has demonstrated your sensitivity to the role of moral and spiritual values in a world where brute force sometimes threatens to destroy everything.

May God bless the efforts of Your Majesty in this domain, and on the 40th anniversary of your coronation, may He grant you the opportunity to use your energies for a long time yet in the service of your country which, respecting the rights of man and fostering understanding among its peoples, will find the way that leads to progress and tranquility. This is Our sincere wish. We thank Your Majesty again for your visit which honours Us. We invoke upon you, your Imperial family, the religious and civil Authorities of your country and the dear Ethiopian nation, the most abundant Divine Blessings.

*ORa n.47 p.5.