



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN OF SPAIN****

Thursday, 10 February 1977

Your Majesties.

Our spirit is penetrated and filled with feelings of intense pleasure on receiving you today on this official visit to the Holy See, aware as we are of the extraordinary moment we are living. In the suite accompanying you we can discover the vibrating, agreeable and consoling presence of the whole of Spain.

Experiencing this deep emotion, there come to our lips words that go beyond all due courtesy: Welcome, Your Majesties! Receive our warmest greetings at this centre of the Catholic world

And accept also, Sir, our deep gratitude because, the heir of monarchs who bore the glorious title of Catholics, you have desired to cross the frontiers of your country to come and pay a filial and respectful homage to the Pope.

It is not difficult for us to discover in such a noble gesture another proof of your personal sentiment, which represents and binds together the spirit of beloved Catholic Spain, its long history of faithfulness to the Church and of deep love for the Vicar of Christ, its incarnation of Christian life both in the depths of conscience and in the outlines of its temples, its ecclesial depth, moulded by a varied array of Saints – some of whom joyfully raised by ourselves – who have enriched and enlightened mankind.

This glorious Spanish panorama, though not exempt from moments of tension and suffering, as well as its hopes for the future, associates in our mind and in our heart the image of Spain with a rich and noble past, with the image that Your Majesty wishes to incarnate of the young Spain, open, projected towards multiform progress, faithful to its fundamental essence, but set in new horizons.

In this solemn and historic circumstance, the Holy See wishes to confirm its deep esteem and benevolent closeness to Spain, which no contingency has ever dimmed. Such was the state of mind which inspired the cordial concern, always interwoven with hope and faith in their great values, with which the Church has accompanied and will accompany the lives of her Spanish sons. Her purpose is to revive in them the complete sense of the values of their existence, consciousness of the personal and community dimension of their faith, responsibility for its specific integration in social structures, the necessity of collaborating in the brotherly integration of all in the common destiny, in the work of overcoming old barriers, in progress harmoniously shared for balance among the social classes, in the extension of a just climate of responsible freedom, open to the complete fulfilment of the Christian and citizen. An educating task that has beneficial repercussions in the community! Ancient and modern history bears witness to this.

We also wish to express to you our pleasure at the recent and promising improvements accomplished in the field of Church-State relations in Spain. These improvements, while respecting mutual independence, are made up at the same time of convergent intentions, which we hope to see approaching their conclusion soon. For your effective personal intervention in this field, we repeat to you, Your Majesty, our sincere appreciation and gratitude. At the same time we assure you that the Church does not seek privileges, but simply sufficient space of freedom in which she can carry out her evangelizing mission and offer society the service of her collaboration for the common good of Spaniards. We trust that this space, with its practical implications on the social plane, will never be lacking.

Your Majesty, we conclude by formulating our best wishes, fatherly and cordial, for your person and your civil authorities, for the Queen and the royal family, and for the whole of Spain. We ardently wish it Christian faithfulness, solid peace, lasting concord – overcoming the tensions caused by recent painful facts – sure progress and prosperity, along a constantly rising path, on the spiritual and on the human plane. These are the good wishes and intentions which we unite with intensity of affection in our prayer to the Almighty with our Apostolic Blessing.

*ORa n.8 p.3