



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE AMBASSADOR OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 28 January 1977

Mr Ambassador,

We are happy to welcome Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Holy See and to receive the Letters by which His Excellency General Olusegun Obasanjo accredits you to this post. In accepting with gratitude the courteous good wishes which you have brought from your Head of State, we would ask you to convey to him in turn our cordial greetings.

We appreciate the kindness towards our person which you have shown in your address and the deep regard you have expressed for the efforts of our pontificate to favour just solutions to the world's problems. It is likewise gratifying to hear your praise of the active and beneficent presence of the Church in your country.

You have outlined the common purposes for which Nigeria and the Holy See work together. We are united in the pursuit of a most exalted aim, that of liberating man from all that offends against his very humanity; from all that offends against truth, justice, love and peace. Indeed, we may add, from all that offends against what the Creator intends for mankind.

The fact that Nigeria's Constitution enshrines the right of religious liberty is a basic condition for our cooperation. We are pleased to note how you regard religion as contributing idealism and energy to the promotion and unification of national life, for religion, with its moral demands, cannot but exert a salutary influence upon the life of a country. We are confident that all our Catholic sons and daughters in Nigeria will continue to give proof of their generosity and devotion in serving the

cause of development.

In conclusion we gladly take this opportunity to give expression once again to our particular affection for the people of Nigeria, whom we have had the joy of visiting in their homeland, and we ask Almighty God to bestow abundant blessings on them and their leaders. We also pray that Your Excellency's assignment as Ambassador to the Holy See will prove happy for yourself and of benefit to all.

*AAS 69 (1977), p.97;

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XV, p.107-108;

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1977, p.40;

OR 29.1.1977, p.1;

ORa n.6 p.2, 3.