



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE PAOLO VI
A JÁNOS KÁDÁR,
PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO D'UNGHERIA****

Giovedì, 9 giugno 1977

The visit you pay us today is certainly an event of extraordinary significance and special importance. It marks almost the point of arrival of a slow but uninterrupted process which, in the course of the last 14 years, has gradually brought closer together the Holy See and the People's Republic of Hungary, after the prolonged period of separation and tension, the echo of which has not yet died away completely.

This meeting offers us the opportunity for serious reflections. Such are fitting for him who, on the part of the Holy See, welcomed and earned further the initiative of this rapprochement – already taken by our venerated predecessor John XXIII, towards the end of his earthly day – on meeting him who, owing to the responsibilities that the State organization attributes to him, was in his turn, on behalf of the Hungarian Government, the main and most authoritative promoter of a similar initiative.

The judgement of history, after that of our conscience, hangs over the initiative itself and its results, which are followed, in fact, by many people with watchful and not infrequently critical, or at least puzzled eyes.

Accustomed as she is to the succession of vicissitudes that mark the course of her bi-millenary history, the Catholic Church – and with her the Holy See – does not turn from even bold decisions. She is guided, not by consideration of advantage or popularity of the moment, but by the deep requirements of her religious mission, which is bent on the eternal, as well as by her own vocation in the service of man, son and image of God, of his rights, his legitimate aspirations to a worthy life, in peace, justice and in the brotherhood that knows no frontiers.

We believe that experience confirms the validity of the way undertaken. It is the way of a dialogue on affairs, attentive to protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the Church and believers, but open, at the same time, to an understanding of the concerns and action of the State in the fields that are characteristic of it. It aims at stimulating, in an atmosphere of real religious peace, the unity and loyal collaboration of all members of social life, to the ever increasing advantage of the national community.

This means that the Holy See and the Church in Hungary are sincerely ready to continue along this path, with clarity and loyalty. They duly appreciate what the State has done to make possible on its side, by means of mutual agreements, the results obtained so far, and wish that it may be possible to proceed towards more advanced goals.

We know that a similar resolution has been expressed repeatedly by you too. This encourages us to hope that your visit, as well as being the crowning, in a certain sense, of an important stretch of road already covered, is also the announcement and promise of new progress on the way of reciprocal contacts, mutual understanding, and positive cooperation in the service of noble causes of interest not only to the Hungarian people but also to other peoples and to all mankind, particularly in the defence of peace and in promoting the social, economic, cultural and moral progress of the nations.

The Holy See knows and appreciates how much Hungary, whose history and geographical position, at the heart of Europe, push almost naturally to love and desire peace, can do in this connection. The Hungarian Government has wished, in its turn, to manifest its regard for the readiness of the Holy See to make its contribution to a commitment which is the common duty, in the interest of all.

We cannot forget, among other things, that it was precisely from Budapest that there reached the Holy See for the first time, in 1969, the appeal in favour of the initiative for safety and cooperation in Europe, which subsequently took on concrete form in the Helsinki Conference. The Holy See had the honour of participating in the latter, aware of contributing in this way to establishing a foundation of high moral and political value for better co-existence among the peoples of the old continent. We express the hope that the final Document of the Conference, which bears the signature of the highest leaders in charge of the life of the European States, will find, in all its parts, and on the part of all the signatory countries, full and faithful application, so that the deepest expectations and the confidence of the peoples of Europe will not remain disappointed.

With this wish we are happy to express to you, to your wife and to all the distinguished personalities who accompany you, our greeting and good wishes.

We desire, then, to address a particularly affectionate thought of good wishes to the Hungarian people, so dear to us and always present in our memory and in our prayer. May the blessing of

Almighty God descend upon them.

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