



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF IRELAND TO THE HOLY SEE

Tuesday, 12 December 1978

Mr Ambassador,

I GLADLY WELCOME Your Excellency as Ireland's Ambassador to the Holy See and, in accepting the Letters of Credence that you bring from His Excellency President Hillery, I would ask you to convey to him my cordial greetings and to renew to him the heartfelt good wishes that I expressed on the occasion of our recent meeting.

It gives me particular pleasure to receive thus the representative of a country with such long and glorious traditions of attachment to the Christian faith. Saint Patrick, from whom the Irish received that faith, is deservedly looked on as their Abraham or Moses since it was he who formed them as a Christian people and set them on a path that they have since endeavoured faithfully to follow. The continent of Europe, with which your country is at present establishing closer ties, still has vivid memories of the great Irish personalities who left a deep impression by their wisdom and their sanctity, at a time when the light of the Gospel and of learning was in danger of growing dim. Today every continent feels the influence of your missionaries and of the men and women who have made their homes in other countries or are bringing other peoples their fraternal aid.

I rejoice greatly at these manifestations of the deep-seated Christian conviction of your compatriots. It is, I feel, a guarantee that understanding and cooperation will take the place of hatred and conflict. The Gospel message, which the Church is called upon to make increasingly part of a people's way of thinking and living, enjoins sincere respect and love for those with different social and political views. It teaches us that every other human being is a brother or sister. It is therefore bound to strengthen family unity between the children of the same motherland and to encourage mutual collaboration and respect for the rights of others and for the spiritual values that are the foundations of a society's concord and of its moral and social advancement.

I assure you, Mr Ambassador, of my deep interest in your country's welfare and of my prayers that all may enjoy happiness in peace and justice. I warmly appreciate the contribution that the Irish authorities are making to the good of

people throughout the world by spiritual and material aid, by helping to maintain and strengthen peace, and by supporting human rights.

I would assure Your Excellency of every assistance on the part of the Holy See in the fulfilment of your duties as Ambassador and I express the hope that your mission will be rewarding for yourself and beneficial to all.