



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr JOSÉ MANUEL WATSON DIEZ,
THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF PANAMA TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 21 December 1978 Mr Ambassador, Receiving the Letters which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Panama to the Holy See, I wish in the first place to bid Your Excellency a hearty welcome to this Centre of the Catholic world. Here today the new mission begins which has been entrusted to you by the President of your country, to whom I wish to send my respectful greeting. Be well assured now, Mr Ambassador, that in carrying out the high office you have assumed, you can rely on my cordial goodwill and my resolute determination to promote your task in every way possible, so that it may be very profitable and contribute effectively to draw closer the solid bonds of mutual esteem and collaboration that unite Panama and the Holy See. In this perspective, the close presence of Your Excellency will make me see, beyond your worthy person, the country you represent, with its privileged geographical position, its vast heritage of culture, history and rich traditions. And above all it will conjure up before me a noble and generous people, in which the Church has thrown out deep roots, the beneficial influence of which has helped a great deal to shape its essential characteristics, also as a nation. Thank you, Mr Ambassador, for the public testimony of recognition for the work carried out by the Church for your country, and which you evoked eloquently. It is a gratitude to which the Church and the Holy See give expression in the resolution of continuity and disinterested service, in order that the society of Panama may be imbued more and more with those higher values which make community life more fruitful, more united and brotherly; with horizons of growing human dignity, always open to the highest spheres and aspirations of man. For a more perfect temporal order can be achieved only if the improvement of spirits takes place in parallel fashion (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 4). Mr Ambassador: I recommend to the Lord these intentions, as well as your personal and family ones. At the same time I send to all my beloved sons in Panama my affectionate greetings, accompanied by my best wishes for peace, prosperity and Christian progress, in a climate of serene understanding and active collaboration with neighbouring nations and those of the whole world.

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