



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF SRI LANKA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 8 January 1979

Mr Ambassador,

I WELCOME YOU warmly as the representative of the Government and people of Sri Lanka. I thank you for conveying to me the greetings of President Jayewardene, and I would ask you to be good enough to assure him of my prayerful wishes for his welfare.

The country that you represent has a long history in recorded human events and in philosophical inquiry and striving for enlightenment. I have sincere respect for all sectors of the population of Sri Lanka, with their various cultural and religious traditions, and I pray that they will develop all that is best in each tradition for the good of the whole nation.

The Catholic Church considers it her duty to foster unity and love between individuals and nations. She sees all mankind as coming from God as their origin, and destined for God as their final goal. For her, every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and is therefore endowed with a surpassing dignity that demands the highest veneration. She endeavours to inculcate brotherly love among all men, who are children of the same Father.

The Catholics of Sri Lanka accordingly have the religious obligation to contribute, through understanding and respect for others, to their nation's harmony and welfare. I am happy to hear Your Excellency say that the Christians in your country play a notable part in its life. I am confident that, in freedom and in a spirit of collaboration, they will help to build up a society in which all will be able to live in full accord with their human dignity and develop their God-given potentialities.

I am confident also that your nation as a whole will effectively assist in the advancement of peace on world scale. This is a cause that the Holy See has very much at heart. I count on the combined efforts of individuals and institutions to bring to the fore, both in thought and practice, the humane principles that build up and safeguard peace. I therefore appreciate very warmly the good will shown in the service of such principles, and I ask God to bless it.

I wish success to Sri Lanka's work for economic progress and the increase of international collaboration for the improvement of conditions in the materially disadvantaged areas in the world.

As an ambassador, Your Excellency has the mission to foster harmony, peace and cooperation between nations. I assure you of my heartfelt support in carrying out that task and I pray that it will be fruitful and happy.

*AAS 71 (1979), p.350-351.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. II, 1 pp. 29-30.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1979 pp.11-12.

L'Osservatore Romano 8-9.1.1979 p.3.

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