



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF YUGOSLAVIA****

Sunday, 13 July 1980

Your Excellency,

I extend a cordial welcome to you, to Mrs. Vrhovec, and to the distinguished personalities accompanying you. It gives me pleasure to meet so eminent a member of the Government of Yugoslavia. Since the visit by your predecessor, Mr. Milos Mini, to Pope Paul VI in November 1977, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been represented at the alternately sad and joyful events in the Vatican from August to October 1978, and earlier this year the Holy See similarly manifested its sympathy with the Yugoslav peoples at the time of the death of President Tito. All this has been a confirmation of the growth of good relationships between the Holy See and Yugoslavia and a pointer towards their further development. I myself will be happy to advance them, as did my predecessor Pope Paul VI.

Your country's endeavours in the field of international relations are positively reflected in this process. I am happy to reiterate the sentiments expressed by Pope Paul VI when he spoke of the Holy See's appreciation of Yugoslavia's activity in pursuit of better cooperation between nations, particularly in questions concerning peace, disarmament, and the support due to developing countries. The Holy See attaches great importance to these questions, some of which have become very acute at the present time in view of the many obstacles that seem to stand in the way of dialogue for the solution of serious disputes concerning relations between peoples and the development of countries while ensuring respect for their independence and dignity. I have referred to such problems repeatedly, especially before the General Assembly of the United Nations and at the UNESCO headquarters and also on my journeys to my native Poland and many other countries of the world, including the journey to Brazil that I have just completed, and I have expressed my concern that each country may be able to experience the development

required by its dignity, while preserving its independence and its own characteristics and traditions, in an atmosphere of respect for the rights and freedoms of each people and each individual everywhere.

Another reason for interest in the constructive development of our relations is provided by the effects it ought to have on the life and activity of the Church in Yugoslavia. As you are well aware, the Catholic Church, while not seeking privileges, needs to be assured of the requirements for her work and that of her institutions, making it possible to develop the potentialities contained in the resources of the Christian faith. This will enable Catholics to play in an ever better way their proper part as loyal citizens, who are ever desirous of contributing selflessly to the welfare of their homeland, and it will certainly be to the advantage of the wellbeing and the progress of all their fellow citizens, of the whole of Yugoslavia.

Good will and a spirit of understanding will ensure the success of these hopes by overcoming difficulties of any kind. God grant that cooperation will continue to grow, both within your country and in the broad field of international relations, for the good of all.

Yugoslavia and its peoples are of deep interest to me. I pray God to bless them and to assist them in furthering their material and moral progress and in ensuring their prosperity and happiness. May I assure Your Excellency of my sincere good wishes for yourself and for the distinguished leaders of your country.

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