



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE FIRST AMBASSADOR OF GREAT BRITAIN
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 1 April 1982

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to receive Your Excellency as the Envoy Extraordinary and Ambassador Plenipotentiary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The presentation of your Letters of Credence today, together with the accreditation of the first Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to the Court of Saint James's marks an historic moment in the relations between the Holy See and Britain. It serves as a sign of the understanding and good will which characterize our diplomatic ties, and it affords a basis for expecting still closer collaboration in the future.

I appreciate the cordial greeting which you have conveyed to me from Her Majesty and I would ask you to assure her of my personal regard and highest esteem. Mindful of your country's rich cultural tradition and of its special contribution to the history of civilization, I look forward with joyful anticipation to visiting Her Majesty and the people of Britain in the near future.

My forthcoming journey to your country is primarily of a religious nature, a pastoral visit to the members of the Catholic Church. I am also looking forward to the happy opportunity of meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and other distinguished ecclesiastics and churchmen. These meetings, together with the prayers of so many, will undoubtedly further the great work of promoting unity among Christians.

I welcome the reference which you have made to recent events in Poland and your deep interest in the well-being of the Polish people. You also mention the vital need for an end to violence in Northern Ireland and the importance of safeguarding human rights in all the countries of the world. It is a sad fact of our time that basic personal rights are not everywhere respected and ensured.

Social and cultural discrimination still exist in far too many forms, and many people lack true freedom of conscience and the right to practise their religion, even in their own homelands. We cannot remain silent in the face of such injustices. As long as basic human rights are denied in any land there can be enduring international peace. For a fundamental human bond links the destiny of the peoples of every nation. Thus no country can fully enjoy its own freedom, knowing that in other countries the dignity of the human person is being violated.

I wish to assure you, Mr Ambassador, that you can count on the continued interest and assistance of the Holy See in the fulfilment of your mission, and I invoke God's blessings upon Her Majesty, her Government and all her people.

*AAS 74 (1982), p. 702-703.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. V, 1 pp. 1089-1090.

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