



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr BJÖAN-OLOF ALHOLM
AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 11 January 1982

Mr Ambassador,

I am grateful to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Finland for the good wishes of which he has made you the bearer. I would ask you to convey to him the assurance of my prayers for him personally and for the important service that he is called upon to render to his country and to the world community.

Finland is known and appreciated everywhere for its attachment to its independence and personal liberties, and also for its dedication to international understanding and peace. On the occasion of my visit on 2 June 1980 to the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, I remarked that it is not by means of physical force but because of its culture that a country preserves its identity and national sovereignty. It is the moral and ethical values enshrined in Finnish culture that give the nation its permanency and strength. I pray that those values will be carefully maintained and developed, for the good of your own people and of the whole world. The Catholic Church enjoys, I know, high esteem in Finland, and although its members there are few in numbers, they are willingly contributing to this task, as part of their service to their country. The Holy See also looks with appreciation on Finland's role in the service of world peace. It was not without reason that Helsinki was chosen as the venue for the opening and closing of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, whose Final Act contains principles and pledges that reflect aspirations shared by people of good will everywhere, especially with regard to human rights and the rights of peoples. I hope that your country will long continue to play its valuable role in this field, by encouraging understanding between peoples and respect for the rights of nations and individuals. In expressing my deep interest in Finland and my good wishes for its well-being, I also wish to assure you of my regard and of my prayers for you yourself and for the mission that you are undertaking. I am confident that with your help the cordial relationship between Finland and the Holy See will continue to develop. May God assist you and bless

you.

*AAS 74 (1982), p. 319-320. *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol.V, 1 pp. 79-80.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1982 p. 31.

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