



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. Mr NARENDRA SINGH  
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO THE HOLY SEE\****

*Thursday, 14 January 1982*

*Mr Ambassador,*

It is a pleasure that I welcome Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Holy See and accept the kind good wishes that you bring me from the authorities of your country. I warmly reciprocate these good wishes and pray God to bless all the people of India.

As Your Excellency mentioned, the Christian faith came very early to India. It has been part of your country's history ever since. When modern India acquired its independence, the Christians rightly placed their trust in their fellow-citizens and in the guarantees written into the Constitution and they willingly participated in all aspects of the nation's life. I am confident that the praiseworthy traditions of respect for religious belief, of which Your Excellency spoke, will ensure the continuation of these guarantees of freedom of conscience and of the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, without being discriminated against. One of the most precious elements of the heritage of India is its respect for the endeavours of men and women to fulfil the obligation that their nature imposes on them to seek the truth and adhere to it and to direct their whole lives in accordance with its demands.

The same heritage gives great significance to India's role in the worldwide community of nations. In the international sphere there is need of voices that will speak for human rights, for the rights of individual men and women everywhere, the rights connected both with their bodily and their spiritual aspect, the rights without which they cannot live lives in keeping with their dignity as human beings endowed with intellect and will and with personhood. These fundamental rights are a condition for peace, and those who contribute to ensuring respect for them are true peacemakers.

I ask God to bless the work being done in India and by India to enable everyone to actuate human possibilities more fully. And I pray that he will bestow his favours abundantly on all the people of India and on those who are serving them in the fields of government or diplomacy or in any other way.

\*AAS 74 (1982), p. 320-321.

*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. V, 1 pp. 92-93.

*L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1982 pp. 36-37.

*L'Osservatore Romano* 15.1.1982 pp.1, 2.

*L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.5 p.17.