



# The Holy See

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*Discours à l'Ambassadeur de GRÈCE,*

**S.E.M. Christos ROKOFYLLOS**\*3 décembre 1983 The graciousness of your words on the excellent relations between the Republic of Greece and the Holy See, as also the expression of your personal sentiments on this day of the presentation of your Letters of Credence, are for me a reason for satisfaction and hope. I thank you heartily, and I would be most grateful if you would convey my gratitude to His Excellency the President of the Republic for having designated you to represent at the Apostolic See the Government and the peoples of a country still radiant with the glory of its prestigious history.

Since the sixteenth century, under the pontificate of Gregory XIII, the diplomatic representations, established with the nations that desired it, have become a permanent institution. To be sure, shadows have managed to mark their history. Nevertheless, the thrust of this very special way of access to the general good of peoples and of Churches is positive. Diplomacy should always be a beneficent option even if its pace is often slow and its results modest. It is the path of safeguarded right, of accepted solidarity, of recognized and effected possibility, of inexhaustible patience, in the face of situations of tensions, of injustices and, alas, of acts of violence, absolutely unworthy of any human civilization, in any time and still more in our own which is so inclined to settle its differences by force.

Your address of a moment ago, Mr. Ambassador, made me feel that you understand diplomacy as an act of confidence in men, in their capacities to search for the truth, to engage without ceasing in the construction of justice and peace, above and beyond particular, if not particularist, interests, while taking natural and international law as a point of reference. Diplomacy is truly a pathway that leads to concord and thus to the welfare and the grandeur of peoples. My revered predecessor Paul VI often set out clearly the role of diplomacy, that of the Church as well as that of States, always insisting that it be animated by an esteem and a love of human beings.

This is why I am so pleased to receive Your Excellency on this day when you inaugurate your high functions as Ambassador of Greece to the Holy See. I remember, when receiving your immediate predecessor and first Ambassador appointed by President Constantin Caramanlis, that I made a point of emphasizing all that the West owes to Greek culture, and how indebted Christianity is to your language which served as a vehicle for the Gospel and for the numerous letters of the Apostle Paul. This remote past has known the vicissitudes of history. But the diplomatic relations resumed several years ago - and, on a completely different plane, the dialogue between Orthodoxy and Catholicism - are so many signs of well-founded hope for the development of understanding and collaboration between your government and the Orthodox communities on the one hand and the Apostolic See of Rome on the other. Do not the major problems of peace and justice, so acute today, require the forgetting of differences which are outdated? You yourself make this point in your

address. Do not the promotion of religious and ethical values, indispensable for any authentically human civilization and - what is more - for the very survival of humanity, require the unequivocal consensus and every possible support of those who bear the responsibilities of States and of Churches alike?

Permit me likewise, Mr. Ambassador, to stress that your mention of the problem of Cyprus finds me particularly receptive. I wish to express once again how much I desire the prompt re-establishment of peace between the two communities, in respect for the rights and for the legitimate aspirations of each of them and with the assistance and the guarantee of the international community.

Catholic communities

Mr. Ambassador, it is my earnest desire that your lofty mission afford you the profound joy of contributing to the task of rendering the diplomatic relations between Greece and the Holy See ever more rich and effective. I can assure you that you will find in this Vatican city the welcome and the respect, the understanding and the support that you have a right to expect. And I am certain that the Catholic communities of Greece, though few in number, will come to appreciate more and more that liberty which the Greek Constitution guarantees them and which will allow them in all tranquility and loyalty to offer their appreciable contribution to the harmony and to the vitality of your dear country.

My desires and my prayers unite for the successful unfolding of your mission. And, once again I ask that you transmit my respectful greetings and my sincere good wishes to the President Mr Constantin Caramanlis, to his collaborators, and, in particular, to the Prime Minister. Through you I greet also the dear peoples of Greece.

It is to God that I entrust and will continue to entrust the peace, the prosperity and the glory of your dear country!

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