



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 7 January 1985

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to accept from Your Excellency the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I extend to you a cordial welcome and I thank you for conveying the greetings of your President, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari. I reciprocate his good wishes, and at the same time I give the assurance of my highest regard for all the citizens of your nation.

I am grateful for your reference to my Pastoral Visit to your country. For me this was a joyous occasion, and I still vividly remember the kind hospitality which was shown to me throughout my stay with you. At that time I had the opportunity of expressing my appreciation for the many ways in which the Nigerian people, since independence, have contributed to progress within the nation itself, to the building up of a more unified African continent, and to international efforts aimed at creating a more peaceful world.

These accomplishments, as you have noted, were not arrived at without sacrifice, effort and, at times, suffering. Even today the attainment of a stable economic order and the maintenance of a high standard of public morality are areas that demand the constant energies and the creative leadership of the members of the Government.

You have also referred to the vision of hope that the Holy See brings to the poor and the oppressed of the world. Following the mission entrusted to her by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, on both the universal and local levels, identifies with the helpless of society and on their behalf raises her voice in the cause of promoting human dignity. In this regard, the Holy See takes

particular interest in every aspect of the well-being of the human person, especially where there is suffering, and in situations where human rights are denied.

For this reason I am happy to hear the reaffirmation of your country's commitment to the pursuit of justice and peace. To this endeavour the Nigerian people bring a deep reverence for God and a respect for spiritual values. Hence, theirs is indeed a worthy contribution to the establishment of a more harmonious world order.

Your Excellency, your presence here today symbolizes the bond of friendship between Nigeria and the Holy See. I trust that the period of your mission will be a fruitful one; be assured that you will receive the full cooperation of the Holy See in fulfilling it. Upon yourself and upon the beloved country which you represent I ask Almighty God to bestow his abundant blessings.

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