



The Holy See

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

Friday, 11 January 1985

Mr Ambassador,

I am happy to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to the Holy See. I thank you for the good wishes which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency President Chun Doo Hwan and I would ask you kindly to convey to him my cordial greetings.

Your presence here in the Vatican only a few months after my unforgettable visit to your country brings to my mind – among the many striking memories of those days – my meeting with the Diplomatic Corps in Seoul. I was pleased to avail myself of that occasion to express my solidarity with the Korean people in their major concerns. At that time I stated: “The aspirations to peace, security and national unity, which are everywhere more and more felt today, are especially perceptible among the Korean people, and my visit is meant to indicate that these profoundly noble longings are shared by me and by the Church”.

From among these concerns, you have referred to the hopes of millions of your fellow citizens that members of families separated by tragic events of the past may at last be found and reunited in peace and family harmony. I pray to Almighty God that this goal will be achieved. May he bless the endeavours of all those who, in recent times, have been working to overcome difficulties and obstacles and are seeking to pave the way to mutual openness and understanding. The joy of those who have found one another and the sorrow of those who are still searching for their loved ones is an incentive to the sense of responsibility of all those who serve the common good of the nation and have their people at heart.

The humanitarian dimension of the vast problem of reuniting families is a clear example of the manner in which political decisions, and the events and forces that lead to them, deeply affect the lives of entire peoples, not in the abstract, but on the level of the individuals who make up those peoples, and their real opportunity for a life worthy of their true human dignity. In the service of human dignity the Church and all men and women of good will can find wide areas of mutual understanding and collaboration.

The Catholic Church is beginning the third century of her presence in Korea. In fidelity to the mission entrusted to her by her divine Founder Jesus Christ, she is committed to making a spiritual, cultural and social contribution to the life of the nation, and in particular to fostering civil and moral progress. It is my prayer that the constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and the climate of respect and tolerance which characterize your country's public life will enable this collaboration to grow and develop for the good of all.

One of the vivid impressions which I retain of my visit to your country, Mr. Ambassador, is the very high proportion of young people. This year, in concomitance with International Youth Year, I have dedicated the World Day of Peace Message to the young, with the theme "Peace and Youth Go Forward Together". In this message I have written that "it is essential for every human being to have a sense of participating, of being a part of the decisions and endeavours that shape the destiny of the world" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius scripto datus ob diem I ianuarii MCMLXXXV paci inter nations fovendae dicatum*, 9, die 8 dec. 1984: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VII, 2 (1984) 1559). This is especially true of the young.

One of the challenges facing the leaders of nations is that of ensuring such participation in ways that are truly just and effective. One of the challenges facing youth is to acquire a new awareness of their responsibility and a fresh sensitivity to the needs of their fellow human beings, avoiding the siren calls of self-interest, heeding first the values of life and then moving with confidence to put those values into practice (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius scripto datus ob diem I ianuarii MCMLXXXV paci inter nations fovendae dicatum*, 3 et 7, die 8 dec. 1984: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VII, 2 (1984) 1553 s. et 1557 s.). May Almighty God enlighten all of us to respond to these urgent demands of our times with wisdom and farsightedness!

Mr. Ambassador, your mission as the representative of your country to the Holy See has a special character corresponding to the eminently spiritual and moral nature of the Holy See's presence and activity in the sphere of international relations. I would assure you of the fullest collaboration of the departments of the Roman Curia, and I wish you every happiness in the fulfillment of your duties. Again I give the assurance of my deep affection for the people of Korea, and I invoke God's blessings of peace and wellbeing upon them and upon their leaders.

*AAS 77 (1985), p. 642-644.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. VIII, 1 pp. 50-52.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1985 pp. 28-30.

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