



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF CANADA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 7 November 1985

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome Your Excellency and to accept the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Canada to the Holy See. Your expression of good wishes on behalf of the Government of Canada for the continued success of my apostolic ministry is gratefully acknowledged. And I thank you for your kind remarks regarding my pastoral visit to your country last year.

Although that historic visit was primarily a celebration of faith for the members of the Catholic Church, I also remember with joy the enthusiastic and loving welcome extended to me by Canadians of all creeds. I am very pleased that this unforgettable pilgrimage “a mari usque ad mare” allowed me numerous opportunities to come to know the many different people of your country, so rich in its ethnic diversity and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the fact that my visit enabled Canadians to know themselves better causes me to give thanks to Almighty God for the abundant graces which he bestowed at the various encounters of prayer, sharing and dialogue during my visit. Many deep and lasting impressions remain in my heart. I wish to express my gratitude once again for the great honour and respect that your people showed to me as chief Pastor of the Catholic Church.

I have noted with pleasure your reference to the beloved young people of Canada. Like youth everywhere, they, as you say, are searching for a meaning to their lives in a world where confusion, indifference and violence often seem stronger than the forces of peace. Their searching and longing is a sign of the need for world leaders and all people of good will to devote themselves to untiring work for peace and justice. In responding to this challenge, those who exercise the art

of diplomacy make a vital contribution. And I am sure that you will make it your task to contribute to a constructive dialogue and thereby inspire confidence among the generous and courageous youth of Canada in a new vision of peace. I truly believe that peace can be attained in the world community. But as I stated to the members of the Canadian Parliament and the representatives of the Diplomatic Corps when I met them in Ottawa, "True peace will come about only when the hearts and minds of all are converted to compassion, to justice and to love".

I am pleased that the two founding peoples of Canada, while each retaining its own cultural identity, continue to live and work together in harmony and mutual respect. Respect for the dignity of the human person in a culturally diverse society offers a solid base of hope for the future. For the core of the problems of today's society lies in the quality of the relationships which exist between individuals and between peoples. When these relationships are built on respect for the dignity and sacredness of every human being, then human rights are safeguarded and society enjoys true harmony and stability.

As you have rightly observed, Mr Ambassador, there are a number of areas where there is a convergence of views and activities between your government and the Holy See. This convergence makes more effective those efforts which promote the active defence of human rights and which seek to provide economic and humanitarian aid to less fortunate peoples and States. I commend your resolution to build upon these convergences in accomplishing the task which has been assigned to you.

I ask you to convey to the Government and people of Canada my greetings and good wishes. It is my hope that you will have a very fruitful mission. May God bless you and your fellow citizens with his abundant favours.

*AAS 78 (1986), p. 335-336.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. VIII, 2 pp. 1211-1213.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1985 pp. 922-923.

L'Osservatore Romano 8.11. 1985 p.4.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.46 p.5.

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana