



The Holy See

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

18 December 1986

Mr Ambassador,

I AM VERY PLEASED that this meeting, in which you present the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Singapore, is taking place only a few weeks after my brief visit to your country. I had the pleasure at that time of meeting your President, His Excellency Mr Wee Kim Wee, and the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. I felt the warmth of your people's welcome and hospitality, and I had the opportunity to visit the young and vibrant Catholic community of Singapore that is striving to work wholeheartedly for the well-being of the entire civil community in peace and harmony. For all of this I give thanks to Almighty God, and I express my cordial appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people whom you represent.

I welcome you, Mr Ambassador, and I assure you of the Holy See's desire to collaborate fully with your country in maintaining and strengthening the bonds that unite us in promoting peace and development in the world through respect for human rights and by way of solidarity with the peaceful aspirations of all peoples and nations.

Singapore constitutes a very significant instance of people from many different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds coming together to build a nation on the basis of mutual acceptance and collaboration. By pursuing this path in justice and tolerance, your people effectively give expression to a conviction which I stated as follows at Singapore's National Stadium during my recent visit: "Peace requires justice, an attitude which recognizes the dignity and equality of all men and women, and a firm commitment to strive to secure and protect the basic human rights of all".

By following such a path, small nations too have an important role to play in the cause of world peace. By their example they can show that peace is possible and that it is vital for the economic and social development of peoples. I therefore pray that the Republic of Singapore will continue to prosper and that all its citizens will enjoy the freedom to serve God and their fellow human beings in goodness and truth.

The Catholic Church, and other religious communities too, are able to make a fundamental contribution to the cause of peace precisely because they are concerned with the spiritual realities of human life. They help people grow in the love of God and neighbour. As I also stated during my visit: "True peace begins in the mind and heart, in the will and soul of the human person, for it proceeds from genuine love of others. Indeed it is true to say that peace is the product of love when people consciously decide to improve their relationship with others, to make every effort to overcome divisions and misunderstandings, and if possible even to become friends".

I have vivid memories of my contact with the Church in Singapore. I am pleased that the Catholic community, although it constitutes only a small portion of the population, is active in educational and welfare services, and is contributing in many ways to the life of the nation. I know how dearly the clergy, religious and laity love their country and wish to contribute to its happiness.

Mr Ambassador, I invoke God's blessing upon you as you begin your mission. I assure you of my goodwill and I ask you to transmit my cordial greetings to President Wee. May God abundantly bless your country.

*AAS 79 (1987), p. 1076-1077.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. IX, 2 pp. 1987-1989.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1986 pp. 1022-1023.

L'Osservatore Romano 19.12.1986 p.4. *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.51/52 p.20. © Copyright 1986 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana