



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de GABÓN,
Excmo. Sr. Don Jean-Claude LABOUBA**

25 de marzo de 1988

Mr. Ambassador,

Welcome to the Vatican, where I have the pleasure of receiving you on the occasion of the presentation of your credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Gabon.

I am touched by the noble sentiments to which the courteous words you have just addressed to me bear witness. I am especially touched by the very kind greetings which you offer me on behalf of your President, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo; as I ask you to thank him, it pleases me to offer him through you my best wishes on his behalf as well as for the prosperity and spiritual well-being of the entire Gabonese people.

You have mentioned the good relations which exist between your country and the Holy See. I am glad of this, and I do not doubt that your mission will further strengthen our convergence of views and our bonds of friendship for a common action to the benefit of our brothers.

It is my conviction that the Church, whose entire ambition is to proclaim freely the Lord's message of salvation, can do much to improve the life of the human community. In this programme you can be assured, Mr. Ambassador, of the loyal support of the Gabonese Catholics. Since they are borne along by the dynamism of their faith, they wish to work in fraternal collaboration with their fellow citizens for the integral development of their country.

With respect for different Cultures, the Church seeks to be a leaven of unity; she would like the Gospel to enliven more and more the cultural ferment which is the basis of any country. This is the

task to which the Gabonese pastors and faithful consecrate themselves as they wish to serve the country's higher interests. With a preferential concern for the poor and for young people, they wish to contribute according to their means to the development of education as they continue to form hearts and minds, giving a taste for unselfish work and responsible service. As they are encouraged by their bishops, Christians wish to offer their contribution to the establishment of a more just society and to the pursuit of a real dialogue between ethnic groups; they thus help to guarantee peace through respect for human rights and real relations between people.

I am confident that the Catholics in your country, whom you will allow me to greet specially on this occasion, will always find on the part of the state the conditions favourable to the peaceful exercise of their ecclesial life and their apostolic activity in the spirit of the good relations which have traditionally existed between us.

Mr. Ambassador, as I offer these best wishes for the successful accomplishment of your noble mission, I gladly assure you of the understanding consideration which you will need. As I again express my affection for the Gabonese people and address my respectful greeting to its leaders, I invoke upon the entire country the constant aid of the Most High and his abundant blessings.

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