



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr. SOMBOON SANGIAMBUT,
AMBASSADOR OF THAILAND TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 5 November 1988

Mr Ambassador,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept from you the Letters of Credence by which you are accredited as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Thailand to the Holy See. I am grateful to you for the kind greetings you have conveyed on behalf of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and I would ask you to assure His Majesty of my friendship and warmest good wishes. He has been particularly in my prayers on the recent occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday and I join all the people of your country in rejoicing at this significant event.

I have noted with much satisfaction your reference to the long and cordial relationship between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Holy See. This friendship is sustained by the religious sense and traditional hospitality of the Thai people, coupled with the Church's message and mission of peace and service to all mankind. High points of this bilateral relationship were undoubtedly the visit which Their Majesties made to my predecessor Pope John XXIII in October 1960, and my own visit to your country and in particular to the Royal Family in May 1984.

The members of the Church in Thailand have set themselves the task of "a life of simplicity, charity, love of peace and humility, (with a readiness) to improve and offer themselves to serve all, especially the poor". This spirit of service is evident in the Catholic community's presence in schools, where children and young people of all sectors of the population are formed to assume their role as worthy and responsible citizens of their country. It also expresses itself in health services and assistance programmes which seek to help the disadvantaged. Among these services, I would mention the relief work being done among the many refugees who, leaving

behind situations of conflict or oppression in South East Asia, have found refuge in Thailand. At Phanat Nikhom I was able to see for myself the implications of this sad situation, and my appreciation of the openness of the Thai Government and people to these brothers and sisters in need is deeply felt. We cannot forget that “each refugee is an individual human being, with his or her own dignity and personal history, with his or her own culture, experiences and legitimate expectations”.

It is my ardent hope that the Governments, together with the humanitarian and voluntary organizations of the world, will continue to come to the aid of these people, offering them above all real prospects of a better future. I again appeal to the international community to take effective steps to solve this problem in a spirit of goodwill and justice.

Mr. Ambassador, there are many areas of international life in which the Holy See and the Government of Thailand can seek increasing understanding. I wish to assure you of my prayerful best wishes for the success of your mission as the diplomatic representative of your country, and I assure you that you may rely on the ready collaboration of the various Departments of the Holy See. I pray that you will be happy in this excellent form of service to your people and I invoke abundant heavenly blessings upon Their Majesties the King and Queen, the Royal Family, and the entire Thai nation.

*AAS 81 (1989), p. 622-623.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XI, 4 pp. 1427-1429.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1988 pp. 991-992.

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