



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. Mr. BRIAN THOMAS BURKE,  
THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRALIA TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Monday, 31 October 1988*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am happy to accept from Your Excellency the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Australia to the Holy See. In offering you a warm welcome, I wish also to thank you for the cordial greetings which you have conveyed to me from the Governor General, the Prime Minister and the Government and people of Australia.

I would ask you to be so kind as to reciprocate these good wishes. At the same time I assure you of my continued prayers for the harmony and prosperity of all the citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia.

It is a special joy to welcome you, Mr Ambassador, in the year when Australia is celebrating the Bicentenary of its European settlement. This historic milestone is an occasion to recall with satisfaction how successfully people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds have worked together over the past two centuries in building a thriving, peaceloving nation. In so far as you have pursued this path in justice and with mutual respect, you have borne witness to the truth that "peace is the fruit of just and honest relations at every level of human life, including the social, economic, cultural and ethical levels". It is my fervent hope that this Bicentenary celebration will serve to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation amongst all the ethnic groups that make up Australian society.

As Your Excellency has noted, Australia and the Holy See share many common objectives in the present context of international affairs.

The Holy See desires to collaborate fully with your country, and with all nations, in the cause of world peace, in the promotion of integral development, and in the defence of the human rights of every person, from the moment of conception until natural death.

The Church devotes herself to these efforts on behalf of the human family because they are closely linked to her primary mission in the world – the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At the present moment in history, she feels obliged to make special efforts to further the cause of peace.

True peace begins in the mind and heart, in the will and soul of the human person. And it proceeds from the genuine love of God and neighbour, a practical love which makes every effort to overcome prejudices, divisions and misunderstandings.

In this task, diplomacy has a key role to play. And thus I gladly acknowledge Your Excellency's statement that in accepting your new responsibility you will strive to work together with the Holy See to further international cooperation and fruitful dialogue among nations as the path to a more peaceful world. There is indeed an urgent need to emphasize these objectives in present circumstances. In the modern world, dialogue and international cooperation are often impeded by obstacles resulting from ideologies which generate distrust, injustice and conflict.

In the face of these difficulties, we have to move beyond conflicting ideologies and find common ground for dialogue. We must find ways to rebuild trust and thus make possible an ever more effective and fruitful collaboration among all men and women of good will.

Mr Ambassador, I hope that your diplomatic mission will further the good relations already existing between Australia and the Holy See. I assure you of the assistance of the Holy See's different departments in the fulfilment of your responsibilities. May God grant you wisdom and strength, and I invoke God's abundant blessings upon you and your family, and upon all the beloved people of Australia.

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\*AAS 81 (1989), p.616-617.

*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XI, 3 pp. 1403-1405.

*L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1988 pp. 979-980.

*L'Osservatore Romano* 31.10-1.11. 1988 p.6.

*L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.48 p.7.

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