



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II
A S.E. IL SIGNOR THEODORE JEAN ARCAND,
NUOVO AMBASCIATORE DEL CANADA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE****

Giovedì, 23 novembre 1989

Mr. Ambassador,

With pleasure I welcome Your Excellency and receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Canada to the Holy See. I am all the more appreciative of the greetings which you convey to me from Her Excellency the Governor General and from the Prime Minister, because of the treasured memories linking me to your country. I would be obliged if you express my gratitude for the messages which they have asked you to convey.

You mentioned the years which you spent in the past in Rome as a member of Canada's Embassy to the Holy See; I am happy at your return as head of the mission. That experience, to which are added the various high responsibilities you have held in various posts, will make your task easier in the context of the harmonious relations which Canada enjoys with the Apostolic See. You know that you can count on the assistance of my collaborators who will try to facilitate your mission.

Mr Ambassador you have just recalled several major concerns which to a large measure respond to the Church's own point of view concerning the positive signs or elements of concern marking the world's current situation. The desire for peace and its strengthening go hand in hand, as is so often clearly expressed, with the desire for the development of a generous spirit of fraternity among the peoples, with the safeguarding of the spiritual and cultural heritage of every human group, even of minorities, and with the need for greater dialogue and cooperation among the nations of all regions of the world.

The Holy See, in conformity with its specific mission, works for the ever greater acceptance of the

conditions of a peace truly founded on the respect of the person in all his dimensions. The exchange and reflection which diplomatic relations permit are greatly useful in contributing not only to increasing the knowledge of current situations, but also to promoting the analysis of the moral principles without which the solutions of the problems would not be just.

Canada's history and traditions have caused it to face the difficulties of a nation forged by men and women coming from different cultural horizons. This centuries-old experience seems to have disposed your country to participate with a spirit of tolerance and generosity in international life. As you have pointed out, it is in joining forces and not in confrontation, that the world must face the considerable problems confronting it. Canada is making a contribution appreciated by its partners, particularly through the expansion of the North-South dialogue so that the common good may eventually have a global dimension. This path certainly involves practical activity on behalf of development, the true freedom of peoples, the protection of the environment, respect for all that is precious in man, beginning with his person and his life. For its part, the Holy See does not fail to participate in these efforts, as you know.

In welcoming you, Mr Ambassador, I turn in thought to all your compatriots who gave me such a warm welcome five years ago. My wish is that they do not cease strengthening the harmony and peaceful coexistence which I was able to witness. Undoubtedly, the considerable changes which have occurred during recent decades still cause concern for the future. I know particularly that the members of the Catholic Church are very much aware of it, and that they seek to assume their share of the concerns of the whole of Canadian society. They cannot forget the role which the Church's first apostles played in your country, their example of holiness, their sense of charity practiced with effectiveness and delicacy, and their skill as educators, to mention only a few of their characteristics. They want to continue to serve the nation in a spirit of fraternity under the forms which have evolved and in harmony with their compatriots of other Christian confessions.

Your Excellency, through you I want to express my warmest best wishes to all of Canada, and the assurance of my vivid memory of my visits to that beautiful country. Please convey my respectful greetings to Her Excellency the Governor General and to the Prime Minister.

I express my best wishes for the fulfilment of your mission to the Holy See, and I assure you once again, also in the name of my collaborators, that you are welcome here.

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