



The Holy See

***DISCURSO DEL SANTO PADRE JUAN PABLO II
AL SEÑOR EDILBERTO MORENO PEÑA,
NUEVO EMBAJADOR DE VENEZUELA ANTE LA SANTA SEDE****

Sábado 15 de diciembre de 1990

Mister Ambassador:

It gives me particular satisfaction to receive the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Venezuela to the Holy See. In giving you my cordial welcome upon this solemn occasion, I wish to reiterate the warm affection which I feel for all the sons and daughters of the noble Venezuelan nation.

I thank you sincerely for the kind words which you addressed to me, and particularly for the respectful greeting which the President, Dr Carlos Andres Perez, wished to send to me through you. I ask you to kindly transmit my greeting to him, along with my best wishes for peace and prosperity.

You made it a point to mention my pastoral visit to Venezuela. Those were intense days of faith and hope during which I was able to appreciate the great values which honour the Venezuelan people, for whom the Catholic faith has been a basic element in their identity and a source of inspiration for their virtues and their institutions. In arriving at the Maiquetia Airport, I greeted those present with these words: «I come to the land of Simon Bolivar whose desire was to construct on this continent a great nation, less so for its extent and its riches than for its freedom and glory (cf. Letter of Bolivar, Kingston, September 1815)».

You yourself alluded to this noble aspiration of the Liberator, Mister Ambassador, in saying that «the destiny of solidarity with the great Latin American homeland is for us a vocational command». In truth effective solidarity is what can and must inspire high goals and find paths towards

solutions to the problems which affect so many peoples. It is a fact that each country already needs or will need the others, since mutual interdependence on the economic, political and cultural levels is becoming more and more unavoidable. God has given over the earth to humanity as a whole, therefore all people have to show solidarity as regards the world's future.

This solidarity acquires special meaning in regard to Latin American countries; their geography, history, faith and culture are linked by such strong bonds that it can be rightly said that they make up one big family. Therefore I am pleased to hear, Mister Ambassador, that Venezuela is taking the necessary steps to bring about the hoped for integration.

This task has to be faced with great creativity, leaving aside partial and selfish visions and always placing the values which give dignity to the person ahead of reductive concepts which do not allow for the integral development of individuals and of society.

In the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* when I referred to solidarity and interdependence among peoples, I expressed the hope that «nations of the same geographical area should establish forms of cooperation which will make them less dependent on more powerful producers; they should open their frontiers to the products of the area, they should examine how their products might complement one another, they should combine in order to set up those services which each one separately is incapable of providing; they should extend cooperation to the monetary and financial sector» (n. 45).

In the case of Latin America this cooperation and exchange become all the more necessary since common problems exist within the whole continent which have to be faced together. It is a fact that the isolation of the respective economies does not serve any of the countries involved. Thus it is to be hoped that the overcoming of perspectives which are limited to the economic sphere yield to a project which is capable of giving each country the possibility of being a true partner in view of authentic economic cooperation which fosters development.

Within her proper field, the Church is greatly interested in all that redounds to the greater good of the human person and of social groups, beginning with the family, the basic cell of society. From this derives her determined will to cooperate in all that can foster a more just social order. We cannot ignore the fact that, despite the huge amount of resources which the Creator placed at humanity's disposal, we are still very far from the ideal of justice willed by God. In truth, alongside great wealth and high life styles one finds large majorities without the most elementary goods.

Thus there is an urgent need for an in depth analysis to detect the causes and mechanisms which block the resurgence of those conditions which make possible the desired development of each and every one of the citizenry. In this perspective, I wish to stress that ethical values have to enlighten all public activity so that partisan or opposing interests which not infrequently make their negative presence felt in the life of society may give way to a sincere and effective zeal for serving

the common good by those who have public responsibilities.

I can assure you, Mister Ambassador, that the Church in Venezuela – within the ambit of her religious and moral mission - will follow along firmly in her intention to cooperate with the authorities and the various institutions of the country in order to foster and to encourage all those initiatives which serve the human cause, «the primary and fundamental way for the Church» (Redemptor Hominis, 14), towards dignity and integral progress, by always fostering the spiritual and religious dimension of the person in his or her individual, family and social life.

Before finishing this meeting I wish to tell you of my support and best wishes that your high mission begun today will unfold well. Through Our Lady of Coromoto, Patroness of the Venezuelan nation, I raise my prayer to the Most High so that He will always assist you with His gifts, and your distinguished family as well, with the officials of the nation, and the beloved people of Venezuela, who are always so close to the Pope's heart.

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