



## The Holy See

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Mr Ambassador,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Vatican at the beginning of your mission as Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the Holy See. In accepting your Letters of Credence, I ask you kindly to convey my cordial greetings and good wishes to President Vassiliou. It is my fervent hope that your mission, like that of your late and distinguished predecessor, Mr Polys Modinos, will strengthen the bonds of mutual esteem and fruitful cooperation which characterize relations between the Holy See and the people of your ancient and noble Island.

The world events of recent months have vividly demonstrated how profound and enduring is the desire of entire peoples to live in peace, to lay aside old hostilities and to unite in forging a new era of international understanding. Yet the existence of a just social order still remains a distant ideal for many societies. Indeed, as Your Excellency has frankly pointed out, Cyprus itself has been the scene of continuing division and conflict. In spite of deeply rooted disagreements, hope for their just settlement must never be abandoned. The Holy See remains firmly convinced that the solution to longstanding division between peoples is to be found in patient dialogue and in respect for the principles of justice embodied in international law.

For this reason, the Holy See has sought, through its presence within the international community and through its diplomatic activity, to further all efforts aimed at "strengthening and perfecting the unity of the human family". While the proper contribution of the Catholic Church to the establishment of peaceful relations between Nations and peoples ultimately derives from her religious mission, she strives to promote effective dialogue and harmony among believers and non-believers alike. The Church is convinced that the search for unity and peace in our increasingly interdependent world is a necessity imposed upon all by God, the Creator of mankind. Indeed, submission to the will of God demands of all believers an unflinching commitment to this goal.

Within this context, there is an urgent need for "a solidarity which will take up interdependence and transfer it to the moral plane". Your Excellency has spoken of the moral principles which must necessarily be the foundation for policies that lead to peace and security. Among these, I would emphasize the grave obligation to seek out and explore every avenue of potential agreement. It is obvious that any attempt to promote authentic dialogue must respect racial, religious, social and cultural differences. An enduring unity of peoples and diverse social groups can only be achieved when legitimate pluralism is respected and guaranteed by all members of society.

At this time, I wish to mention the presence and activity of the Catholic community on your Island.

For centuries these Maronite and Latin Rite Christians have professed and practised their faith in full communion with the Holy See. Despite their small numbers, they too have wished to share in the quest for a social order marked by justice, harmony and peace. In the education and religious formation imparted in their schools, in developing new channels of cooperation with other Christians, and in the proclamation of the Gospel values of respect and love for others, the Catholics of Cyprus are committed to the task of developing the full potential of your national community. I am confident that the Church's work will continue to foster peace in your country. Mr Ambassador: as you begin your mission, I wish to express once again my warm best wishes and to assure you that the various offices of the Holy See are always prepared to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon you and upon all the beloved people of Cyprus.

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