



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de ARGELIA,
Excmo. Sr. Don Boualem BESSAIH**

19 de noviembre de 1991

Mr. Ambassador,

With joy I welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Algerian Democratic and Popular Republic to the Holy See.

I thank you very much for having expressed to me the very kind greetings of His Excellency President Chant Bendjedid. In return, I kindly ask you to express to him my respectful wishes for his person and my best wishes for the successful fulfilment of his noble task. I likewise greet the members of the Government, especially Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and I ask God's assistance upon all the people in positions of responsibility at the service of the Algerian nation.

In your courteous discourse you mentioned the Apostolic See's efforts on behalf of peace, security and justice throughout the world. Algeria, you said, shares the same ideals and supports their realization. I am pleased to hear you renew the generous proposals of your country whose commitment to promote harmony in the international community has been manifested in regard to the tragic regional conflicts.

If one wants to maintain just and peaceful relations among people it is important, among other things, to take into consideration the fertile field of spiritual values. Your presence here, Mr Ambassador, shows your nation's esteem and respect for religious motivation. For her part, the Catholic Church seeks to create and maintain authentic dialogue with members of other faiths in order to develop mutual knowledge and understanding, the better to serve the cause of peace. In the Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* which I published this year, I issued an appeal to the

Christian Churches and all the world's great religions to encourage them to give united witness of their common convictions about the dignity of the human person created by God, with the assurance that «religions, now and in the future, will have a preeminent role in preserving peace and in building a society worthy of man» (n. 60).

Please allow me, Mr. Ambassador, to take advantage of the occasion of this meeting to address, through you, a cordial greeting to the Catholic community present in Algeria. I want to express my solicitude to all its members; I would also like to encourage them to continue their ministry of fraternal assistance and prayer for the intention of those with whom they live. May they continue to forge bonds of solid friendship and to contribute, with their Muslim brothers and sisters, to the development of the country! I hope that the Christian communities may always be able to exercise regularly their own activities, that they may enjoy the guarantee of their rights in the same way that, in their turn, Muslim communities in countries with a Christian majority should enjoy them. May- Christians and Muslims, moved by their religious convictions, be builders of unity, rapprochement and responsible dedication to serve the common good.

At this time you are beginning your mission, I offer you my sincere best wishes. Be assured that you will always find here an attentive welcome and cordial understanding.

Upon Your Excellency, the President of the Republic, the Algerian Government and people, I invoke the assistance of the Most High that your nation may continue its journey towards a progress and development which responds to the deep aspirations of all its members.

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