



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT*

Saturday, 14 November 1992

Mr. Ambassador,

I am pleased to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt. I deeply appreciate the sentiments which you have expressed in the name of his Excellency President Mubarak and I ask you kindly to convey my own cordial greetings. Please assure him of my profound respect for the Egyptian people and of my prayerful best wishes for your country's peace and welfare.

I am grateful for Your Excellency's remarks concerning the Holy See's activity within the world community. By its presence and action, the Holy See wishes to encourage the growth of dialogue and understanding among nations, a dialogue aimed at fostering respect for fundamental human rights and cooperation in eliminating the violence and poverty hindering development. The Church is convinced that the task of establishing justice and peace at all levels of social life is essentially a moral one, and that solving national and international problems is not just a matter of economic production or of juridical or social organization, but also calls for specific ethical and religious values (cf. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 60). In the end, only a firm commitment to effective solidarity will inspire the vision and change of mentality needed to overcome past tensions and to meet present and future challenges.

In this context, I am pleased to note the efforts of the Arab Republic of Egypt in fostering dialogue and mediation in Africa and the Middle East. Such efforts, pursued with perseverance and realism, represent the best hope for a resolution of conflicts which have lasted all too long. At a time when attempts are being made to address the political situation in the Middle East with new initiatives, Egypt can offer a specific contribution by patiently encouraging the positive prospects which have

emerged, with attention to the rights of all parties involved. For its part, the Holy See trusts that the opening of channels of dialogue will lead to a just and fair solution of the many complex questions which need to be dealt with, especially with regard to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and the rightful desire of the other peoples of the region to live in peace and security.

Your Excellency has rightly called attention to the importance of cooperation between Egypt's Muslim and Christian citizens in the pursuit of national unity. There is an urgent need to foster such cooperation between believers, a cooperation based upon rigorous respect for the inalienable human rights of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. Cooperation between the followers of different faiths is a necessary condition for peace and a natural result of authentic religious commitment. Rather than being a source of divisiveness or conflict, religious belief is innately ordered to harmony, brotherhood and understanding. "Precisely because of their faith, believers are called – as individuals and as a body – to be messengers and artisans of peace" (John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1992*, 1). As you are aware, Egypt's Catholics wish to make their own contribution to the growth of the nation, by working together with their Muslim brothers and sisters in building a society which appreciates and respects its members' different religious and cultural traditions.

Your Excellency, as you begin your mission to the Holy See I offer you my prayerful good wishes and assure you of the readiness of the various offices of the Roman Curia to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and your family, and upon all the beloved Egyptian people, I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of the Most high God.

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