



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF JAMAICA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 28 November 1992

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Jamaica to the Holy See. Grateful for the good wishes you have brought from your Government and people, I ask you to convey my cordial greetings to the Governor General, the Prime Minister and all your fellow-citizens. Please assure them of my prayers for the peace and prosperity of your country.

By its diplomatic action, the Holy See seeks that "wholesome mutual cooperation" (Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 76) with sovereign States which has as its centre a shared concern for human promotion and the defence of human dignity. Because of the ethical and moral dimensions that inevitably touch questions of development, the Church feels in duty bound to offer her guidance to men and women of good will. Down the centuries, she has reflected upon and enunciated the principles which follow from the Gospel message of salvation and are demanded by right reason (Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 63). In her social teaching she is concerned above all to provide a sure point of reference regarding ethical aspects of development and progress.

Economic choices, including the difficult ones involved in restructuring a national economy, as is now the case in Jamaica, entail moral decisions with implications for every person, family and community. Authentic development does not consist merely in the accumulation of wealth and in a greater availability of goods and services. Those responsible for economic life should evaluate proposed policies and programmes not only for their expected productivity but also and especially for their possible effects on human dignity. Since economic development should serve the individual's good in the community, the protection and promotion of the transcendent worth of

human beings ought to be the criterion used to judge the merit of any economic policy. As the tragic experiences of this century reveal, unless economic decisions are made in the light of the truth about God and the human person, then any so-called development turns into a new kind of slavery and oppression (Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 28).

As Your Excellency has noted, a supportive international environment is necessary if a country's economic problems are to be solved. Although there has been a radical change in relations between East and West since the collapse of totalitarian regimes, an enormous social and economic gap still divides the developed nations of the North from the developing nations of the South. At the same time it is true that alongside continuing instances of exaggerated national self-interest and exploitation of the weak, more and more people are becoming convinced that nations depend on one another for their ultimate well-being. This interdependence reveals "the need for a solidarity which will take up interdependence and transfer it to the moral plane" (*Ibid.*, 26).

During my recent visit to Santo Domingo, I again appealed to the wealthier countries to demonstrate their commitment to international solidarity by not shirking their moral responsibility of assisting developing nations (Cf. John Paul II, *Inaugural Address on the Occasion of the 4th General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate*, [October 12, 1992], 14). This worldwide solidarity, which is not unrealistic, opens up the possibility of establishing "a true economy of communion and participation in goods on both international and national levels" (*Ibid.*, 15). A firm and persevering commitment to the welfare of all is the only path to justice and world peace.

Catholics in Jamaica take a proud and active part in the nation's life and development. Their faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ impels them to respond to the cry of the uneducated, the sick, the suffering and the marginalized. Through her schools, health-care facilities and other social service agencies, the Catholic Church seeks to serve all the people of Jamaica, especially those who are most in need. What moves her is the "new commandment" to love our neighbour as Christ himself has loved us.

Mr Ambassador, with your understanding of the specific nature of the Holy See's role in fostering the solidarity of the international community and with your knowledge of the Church's commitment to the cause of authentic human development, you will do much, I am certain, to strengthen the ties of friendship between your Government and the Holy See. I offer you my best wishes for the success of your mission, and assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in fulfilling your duties. Upon yourself and all the people of Jamaica I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XV, 2 p.755-75.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1992 p. 814-815.

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