



The Holy See

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

Saturday, 28 November 1992

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to accept the Letters of Credence appointing You Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Nepal to the Holy See. It is almost ten years since Nepal and the Holy See agreed to the exchange of Representatives, and shortly afterwards I met here in the Vatican His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. Since that time the international order has undergone momentous changes which have had a profound impact not only on the conduct of diplomacy but on the very destinies of whole nations and peoples. In welcoming you to the Vatican today, I express my hope that in this altered world climate – with so many opportunities for advancing the cause of justice and solidarity – your service as your country's Ambassador will help to foster relations between Nepal and the Holy See so that, through mutual understanding, no chance to strengthen peace will be lost.

The establishment of a Catholic community in Nepal is quite recent, and it is small in numbers. Nevertheless, from the very beginning its members have sought to serve the nation by works of solidarity and development, especially in the fields of education and social assistance. In building up the society of which they form an integral part and to which they are lovingly devoted, the Catholics in your country seek to work in harmony and cooperation with the followers of all religious traditions and with all people of good will.

Your affirmation that political and economic choices must always be made in the light of the principle that man has both a spiritual and a material dimension clearly reflects the age-old traditions and values of the people of your country. Shaped over the centuries by a venerable wisdom about the meaning of man's existence and his relationship to the divine, Nepalese culture

bespeaks an attentiveness to man's transcendent destiny. As you have stated, without a concern for man's spiritual good, efforts at development are counter-productive. On this point the Catholic Church has expressed herself in affirming the subordination of *having* to *being*: "to 'have' objects and goods does not in itself perfect the human subject, unless it contributes to the maturing and enrichment of that subject's 'being', that is to say unless it contributes to the realization of the human vocation as such" (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 28). Technological advances which are not based upon sound ethical principles or which are not ordered to man's true happiness in fact worsen his condition, a point to which the history of this century gives eloquent testimony in all too many cases.

In relations with States and in the international forum the Holy See seeks to be a persevering voice in support of an integral vision of the human person. In accordance with its specific competence, the Holy See desires to foster all that unites individuals and societies and all that works for their greater good. It promotes effective cooperation among those dedicated to building a world marked by justice and peace. As a partner in the search for the full development of peoples, the Holy See feels particularly obliged to speak out clearly in defence of the whole range of human rights, especially the right to religious liberty. This right is a fundamental requirement of the dignity of every person and in effect it is the cornerstone of the entire structure of human rights. Even when circumstances cause the civil authority to extend special legal recognition to one particular religious body, the State has a duty to ensure that for all citizens, and also for resident foreigners, the right to freedom of conscience is legally recognized and effectively protected (Cf. John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1988*, 1). As a recognition of the inviolability of man's conscience, respect for religious freedom must be considered an irreplaceable factor of individual and social good and an essential element for peaceful human coexistence.

Mr Ambassador, I am grateful for the warm greetings you have brought from your Sovereign, and I ask you kindly to convey to him and to Her Majesty the Queen my personal best wishes. I also ask you to convey my greetings to the Prime Minister. I assure you that you will receive the full cooperation of the Holy See in your efforts to discharge successfully your responsibilities. I pray to Almighty God for the prosperity and well-being of the people of Nepal.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XV, 2 p. 752-754.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1992 p. 812-813.

L'Osservatore Romano 29.11.1992 p.11.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.49 p.12.

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