



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr. SHIRCHINJAVYN YUMJAV
FIRST AMBASSADOR OF MONGOLIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 28 October 1993

Your Excellency,

I am happy to welcome you to the Vatican today, and I assure you that it is for me a particular source of satisfaction to accept your Letters of Credence as the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Holy See. This day marks a new chapter in the relations between the Catholic Church and the noble Mongolian people, and I hope that these ties will grow ever stronger. I ask you kindly to convey to President Punsalmaagiyn Ochirbat and to the members of the Government my cordial good wishes, and I express my sentiments of esteem and respect for all your fellow-citizens.

Today's ceremony is closely connected with the transition which has been taking place in Mongolia in recent years. A fair appraisal of this development requires that it be considered within the context of the whole complex process of current global transformations. In your remarks, Your Excellency indicated the breadth and depth of the changes which have resulted in your country. The peaceful substitution of democratic structures for a long – established totalitarian regime, the ratification of a constitutional order enshrining respect for human rights – especially religious liberty – and the entry of Mongolia into the community of nations as an autonomous and fully participating member: all of these are monumental achievements.

As we think of the new Mongolia and its immediate future, one word comes immediately to mind: *development*. This is the aspiration of your people and the expressed goal of Mongolia's leaders. The transition from a centrally – planned and directed economy to one which is market – based is an important aspect of this growth and development. However, as both reason and experience show, economic progress requires a parallel social progress, with the creation of the educational,

cultural and spiritual conditions for the full personal development of the men and women who make up the national community. "*Development is a question of people*" (John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1987*, 6, 8 December 1986), and the citizens of your country are both the subject and the aim of development efforts. Government at every level effectively serves the common good to the extent that it helps people to discover the values which enable them to build a new life and to take their rightful place in society with dignity and justice (Cf. *ibid.*). In a democratic society, this service to the common welfare of the social body is the moral justification of political leadership.

As is so often the case with such historic accomplishments, recent transformations have brought with them a whole new series of challenges which must be met in order to bring to full fruition their great potential for improving the life of the people. The establishment in Mongolia of a new civil order provides a providential opportunity for an era of authentic progress. Efforts to improve the lot of a people through reorganizing the economy and making it more productive of essential goods and services, securing a healthy environment and ensuring the prudent management of natural resources, increasing the literacy rate and broadening access to education, and improving and extending medical care – such efforts will ultimately be sterile unless they are rooted in and directed by a firm belief in the truths of the ethical order which ought to rule the actions of individuals and communities. Respect for universal moral norms protects "the inviolable personal dignity of every human being" and helps "to preserve the human social fabric and its proper and fruitful development" (John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 97).

In today's interdependent world, the development of one country cannot come about without the concurrence of many others, and without reference to the international community and its structures of trade and production. The construction of a peaceful world, one in which the security of peoples and of states is ensured, requires a great solidarity between the developed and developing nations. In this respect, I express the ardent hope that Mongolia will receive the aid it needs as, with enthusiasm and renewed commitment, it moves forward as an independent and equal member of the family of nations.

The presence of the Holy See in the international community is directed towards the building of a more just and peaceful international order along the path of solidarity, dialogue and universal brotherhood. I am confident that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Mongolia will serve this very purpose. In reiterating the Catholic Church's desire to be of assistance in your country's present circumstances, especially by helping to overcome the moral and religious void left by past experiences, I wish to reaffirm that the Church will always be motivated by profound respect for the cultural and religious traditions of the Mongolian people.

With fervent prayers for Your Excellency and your fellow citizens, I invoke abundant divine blessings on your country, and I wish you well in the fulfilment of your diplomatic mission.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XVI, 2 p.1157-1159.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1993 p.917-918.

L'Osservatore Romano 29.10.1993 p.8.

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