



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR. RADIN SUHARJONO,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDONESIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 16 June 1995

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican at the beginning of your mission as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Indonesia to the Holy See. I very much appreciate the greetings and good wishes which you bring from President Soeharto and from the Government and people of Indonesia. I gladly reciprocate, and would ask you to convey to the President the assurance of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the nation, especially in this year of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Independence. I am confident that with Almighty God's help and the commitment of all its citizens Indonesia will avail of this happy commemoration to strengthen further its ethical, moral and spiritual foundations.

As you have been kind enough to recall, it was six years ago that I had the privilege and pleasure of visiting Indonesia and of experiencing at first hand not only the majesty and splendour of the Archipelago, but especially the hospitality and beauty of the people. The memories remain vividly etched in my mind: the variety of cultures and languages spread far and wide over thousands of islands. I came as a friend to all Indonesians, with great respect for the people of your nation (John Paul II, *Address to the President of the Republic of Indonesia at the Istana Negara Presidential Palace in Jakarta*, 1 [9 Oct. 1989]). And just last year the naming of Archbishop Darmaatmadja of Semarang to the College of Cardinals was meant to be a further expression of the esteem in which I hold the Church in your country and of the closeness which I feel to all Indonesians. I am happy that this nomination has been so well received by all.

In recent decades we have witnessed a remarkable acceleration of social change and material

development which, while producing many benefits, has also brought new concerns and problems. In this context, societies are realizing more and more that the political community, both national and international, exists to guarantee and serve the dignity and rights of the individuals, families and groups which form it. This is the goal which all public authority must foster; this is the moral principle which underlies and guides the active participation of citizens, individually and collectively, in the life, government and advancement of their country. Indeed, the well-being of a society greatly depends upon making people's interests, their culture and religious traditions, their freedoms, including religious freedom, the overall objective of social and political activity.

Concern for the well-being of the human family inspires the Holy See in its work within the international community and in its relations with States. And here, the Holy See recognizes that there is extensive ground for mutual understanding and cooperation with Indonesia in a common desire to serve the cause of human development and to encourage efforts to end the conflicts which are causing such suffering and bloodshed in some parts of the world. Indonesia has shown a special concern for the fostering of cooperation and peace, especially among its neighbours in Southeast Asia. This is particularly evident in your country's involvement in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its efforts to promote social and economic development in that region of the world. It is just such forms of international solidarity which will help dispel vestiges of mistrust and antagonism, and will serve to correct present imbalances.

An eloquent expression of the principles upon which justice and harmony are to be built is to be found in the Indonesian "Pancasila", the national philosophy which calls for belief in God, national unity, social justice, profound respect for human life, dignity and rights, and which insists on that freedom by which citizens determine their destiny as a people. Essential among these principles are religious freedom and interreligious tolerance, which are so important for a nation such as yours, with its variety of religious beliefs and traditions. Thanks to this policy, Indonesia's Catholic citizens, although a small minority in the overall population, have made significant contributions to the cultural, political and economic life of their country, especially in the fields of education, health care and social development. In this regard, I appreciate the words you have spoken in recognition of the dedicated efforts of the Catholic Church in Indonesia to strengthen and enrich the lives of individuals and of society itself.

In the light of the Church's universal mission to all peoples and nations, I cannot but turn my attention once more to the difficult situation in East Timor. The Holy See continues to follow the development of events there with keen interest and concern. Allow me to express the fervent hope that ever more appropriate measures will be adopted to ensure that human rights are respected, and that the cultural and religious values of the people are protected and promoted. In this way, a climate of trust will be established, which in turn will foster integral development. Furthermore, I wish to add a word of sincere encouragement that the dialogue which has already begun at various levels may continue, in order to advance a form of social and political life which, in justice and peace, will respond to the aspirations of the inhabitants of East Timor.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your service as Indonesia's Representative will continue to favour the good relations between your Nation and the Holy See in working for a civilization truly worthy of the human person. I assure you that all the departments of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. I pray that in his loving kindness and infinite mercy Almighty God will be your strength, and I invoke his abundant blessings upon you, your family, your country and all its citizens.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XVIII, 1 p.1757-1760.*

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