



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. Mr PAUL TIPPING, NEW AMBASSADOR  
OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Saturday, 25 March 1995*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed New Zealand's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See. I ask you kindly to assure the Governor General, Prime Minister and all New Zealanders of my continued esteem and good will. The defence of human rights, the promotion of peace and generous assistance to the world's needy peoples mark your nation's life and its contribution to the international community, and I pray that these noble traditions will continue to flourish and bear fruit.

You have noted the importance of the United Nations in restoring and securing peace wherever it is threatened. From that Organization's beginning fifty years ago, the Holy See regarded it with hope, as a means of strengthening understanding and co-operation among the world's peoples. Now, as it celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, we cannot fail to want the Organization to become ever more the instrument par excellence for promoting and safeguarding peace (cf. John Paul II, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, 9 [9 Jan. 1995]). The achievement of this goal requires a firm commitment on the part of its member States to guarantee, in principle and in practice, genuine respect for human dignity and human rights. This is the foundation which can ensure that the human person is always the focus and the end of all social institutions (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 25). In fact, peaceful and democratic life within and between States can only be built on the recognition of the transcendent dignity of the human person as the subject of inviolable rights.

Your Excellency has also mentioned New Zealand's interest in ecological issues and listed some

of the initiatives it has taken both at home and in the international forum to protect the environment. Individuals and nations must be committed to exercising responsible stewardship over the planet which the Creator has placed at the service of man's integral development. The widespread destruction or misuse of natural resources, which in some places has reached the level of a veritable ecological crisis, constitutes a problem with an inescapably moral character. The moral question arises from the fact that "there is an order in the universe which must be respected, and that the human person, endowed with the capability of choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order for the well-being of future generations" (John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1990*, 15 [8 Dec. 1989]). This aspect must always be taken into account if effective solutions are to be found.

Another matter on the international horizon which is still causing great concern, and which also has profound moral implications, is the continuing use of immense resources, economic and technological, in the production and sale of ever more lethal arms. New Zealand's stance with regard to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is well known and esteemed within the international community. Unfortunately, despite the important changes that have come about in global politics, we still see the transfer of significant quantities of sophisticated arms to highly volatile regions, often in violation of international conventions. More than ever a lofty moral vision and patient determination are needed, if ways are to be found of preventing tensions from degenerating into destruction and bloodshed, as is sadly happening in so many parts of the world.

Your presence, Mr Ambassador, cannot but bring to mind the beloved Catholic community in New Zealand. Following the teaching and example of her Divine Founder, who came "not to be served but to serve" (Mk. 10:45), the Church in your country, as an integral part of her spiritual mission, is extensively engaged in works of education, healthcare and social service. By teaching the value and transcendent destiny of every human life, she helps to strengthen the very basis of society's existence as a community firmly oriented and committed to the common good of all its members. She offers the insights of her social doctrine and the wisdom of her moral teaching as means which can effectively contribute to consolidating society in justice and in harmony between peoples of different ethnic origins and religious persuasions.

Mr Ambassador, I offer you cordial best wishes as you begin your mission as New Zealand's Representative to the Holy See, and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will gladly welcome you and assist you in carrying out your lofty responsibilities. May Almighty God bless you and all your fellow citizens.

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\**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XVIII, 1 p.841-843.

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