



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr NOVEL KISHORE RAI,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF NEPAL TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 12 December 1996

Your Excellency, I am pleased to welcome you today to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev has appointed you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nepal to the Holy See. I thank you for the kind greetings which you have expressed in your Sovereign's name and gladly reciprocate with good wishes for His Majesty and for the entire Nepalese people. Diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Holy See are the expression of our shared conviction that greater understanding between peoples and peace in the world can only be built on mutual respect and trust in bilateral and multilateral relations, ultimately based on the sincere dialogue of mind and heart which makes such relations possible. At the same time these relations have a special character of their own. The Holy See's presence and activity in the international community respond to the particular nature of its essentially religious and humanitarian mission. Thus it perceives its diplomatic role in terms of serving the advancement of the human person and of society through the affirmation of such universal values as peace, solidarity, justice and liberty (cf. John Paul II, *Address for the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization*, 18 [5 Oct. 1995]). The central object of its concern in all situations and in every part of the world is the *dignity which belongs to every human being by the simple fact of being human*. This dignity is an inalienable, inherent possession coming neither from the community nor the State nor the law, but which precedes institutions, laws and agreements and determines their value and correctness. From this view of human dignity there follows the duty to defend and promote the moral and spiritual dimensions of life, personal and social, without which human beings cannot reach fulfilment, nor build a society respectful of their transcendent nature. I note Your Excellency's observation that the greater the progress made on the material level, the more people need spiritual enlightenment in order to sustain that progress. This is indeed an important truth, and one which does not always receive the attention it deserves in the determination of public policies; for true progress lies not in having more possessions but in becoming wiser and more responsible in their use. When that happens we become more conscious of the centrality and inalienable worth of the human person, and more open to others, especially the weak and needy. A nation which intends to be just and humane ought to defend and promote such values, and ensure that its institutions follow principles which enable it to organize and govern the life of society for the common good. Your own country is blessed with ancient religious resources, capable of offering insights and incentives for a balanced development, respectful of the integral good of its citizens. The Catholic community in Nepal, though small

in number, expresses this concern for genuine human development in a practical way through the spiritual formation of its members, and through their work in the spheres of education and health care. It is my hope that this work will continue in a serene spirit of mutual respect and co-operation with Government and people. The Church does not seek special privileges, but only the guaranteed freedom which enables people to be true to the dictates of conscience in matters of religion and to practise their faith publicly and peacefully in harmony with the followers of all other traditions. Mr Ambassador, as you work to strengthen relations between your country and the Holy See, I would assure you of the ready co-operation of the departments of the Roman Curia. Upon Your Excellency and upon the Kingdom of Nepal I invoke abundant divine

blessings.

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