



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr LUIS SOLARI TUDELA,
AMBASSADOR OF PERU TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 15 November 1997

Mr Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to receive you on this solemn occasion for the presentation of the Letters of Credence accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Peru to the Holy See. As I offer you my cordial welcome, I would like to thank you for your kind words and for President Alberto Fujimori's thoughtful greeting which you conveyed to me and which I reciprocate, asking you kindly to pass on to him my best wishes for the peace and well-being of all the noble Peruvian people.
2. This is the second time you are fulfilling the honourable office of representing your nation to the Apostolic See. Your nation has been blessed and is blessed by a broad, profound presence of the Catholic faith in its citizens' lives and has offered the Church and humanity some admirable examples of holiness: St Rose of Lima and St Martin de Porres, St Turibius of Mogrovejo, St John Macías and St Francis Solano, Bl. Anna of Monteagudo and others.
3. The Church in your country, under the Bishops' wise and careful guidance, is working with generosity and enthusiasm to fulfil her mission, thus ensuring that moral values and a Christian conception of life, so deeply rooted there, continue to inspire the citizens' life so that those who have various forms of responsibility will take these values into account, in order to build day by day an ever better and more prosperous homeland, where everyone can see his inalienable rights fully respected.

The Church carries out the mission entrusted to her by her divine Founder in various fields such

as, among others, the defence of life and the family institution. At the same time, in accordance with her social doctrine, she strives to promote a peaceful and orderly existence among citizens and between nations. The Church herself, far from claiming to impose concrete criteria of governance, nevertheless has the inescapable duty of shedding the light of faith on the development of the social reality where she finds herself.

In your address you referred to the fact that the Peruvian nation considers her multiracial elements a treasure. This fact demands special attention from leaders, to prevent the emergence of unjust inequalities, and to ensure that all citizens have access to public institutions and services, by recognizing that every person is endowed by God with a dignity that nothing and no one can violate.

In this regard, the Church teaches that institutional structures must provide "all citizens without any distinction with ever improving and effective opportunities to play an active part in the establishment of the juridical foundations of the political community, in the administration of public affairs, in determining the aims and the terms of reference of public bodies, and in the election of political leaders" (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, n. 75). This involves for each citizen "his right and his duty to promote the common good by using his vote" (*ibid.*), and to have access to various public services such as education and health care. In this regard, I encourage them to continue to work for the full integration of all people into national life, in dignified conditions for everyone and with respect for the traditions and cultures that constitute this rich framework; this will certainly help to avoid the danger of divisions among the Peruvian people and to overcome possible tensions.

4. You also referred to the struggle your Government is waging against poverty. Indeed, this cannot be considered an endemic evil, but the lack, brought about by various circumstances, of the goods necessary for personal development. In this respect, the Church feels as her own the hard plight of so many brothers and sisters who are caught in the web of poverty and, in fidelity to the Gospel, she constantly reaffirms her commitment to them as an expression of the merciful love of Jesus Christ. This is why the Church herself is close to those who are working hard so that social institutions are effectively committed to human advancement, in order to alleviate the precarious situations in which so many individuals and families find themselves.

The moral and social scar of poverty certainly requires technical and political solutions, ensuring that economic activity and the benefits it produces effectively redound to the common good. As I wrote in my *Message for the World Day of Peace in 1993*: "A State, whatever its political organization or economic system, remains fragile and unstable if it does not give constant attention to its weakest members and if it fails to do everything possible to ensure that at least their primary needs are satisfied" (n. 3; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 16 December 1992, p. 2). However, it should not be forgotten that all these measures will be insufficient if they are not inspired by authentic ethical and spiritual values. For this reason, the eradication of poverty

is also a moral duty in which Christian justice and solidarity have an indispensable role.

5. In your address you pointed out that one of the objectives of your country's foreign policy is to contribute to international peace and security, and to foster co-operation with all peoples and, in particular, neighbourly relations. In this regard I am pleased to recall the value of dialogue as a privileged vehicle for establishing and maintaining peaceful relations with other nations, thus overcoming possible controversies that can arise, and for keeping in mind the importance of solidarity and international co-operation. I hope that the process under way in Brasília will reach a successful conclusion, with the effective help of the guarantor countries, in order to put an end to differences with the sister nation of Ecuador.

On the other hand, peace in the international order currently requires many contacts with various forums. By actively participating in the concert of nations and in the organizations of which it is composed, it will be possible to overcome the temptation to national isolation and will enable peoples to recover from international marginalization and impoverishment (cf. Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, n. 33). Peace is not limited to the economic aspects but must also be applied to the world of ideas, basic rights and values. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that peace between peoples will be more easily achieved if diplomatic initiatives are accompanied by an authentic pedagogy of peace which will help to encourage an attitude of co-operation and harmony among all.

6. Mr Ambassador, at the end of this meeting I would like to express my best wishes to you for your mission to this Apostolic See, which seeks to maintain and consolidate the good relations that already exist with the Republic of Peru, and to help overcome difficulties which may arise between the Church and State in your country. I assure you of my prayers to the Almighty that, through the intercession of Our Lady of Evangelization, deeply venerated in the cathedral of Lima, he may always assist you with his gifts, as well as your distinguished family, your co-workers and the leaders and citizens of your noble country, which I remember with great affection and upon which I invoke an abundance of blessings from the Most High.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English* n.49 p.4.

