



# The Holy See

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## **ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF PORTUGAL TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Saturday, 21 December 1968*

*Mr. Ambassador:*

The noble words which Your Excellency has addressed to us touch us profoundly. We find there echoes of the long and vibrant tradition of Catholic Portugal.

Triple tradition, one could say. Historical tradition first of all: that of a country which from its origin as an independent state has been linked to the Apostolic See – as Your Excellency recalled a moment ago – in a relationship which, thanks to the grace of God, is still very strong today.

Religious tradition also: that of a nation which has allowed the message of the Gospel, through the course of ages, to animate so many of its institutions and especially to shape its soul with the solid virtues of faith, courage and endurance which constitute even today its most precious patrimony.

Missionary tradition, finally: that of a Christian community, which, through the bravery of some of the best of its sons, has enriched the Church with epic deeds which rank among the most distant, the most heroic and glorious in history.

The soul of Portugal has remained marked by this tradition, and if from the past we move to the present, each is able to give witness to the seriousness and profundity of the Christian sentiments which yet today animate this nation. We ourselves were able to verify it at Fatima during an unforgettable pilgrimage: very rarely in Our life have We been permitted to see a parallel spectacle of faith and religious fervour.

We are not forgetting that the life of Portugal affirms itself also at the intellectual level, and it is with joy that We make mention in your presence of the recent and very happy inauguration of the

Catholic University of Lisbon which carries so many hopes for the future of your country.

What will be its future, in the immense changes now taking place in the modern world? It will be, We hope and desire, a future of perseverance and of courageous cultural and social development. Under what conditions ought this to be achieved? To be truly fruitful and beneficial, it ought to take place in an orderly manner, that is to say in attentive observance of justice for all and in respect for a healthy liberty which conforms to the needs of the maturity which is developing in these times. We desire that this be realized especially through a solid and cordial unity of all the Portuguese people and in a constant and the Catholic faith.

It is with these sentiments that We receive, Mr. Ambassador, the letters which accredit you to Us as representative of Portugal. We invoke the abundance of Divine favours upon our beautiful country and on those responsible for its destiny, and also upon you yourself and on the happy development of your mission here with Us. And it is with full heart that We accord to you, as well as your family and all those dear to you, Our Apostolic Benediction.

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\*ORa 1969 n.2 p.2.