



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 3 May 1971

Mr. Ambassador,

The delicate sentiments your Excellency has just addressed to Us concerning the Catholic Church and the role of the Apostolic See of Rome are a source of deep joy for Us, and We would like to consider them as an additional pledge of happy and fruitful relationships which will continue and develop between your noble country and the Holy See. While thanking you for these kind words, We wish to assure you of the esteem and affection We bear towards the people of the United Arab Republic.

For anyone who appreciates the stirring experience of humanity during a thousand years, there is scarcely need to emphasize the fact that Egypt evokes a past of imperishable monuments which we still admire as precious witnesses to the grandeur and civilization of Egypt. We do appreciate your reference to those centres of Christian education and spirituality where the thinkers of the school of Alexandria distinguished themselves. Origin, Athanasius and Cyril, as well as the monks or hermits Paul, Anthony and Pacomius. It is in such testimonies and in these incomparable examples that Christian thought and life find inspiration today as yesterday.

At the present time, the Catholics of Egypt are making generous contributions to the pursuit of the spiritual and material well-being of your dear country and thus maintain, with other confessions and religions, relationships characterized by respect, brotherhood and cooperation. We Ourselves recall with pleasure the recent visit here of an Islamic delegation.

As you know, We are much preoccupied with the problem of peace, convinced as We are that this is a profound need and desire of the peoples and an indispensable condition for their integral and joint development. We have therefore followed with hope the laborious course of negotiations

aimed at solving the crisis in the Middle East. With all Our heart We pray that the courage and wisdom on both sides may unite harmoniously to achieve solutions satisfactory to all parties concerned and capable of bringing about a lasting peace.

Oh, if only we could see this Mediterranean basin, so near to all of us, become a haven of peace, a privileged place of enriching meetings between different cultures for the tranquillity of the world and the progress of mankind! Many people think that this is the propitious moment, now more than ever before, to start on this decisive road. For Our part, We have often said it and repeat it again. We are determined to work untiringly within the limits of Our possibilities to promote a fruitful understanding between all these joint partners, with due respect for the liberty and legitimate rights of each one of them in all honour and all justice.

Your Excellency was pleased to point out the cultural and spiritual mission the Catholic schools are fulfilling within the U.A.R. We note this acknowledgement with satisfaction. Yes, the Church is happy to participate in the effort made by the nation in the field of education, so important for its future. With the necessary help of the civil authorities, the Church will continue to provide wholeheartedly this service open to all, while at the same time taking care of the religious support of her own children.

With these sentiments We ask you to convey Our best wishes to His Excellency, Mr. President of the Republic, and express the hope that your mission to the Holy See will be a happy and fruitful one. We willingly invoke upon you and your fellow-citizens abundant blessings of Almighty God.

*ORa n.19 p.4.