



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE AMBASSADOR OF IRAN TO THE HOLY SEE**

Monday, 4 April 1977

We bid you a hearty welcome and we thank you particularly for your kind words which do honour to Your Excellency and to the noble country that you now represent to the Holy See.

For a long time, in fact, Iran has aroused the esteem and sympathy of the Holy See, and diplomatic relations have merely illustrated and strengthened the relationships of cordiality and collaboration which we wish to deepen. The history of your country recalls not only a glorious past and a fruitful culture. The leaders of today, and in particular His Imperial Majesty Shahinshah Aryamehr, manifest a deep concern to develop everything, especially in the fields of education and technical progress, that can help to ensure their fellow citizens the rightful advancement to which they aspire in the modern world. We know also the intense religious feeling that animates the Iranian people as a whole in its monotheistic faith. And that, too, constitutes a happy omen: these spiritual forces encourage and guarantee a development worthy of men, for, when all is said and done, a civilization is great only through its soul.

In this context, you recalled, Mr Ambassador, the respect and welcome that religious minorities enjoy, in particular the Christian communities, in the rich variety of their rites. «Full members of the large Iranian family», as Your Excellency was pleased to stress, they bear witness, in fact, to their deep roots, their religious vitality, and loyal and generous dedication to the service of their compatriots. We rejoice at the spirit of brotherhood and harmonious cooperation that mark these relations, in accordance with Iran's noble tradition of peace.

But it is also on the level of great international problems that your country assumes a very active participation. Mankind needs the collaboration of all men of good will, firmly resolved to consolidate true peace, which goes hand in hand with the promotion of the rights of the human person, the implementation of greater justice for all, and aid for underprivileged environments and peoples. An atmosphere of truth and brotherhood, corresponding to the will of the Creator and to

respect for men, must be established everywhere. That is the leitmotif of our efforts in international relations – as you will witness – and we do not doubt that they coincide with those of the Iranian people.

We appreciate the respectful sentiments that your august Sovereign instructed you to express to us: we ask you to renew to him the assurance of our faithful memory and our best wishes. We implore upon him and upon all your compatriots the Blessings of the Almighty, and we add for you warm wishes for the accomplishment of your mission as Ambassador to the Holy See.

*ORa n.16 p.2.
