



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT*

Monday 13 February 1978

Mr. President,

We extend our cordial welcome to Your Excellency and to the distinguished persons who accompany you, and we express our satisfaction at this meeting, which has had as its subject peace in the Middle East, that peace which we too have so much at heart and for which you are working so intensely.

As you well know, we have followed with player, with good wishes and with active concern, the initiative that Your Excellency has recently promoted for this aim. For an objective of such importance for the peoples of the region and for the whole world, it seems to us indeed that no appropriate attempt should be omitted, with the desire and with the hope that an equitable and stable solution to the conflict can finally be reached.

We are aware of the difficulty of attaining such a solution, which must necessarily comprise different elements: a prospect of justice and security must be reconstituted for all the peoples of the Middle East (and we are thinking here also of Lebanon, which has already paid such a high price by reason of the unresolved situation); the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people must be satisfied; there must be ensured for Jerusalem such juridical and factual conditions that the city should not continue to be a motive of strife between the parties, but that it become – in accordance with its vocation – a religious centre of peace, where the local communities of the three great monotheistic religions can live together in peaceful equality of rights, and where Jews, Christians and Moslems of the region and of the entire world can meet and engage in fraternal dialogue.

We are convinced that, by giving adequate responses to each and all of these just requirements,

the edifice of peace can be built on solid foundations, creating a climate of ever greater trust and mutual understanding, and starting a process which, through collaboration in various spheres, will permit peace itself to be consolidated and to bring forth ever greater fruit.

We therefore repeat here our earnest hope, already expressed recently, that, through the persevering courage and wise far-sightedness of the leaders of all the parties concerned, a decisive impulse may be given to the search for the desired – and we would like to hope – rapid solution.

Finally, we renew to Your Excellency and to all the Egyptian people our fervent good wishes for peaceful progress and for the blessing of the Most High.

*ORa n.8 p.2.