



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRALIA TO THE HOLY SEE*

Thursday, 5 April 1979

Mr Ambassador, IT IS GRATIFYING to note the sense of personal privilege and responsibility with which you undertake your diplomatic mission at the Holy See. Be assured of my cordial welcome and of my desire to assist you in the service you are called to render to your country. I also thank you for the good wishes you bring from your Government, which I willingly reciprocate. You have spoken kindly about the beginning of my pontificate, about my predecessors, and about the role of the Holy See. These words are all appreciated. Your reference to human diversity as a stimulus for cooperative and creative relationships, and your reference to human concern, are particularly meaningful for both the Catholic Church and Australia. The Catholic Church by her very nature embodies diversity to the point of universality, and, while respecting it, she incorporates it into organic unity. Diversity is likewise part of the very make-up of your country, which has become host to peoples from many lands and has been enriched by their contribution. During his visit to Sydney, Paul VI enunciated this principle when speaking to a group of Australia's first inhabitants. "Society itself", he said, "is enriched by the presence of different cultural and ethnic elements"^[1]. On that occasion he also spoke of human and civic rights in the master of diversity, and of brotherhood and collaboration for the sake of the common good. The question of human concern is likewise an issue of great importance. Just yesterday, in Saint Peter's Square I spoke about the need for this concern, for solidarity with every human being throughout the world – with those who suffer from hunger, want, mistreatment, humiliation, torture, imprisonment and social discrimination. I mentioned, moreover, the Church's mission to protect the universal dimension of this human solidarity. In pursuing her own commitment, the Church willingly lends her support to the nations of the world for all their worthy initiatives in the service of man and in the cause of human dignity. In this regard, a particular word of praise is due to Australia for the welcome that it has recently afforded to large numbers of refugees. Today I ask God to bless Australia, and to enable it to accomplish to the full its important destiny. I pray also that your own mission here will be successful and happy.^[1] Pauli VI *Allocutio, 2 dec.*

1970.

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