



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR. BASHIR BAKRI,
AMBASSADOR OF SUDAN TO THE HOLY SEE***

14 July 1979

I would like to address to you words of gratitude in the very first place, for you have chosen, in order to inaugurate your mission, to illustrate subjects to which the Catholic Church and the Pope in particular attach great importance, and you have done so in terms marked by elevation and nobility. I trust that your representation to the Holy See, which has started under such happy auspices, will turn out to be very fruitful.

And how could it be otherwise? Is not your country endeavouring to become, within an Africa still suffering from deep tensions in certain regions, a place of comprehension between the different communities that populate it, a place where solutions, which take into account as far as possible the rights and beliefs of each person, are sought for the inevitable problems that arise? In this way it shows moderation and tolerance.

His Excellency General Gaafar Mohammed Nimeiri, who together with other African personalities took part on 22 December 1973 in a very significant meeting around my revered predecessor Paul VI, now sends you to the new Pope. I beg you to thank him and to convey to him my greeting and personal wishes for his duties at the head of the State and as the present President of the Organization of African Unity. You will tell him that I look to the Sudan with hope and trust.

As for you, Mr Ambassador, you will discover more and more, through your duties themselves, the quite specific character of the Holy See and its role in the concert of nations. Your contacts at the Vatican, the analysis of the documents published, the interest you will take in the life of the Church, all this will enable you to help your Government to understand better this reality. Consequently you will be led to make known the content and significance of our interventions on the international plane. And then, while the Sudan numbers many Moslems among its inhabitants,

a good many of your fellow-countrymen, however, are Christians. Thus there is a deep knowledge of the Catholic world, a basis for even more efficient collaboration in the promotion of spiritual values. I am happy, on my side, at the witness borne, in the Sudan, by members of the Church, under the impulse of the bishops, priests, men and women religious, natives and missionaries, all of whom have no other purpose than to serve the population.

My most fervent wishes, therefore, accompany Your Excellency on the threshold of your mission. I pray to Almighty God to grant them, in order that the years to come may see new progress in mutual understanding and the common promotion of superior ideals for the greater good of mankind.

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