



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E.M. MR JOSEPH QUAO CLELAND
NEW AMBASSADOR OF GHANA TO THE HOLY SEE**

Saturday, 17 January 1981

Mr Ambassador,

IT IS WITH PLEASURE that I accept the Letters which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ghana to the Holy See. I sincerely appreciate the good wishes that you have conveyed from His Excellency Dr Hilla Limann and I ask that you assure him of my own cordial sentiments of respect.

With our meeting today I vividly recall the warm welcome that was given to me by the President, Government officials and the people of Ghana during my pastoral visit to your country this past year. The atmosphere of joyful celebration which marked that occasion impressed me as being a reflection of the profound sense of hospitality that characterizes your people.

My visit, as you know, allowed me to participate directly in the centenary observance of the implanting of the Catholic faith in Ghana. Since 1880 the seeds of the faith have taken root and continued to grow in ways that have benefitted not only the universal Church, but also the whole nation of Ghana. For this reason I appreciate the reference in your address to the contribution of the Church's evangelical spirit in the development of your country, and I would assure you that the Church wishes to collaborate fully with the civil authorities in promoting the dignity and well-being of all the people.

Our meeting takes place as we begin a New Year, as we take another step closer to the beginning of the third millennium. What a unique opportunity is given to each people, nation and continent in this present generation! As I mentioned in my Encyclical [Dives in Misericordia](#), the possibilities of technological advancement, of intellectual and cultural exchange, of great progress in the social

sciences are multiple and challenging. Yet in the very opportunity for attaining such benefits, there also lie tensions and threats to stifle that progress and even to endanger human existence itself. And these dangers are not limited to the external forces of arms and weapons, but they include as well the materialistic mentality of accepting a “primacy of things over persons”^[1].

Your people, Mr Ambassador, enjoy a remarkable history of giving witness to the value of the human person.

As we approach the year two thousand, can we not ask whether in the Providence of God this respect for the human person, so much a part of the life of your people, may be the most lasting benefit that the world community will receive from any single nation or continent? I repeat the conviction that I expressed last year in Accra: “Africa is called to bring fresh ideals and insights to a world that shows signs of fatigue and selfishness. I am convinced that you Africans can do this”.

I ask Almighty God to bless your mission to the Holy See with happiness and success. I extend my cordial good wishes to your beloved country and pray that its people will live in full serenity, advancing the cause of justice, peace and brotherhood in the world.

^[1] No. 11.