



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr DALUWATUMULLE GAMAGE BANDUSENA DE SILVA
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 22 November 1984

Mr Ambassador,

it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. I appreciate the kind words which you have just now addressed to me, and I avail myself of this moment to reaffirm my cordial goodwill and prayerful concern for all the people of Sri Lanka.

As you are well aware, the diplomatic mission of the Holy See has special characteristics which respond to the essentially religious and spiritual nature of the Catholic Church's role in the world. The activities of the Holy See are directed to the integral development of the human family, with particular reference to the safeguarding and promotion of fundamental values rooted in the inalienable dignity of every human being.

Because the Church endeavours to carry out this service in a way that effectively promotes the good of the men and women of our time. The Holy See is greatly interested in maintaining close and cordial relations with the civil authorities responsible for the well-being of the peoples of the various countries. It seeks an exchange of views on ways to promote the common good and is actively present in international life to support efforts aimed at facilitating the just and equitable development of each people according to its specific character and traditions.

In this work the Holy See follows the guidelines set forth by the Second Vatican Council when it stated that "in their proper spheres, the political community and the Church are mutually independent and self-governing. Yet, by a different title, each serves the personal and social

vocation of the same human beings. This service can be more effectively rendered for the good of all, if each works better for wholesome mutual cooperation, depending on the circumstances of time and place" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 76).

Mr Ambassador, an important part of your task as representative of your country to the Holy See consists in furthering this "wholesome mutual cooperation". I wish to assure you of the full collaboration of the various organisms of the Holy See. And I would assure you that the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka wishes wholeheartedly to be a source of understanding and peace, of development and tolerance.

I recall what I stated publicly on 31 July 1983, at a time of painful tension in your country: "The Christians, even though not numerous, certainly shall not fail to contribute effectively to the longed-for reconciliation, by giving an example of true dialogue, an essential condition for social peace".

It is my ardent prayer that such a dialogue will proceed with success and that the Sri Lankan history of respect and mutual acceptance between different religious and cultural traditions will prevail over whatever difficulties exist or will present themselves in the future.

Mr Ambassador, I ask you kindly to convey my greetings to His Excellency President J. R. Jayewardene, reciprocating his own best wishes.

May God grant you much happiness in the fulfilment of your diplomatic responsibilities. And may the whole Sri Lankan people be blessed with true peace and well-being!

*AAS 77 (1985), p. 484-485.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. VII, 2 pp. 1269-13270.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1984 pp. 894-895.

L'Osservatore Romano 23.11. 1984 p.5.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.52-53 p.8.

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