



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE FIRST AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday, 12 December 1985

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you today to the Vatican and to accept your Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Your presence here is an indication of the resolve of your country and of the Holy See to strengthen the cordial relations already existing, and to work together in every way possible to promote understanding and peace at a time when it is especially important to encourage a genuine dialogue between the nations of the world.

I thank you for the words of greeting which you expressed on behalf of His Excellency President Banana, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, and I gladly reciprocate with my good wishes for the stability and well-being of the entire nation.

At this stage in history when the human family is making such remarkable strides in many fields of human endeavour, it is painful to see that progress and peace are constantly threatened by the disunity that exists between individuals and group and nations. Tensions exist which seem beyond the power of reason and goodwill to resolve.

And yet, at the same time, there is a widespread realization that situations of conflict can only be redressed through dialogue and negotiation between the parties involved, in which the welfare of all becomes the object of discussion, agreement and mutual collaboration. Such dialogue and negotiation proceed from the profound desire for peace present in the human spirit. They proceed also from freedom of thought and expression, and from respect for the inalienable rights of all people.

Your words about justice without discrimination for all of Zimbabwe's citizens, about genuine liberation, and about peace with all your country's neighbours, constitute a noble expression of the sentiments that lie deep in the hearts of your fellow-citizens. I pray that Almighty God will enlighten and strengthen your people to achieve these goals for their own happiness and well-being, and as an example to the other peoples of Africa who aspire to a life of justice, harmony and dignity for all.

The Catholic Church, following the teachings of her Founder, is convinced that the path of progress is the path of respect for the inviolable dignity of every man, woman and child. The Church has always held that every human being, created in the image of the Creator, is the subject of inalienable rights and duties. It is a principle which is engraved on man's conscience and which makes itself felt in the face of every form of violence or exploitation.

The Church seeks to collaborate with governments and other social forces in order to create a climate in which individuals and families can fulfil their duties and safeguard their rights. The Bishops of Zimbabwe have repeatedly expressed their intention to work for the whole nation, since such a task corresponds to their pastoral mission and service of the common good.

Mr Ambassador, your mission as Representative of Zimbabwe assumes a particular character in view of the specific role which the Holy See seeks to exercise in the world community. This role is directly related to the fundamental questions of peace, development, respect for human rights, assistance to those in need, and the ordering of international relations according to justice and equity.

It is my prayer that you will find satisfaction in the fulfilment of your duties, and I assure you of the ready collaboration of the various departments of the Holy See.

May Almighty God guide and protect you in your task, and may he pour out his abundant blessings on the beloved people of Zimbabwe!

*AAS 78 (1986), p.505-507.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. VIII, 2 p.1493-1495.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1985 p.1032-1033.

L'Osservatore Romano 13.12. 1985 p.5.

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