



The Holy See

DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II

A S.E. IL SIGNOR MAMADOU TAIROU DJAUGA,

NUOVO AMBASCIATORE DELLA REPUBBLICA POPOLARE DEL BENIN PRESSO LA SANTA

SEDE* *Giovedì, 1° dicembre 1988*

Mr. Ambassador,

Welcome to the Vatican where I have the joy of receiving Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of Benin.

I am touched by the noble sentiments expressed through the courteous words which you have just addressed to me; I am touched in particular by the very friendly greetings which you present to me on behalf of your President, His Excellency General Mathieu Kerekou. It is a pleasure for me to renew to him, through you, the sincere good wishes which I expressed to him yesterday, on the occasion of the national feast of your country. Once again I assure him of my prayer that God may assist the people of Benin in their pursuit of a development which fulfils all the aspirations of the human heart, to use the terms of my message

Mr. Ambassador, you alluded to the efforts of the Apostolic See for the defence of human dignity, for the promotion of social Justice and for the establishment of lasting peace among nations. These are ideals which your own country likewise desires to promote, and your presence here witnesses to the interest your fellow countrymen have in motivations of the spiritual order for the building of an ever more authentically human world. I have no doubt that your mission will lead to a still greater convergence of views and strengthen the bonds that already exist, in support of a more effective action for the common good of our brothers and sisters.

Initiatives undertaken in favour of a greater understanding and of a better brotherhood among human beings are rendered more fruitful when they find in others a certain conception of man which includes his mysterious vocation of openness to God. The wisdom of the peoples of your continent lies in their intuitive grasp of this spiritual dimension of man, and it is well to contribute to the spread of this insight, for the benefit of the whole human family.

For its part, the Catholic Church whose sole ambition is to proclaim freely the salvific message of the Lord, desires to work for the integral development of every man and woman, in fraternal collaboration with the members of other religious confessions and with respect for the beliefs of each.

Allow me, Mr. Ambassador, to take this opportunity to greet, through you, the Catholics of Benin, whom I keep in my prayers and in my heart. This year, I have been able to concern myself in a still more particular manner with their Christian life, thanks to the visit their bishops paid me last March. I can assure you of their loyal support. Carried along by the dynamism of their faith, their desire is to unite with all the citizens in the work of the development of the nation, while bringing the leaven of the Gospel to wherever they live. According to their means, they would like to help primarily those who are in need, to contribute to the important task of the education of youth, teaching the rising generations to satisfy their ideals through works that are noble and useful to the community and to strengthen family structures, in conformity with the dignity of man and woman, for the good of their nation.

At the moment when you are officially assuming your responsibilities. I offer you my best wishes for the happy accomplishment of your mission. Be assured, Mr. Ambassador, that you will always find here the understanding attention you may need. Reiterating my great affection for the people of Benin and addressing my respectful greeting to its leaders, I invoke upon the entire nation the help and the abundant blessing of

God.

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