



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR Mc DONALD AMON BANDA
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 13 April 1989

Mr Ambassador,

It is my pleasure to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Malawi to the Holy See. I deeply appreciate the greetings and good wishes which you have conveyed on behalf of your President, Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda, and I would ask you to assure him of my continued prayers for the peace and well-being of all the people of your country.

I am very much looking forward to my forthcoming Pastoral Visit to Malawi. It takes place in the year marking the centenary of the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries. Through this visit I wish to strengthen my Catholic brothers and sisters in their faith and to join them in thanking Almighty God for the many blessings received by the Church in Malawi over the past hundred years. At that time I will also have the privilege of meeting your President officially, and although the visit will be principally pastoral in character, my message will be one of peace and good will to all the people of Malawi. Thus it is my fervent hope that the visit will serve, as Your Excellency has mentioned, to further the good relations existing between the Government of Malawi and the Holy See.

You have kindly referred to the Holy See's efforts to encourage dialogue in order to safeguard world peace. Indeed the economic gap separating North and South, and the ideological contrasts between East and West make it necessary for the peoples of the world to follow the path of dialogue. True dialogue goes beyond contrasting ideologies and helps to break down preconceived notions and opinions, while focusing attention on the aspirations for solidarity present in all people's hearts. It means abandoning the divisive kind of thinking that defends

personal privilege and power, and replacing political, economic, social and cultural tensions with a new openness to sharing and collaboration in a spirit of mutual trust (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius ob diem ad pacem govendam dicatum, pro a. D. 1986, 4, die 8 dec. 1985: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, VIII, 2 [1985] 1468s.*).

Your country has enjoyed the blessing of peace during its twenty-five years of independence. You stated that this is due in large measure to your Government's protection of the people's right to freedom of worship and association. Likewise, an important factor contributing to your country's national unity has been the Government's respect for the diversity and uniqueness of the different ethnic and religious groups which make up the population. In my *Message for this year's World Day of Peace* I repeated the Holy See's firm conviction that it is only through whole-hearted commitment at every level of society that all forms of religious, cultural or ethnic discrimination can be eliminated and national unity achieved. I emphasized that "reconciliation according to justice and with respect for the legitimate aspirations of all sectors of the community must be the rule. Above all and in all, the patient effort to build a peaceful society finds strength and fulfilment in the love that embraces all peoples. Such a love can be expressed in countless ways of serving the rich diversity of the human race, which is one in origin and destiny" (Cfr. Eiusdem *Nuntius ob diem ad pacem govendam dicatum, pro a. D. 1989, 12, die 8 dec. 1988: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, XI 3 [1988] 1788*).

I note with satisfaction your Government's appreciation of the Church's continued social involvement, especially in the areas of education and health care. The mission which Christ entrusted to his Church is to lead all of humanity to God so as to share his divine life and happiness for all eternity. Stemming from this strictly religious mission, however, there follows the Church's service to the human community, in conformity with the divine precept of charity (Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes, 42*).

Accordingly, the Church in Malawi strives, as far as her resources permit, to assist in programmes of social development. Working in collaboration with your Government, the Church through her different forms of apostolate seeks to serve as a leaven for the betterment of society.

I cannot fail to mention that the Holy See continues to note with concern the growing number of refugees who have entered your country in recent years seeking safety, food and shelter. Most of them are from the areas of conflict in Mozambique. I commend and encourage your Government in its efforts to deal with this difficult problem. I also call upon the worldwide community and international humanitarian relief agencies to assist Malawi in providing all the forms of assistance needed by these poor and homeless people.

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your mission I assure you of the Holy See's complete cooperation in the fulfilment of your responsibilities. The Holy See values its bonds of friendship with your country and through your work it looks forward to strengthening them even more. Upon Your

Excellency, your President and the Government and people of the Republic of Malawi I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

*AAS 81 (1989), p. 1129-1131.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XII, 1 pp. 808-810.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1989 pp. 244-245.

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