



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de CHILE,
Excmo. Sr. Don Sergio OSSA PRETOT**

18 de junio de 1990

Mister Ambassador,

It gives me special pleasure to receive the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chile to the Holy See. In extending to you my heart-felt welcome during this act of presentation, I am pleased to re-iterate to you my deep affection for all my dear Chilean sons and daughters.

This is a happy moment which makes me recall the intense days of faith and hope which I experienced in your country during my pastoral visit, to which you referred, as well as the feelings of nearness and of closeness which the Chilean people profess for the Successor of Peter.

In your kind words, you have alluded to the work mediation which the Holy See undertook which made possible a solution to the dispute in the south with your sister nation Argentina. In my apostolic visit in the month of April 1987, I wanted to commemorate as well the happy conclusion of the Peace and Friendship Treaty which, as you have affirmed, set the foundations for a process of physical integration and economic complementarity which have been permanently set in motion.

During the three years which have passed since my pastoral visit to Chile, important changes have occurred in your country which are giving birth to a process which is transforming its institutions and socio-political structures. In this respect, this Apostolic See is following that evolution with special attention and I cannot do less than congratulate the noble Chilean people for the civic maturity which they are showing as they consolidate the democratic process.

I am pleased to know that the Authorities of your country are working to create a climate of reconciliation which allows for the overcoming of antagonisms and wounds from past times and

moves in the direction of understanding and dialogue; these are essential elements for building a society based on principles of justice and freedom.

Thus it is necessary to achieve adequate harmonization of the legitimate rights of all citizens in the common project of peaceful co-existence and solidarity. In this area, the Christian concept of life and the Church's moral teaching must always be essential elements which inspire all those persons and groups who seek the establishment of a more just, fraternal and responsible society; a society which responds, in consequence, to human needs and to God's true design.

Therefore, with a breadth of vision, it is essential to make a firm commitment to place the common good before special interests. No ideology or system can declare itself absolute above respect for persons and groups, but rather all must foster frank and constructive dialogue which avoids ruling some out and opposing others. In fact, the principles of justice and law have to be respected by all and employed as instruments of lasting cooperation and coexistence.

I wish to reiterate, Mister Ambassador the firm wish of the Church in Chile to cooperate, within the sphere of her proper religious and moral mission, with the Authorities and the various institutions of the country, in promoting everything that redounds to the greater good of the human person and of social groups, and especially the least advantaged. In this respect, I express the wish that the deep Christian roots which have shaped the history and the life of the Chileans may inspire a social process in your country and a moral awareness motion and the defence of those spiritual values which are the true treasure of and foundation for a nation's true progress; for without firm moral principles a people cannot progress.

Mister Ambassador, before ending this meeting, I am pleased to assure you of my best wishes and my support so that the high mission which has been entrusted to you may be carried out successfully. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Carmel, I pray that the Most High with his gifts will always assist both you, your distinguished family, and the leaders of your noble country, as well as the most beloved Chilean people who are always so close to the Pope's heart.

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