



The Holy See

Discurso al Embajador de NORUEGA,

*Excmo. Sr. Don Roald KNOPH*10 de enero de 1991*

Mister Ambassador,

It is a joy for me to welcome you here to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of His Majesty King Olav V of Norway to the Holy See.

I am particularly grateful for the kind message which His Majesty has asked you to give me, and I would be grateful to Your Excellency to tell him of my gratitude and to assure him of my good wishes for his person, for the royal family and all the people of Norway. I have the fondest memories of the welcome given me by His Majesty the King in June 1989 and the very positive conversations we had on that historic occasion.

1. Your Excellency recalled in glowing terms my pastoral visit in 1989 which certainly contributed to shedding better light on – in public opinion in Norway and beyond – the felicitous resumption of diplomatic relations between your country and the Apostolic See of Rome. You also deemed it appropriate to emphasize that these official bonds continue to have an appreciable effect, especially for the better understanding between the majority of your people who belong to the Lutheran confession and the Catholic communities. You pointed out that this spirit of fraternity has allowed Catholicism to receive without difficulty new members among your fellow citizens and the families who have come to live in Norway.

2. Besides basic respect for religious freedom, today's Norwegian society, rooted in its thousand-year-old faith, is seeking to maintain its attachment to the human values which alone allow each person to find true fulfilment and the society to become a communion of persons. The equality of all citizens, founded on the inalienable dignity of every human being, who has been given intelligence, moral conscience and freedom, is a primary principle. Furthermore, a nation expresses its best through effective solidarity with persons and peoples who are poor, hungry or oppressed by totalitarian regimes, by its concern to collaborate in the often difficult task of maintaining or re-establishing peace among rival nations. Last of all, people are now more aware that it is urgent that we take great pains to conserve the natural environment, the Creator's work, which has been inconsiderately subjected to mismanagement, pollution and waste, to the detriment of the well-being and health of humanity. especially in these diverse fields the objectives pursued by your Government are identical with certain directions which the Holy See considers essential.

3. By its specific teaching and its own institutions, as well as through the diplomatic relations it maintains with many countries, the Apostolic See is deeply concerned to cooperate in the true good of the nations. It is true that the Church's

mission is of the spiritual and humanitarian order, in faithfulness to her Founder.

However, the Church wants to place herself at the service of the world's peoples: to proclaim to all people of good will God's universal fatherhood, to invite them at the same time to take responsibility for themselves, their surroundings and the world. The Holy See, whose place is recognized within the international community, is pleased to be able to dialogue with the diplomatic missions accredited to it. In total respect for the responsibilities of legitimate civil authorities, its activity helps to respond to the questions which people ask, individually and collectively, in every age and place, about the nature and value of the person, the meaning of history, the bases of moral good, and the mystery of evil. It is precisely through the socio-economic choices which must be made that governments and their collaborators are frequently aware of the absence or inadequacy of ethical references which are capable of shedding light on and pointing out the path for the many decisions required for an authentic development of the national community as well as for the good of the international community.

That is why dialogue between the interested States and the Holy See can be mutually beneficial. Your Excellency did not fail to refer to that. For their part Norway and the Apostolic See will continue to develop their cooperation in order to help the contemporary world to overcome the impasses of selfishness and hedonism, of fatalism and pessimism, of racism and violence, of skepticism about the future of history. Everything must be done to strengthen a civilization capable of making progress towards a just sharing of resources, a communion of persons, fraternal mutual – aid among nations and peace.

Mister Ambassador, I express my cordial good wishes for the successful and felicitous fulfilment of your mission to the Holy See. You will always find among my collaborators the understanding, confidence and support which you have the right to expect. For you, your mission, your family and Norway, I invoke God's help and protection.

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