



The Holy See

***DISCURSO DEL SANTO PADRE JUAN PABLO II
AL SEÑOR JORGE SILVA CENCIO,
EMBAJADOR DE URUGUAY ANTE LA SANTA SEDE****

Jueves 14 de noviembre de 1991

Mr. Ambassador,

1. I am particularly pleased to receive the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay to the Holy See.

I am most grateful for the kind words you addressed to me and, in particular, for the respectful greeting of your President, Dr Luis Alberto Lacalle de Herrera, to whom I ask you to transmit my heartfelt wishes for peace and well-being, together with my wishes for the spiritual prosperity and well-being of the beloved Uruguayan nation.

You referred, Mr. Ambassador, to the supreme good of peace and the Holy See's efforts to encourage understanding and harmony between peoples and nations. These are the great causes of humanity that the Church, with no other power than the moral authority of the mission entrusted to her by her Founder, is trying to defend in all the international forums where she is present. Through her spiritual and religious nature she can accomplish this service, free from earthly motives or special interests because, as the Second Vatican Council declared, she is bound «to no particular form of human culture, nor to any political, economic or social system. Hence the Church by her very universality can be a very close bond between diverse human communities and nations, provided these trust her and truly acknowledge her right to true freedom in fulfilling her mission» (Gaudium et spes, n. 42).

In this perspective, the Holy See cannot but support the efforts being made on behalf of the process of Latin American integration. In this respect, I know that your country is making positive steps in creating social and economic structures that will open new ways to progress and

development for the peoples in the area. The promotion of unity, solidarity and good understanding is its task: it should collaborate generously to reinforce the links of brotherhood of all people, particularly those who form the great Latin American family.

The Church offers her collaboration in this process of integration and development from her own position, constantly urging that moral values and the Christian concept of life continue to be essential elements that inspire all those who are toiling for the good of individuals, families and society.

2. As Your Excellency has stressed, the presence and the work of the Catholic of itself makes an important contribution to the good of the nation. In this respect, we must congratulate ourselves on the climate of dialogue and understanding which is being reinforced between the Church's hierarchy and the civil authorities. There are many fields in which loyal collaboration can develop from mutual respect and freedom, which will lead to great good for the Uruguayan society. Indeed, the Church's evangelizing and educational activity also has a beneficial effect on many social problems that are fundamentally of a moral nature.

3. In many parts of the world we are witnessing a crisis of values that affects such institutions as the family, or broader sectors of the population, such as youth. For this reason it is becoming more necessary for Uruguayan Catholics to be more aware of their own responsibilities in God's sight and because of their civic duty, an effort is being made to build a society that is more just, fraternal and accepting. With a firm will to overcome past differences, it is necessary to promote growing solidarity among all Uruguayans, which will lead them to make a firm, visionary commitment to the common good.

4. Faithful to the requirements of the Gospel and with all due regard for pluralism, the Church in Uruguay reaffirms her vocation to serve the great causes of the human person as a citizen and child of God. The same Christian principles that have formed the life of the Uruguayan nation from its origins must imbue it with a solid hope and a new dynamism which will spark a new impulse in a society where hard work, honesty, and the spirit of sharing predominate on all levels.

I wish to reiterate, Mr. Ambassador the decided will of the Church in Uruguay to collaborate, within her own religious and moral mission, with the authorities and the various institutions of your country to encourage the very best values and the spiritual and material prosperity of the nation. For their part the pastors, priests and religious communities of Uruguay will tirelessly dedicate themselves to fulfilling their missionary, social and educational task. They are successors of the group of men and women who, from the very start of evangelization and for love of Christ, have devoted their lives to serving their neighbour, and have been examples of unselfish dedication, especially to the most underprivileged.

On the threshold of the fifth centenary of the arrival of the Gospel in the New World, I express my

fervent wishes that faithful to its most noble traditions and its Christian roots, Uruguay may continue on the path of brotherhood and understanding, and may also contribute effectively to strengthening the bonds of friendship, peace, justice and progress among the members of the great Latin American family.

Mr. Ambassador, renewing my best wishes for the success of your important mission which begins today, I assure you of my prayer to the Almighty to help you always with his gifts, you and your distinguished family, your colleagues, the governors of your noble country as well as the beloved Uruguayan people, whom I always remember with particular affection.

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