



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de TÚNEZ,
Excmo. Sr. Don Hamed ABED**

9 de enero de 1992

Mr. Ambassador,

Welcome to this house, where I have the joy of welcoming Your Excellency on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Tunisian Republic to the Holy See.

I thank you very much for the kind words you have just addressed to me. I am particularly touched by your mention of the Apostolic See's efforts to make peace and justice prevail among mankind. As I declared in my message for the 25th World Day of Peace, 1 January 1992, believers are particularly called, by reason of their faith, «to be messengers and artisans of peace: like others and even more than others, they are called to seek with humility and perseverance the appropriate responses to the yearnings for security and freedom, solidarity and sharing, which are common to everyone in this world which as it were has become smaller» (n. 1). I am pleased to ear you express the Tunisian Government's commitment to promote the same ideals for the good of all the members of the human family.

Your presence here, Mr. Ambassador, shows your nation's esteem for spiritual values, indeed, they are the surest foundation for developing harmonious relations among people and for building a society that is ever more worthy of mankind.

Although Islam is the religion of the Tunisian State and the great majority of the people, your country's laws, as you yourself noted, guarantee free exercise of worship for all religions. I express to you my satisfaction at that, and my wish that the faithful of the Catholic Church may continue to be able to exercise their own activities in a constructive dialogue with their Muslim brothers and sisters, as well as with those who follow other spiritual traditions.

I take the opportunity afforded by this meeting to express through you, Mr. Ambassador, an affectionate greeting to the small Catholic community of Tunisia, the heirs of a prestigious Christian past, who generously and effectively testify to their faith in the heart of the national community, inserted there with respect for the beliefs of others, and creating bonds of friendship with all, and thus seeking to promote harmony and understanding among everyone. In a neighbourly spirit, may they continue to make their contribution to the search for the common good! May they especially pursue everything that has been undertaken in the field of education so as to promote further cultural progress and dialogue with the West!

On this occasion, as my thoughts turn to all of your fellow citizens, I ask you to express an deferential greeting to His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Tunisian Republic. I would be obliged if you would give him my fervent best wishes for the successful accomplishment of his noble task. I likewise greet the people who collaborate with him in the government of the nation and I ask God to bless the initiatives undertaken on the path of development, for the good of all the people of Tunisia to whom, at the beginning of this new year, I wish happiness and prosperity.

Mr. Ambassador, I am happy that your presence here reaffirms the bonds between your country and the Holy See. As you begin your mission, I express my sincere best wishes to you. Be assured that here you will always find an attentive welcome and cordial understanding from my collaborators.

Upon Your Excellency, the President of the Republic, the Government and people of Tunisia, I invoke the assistance of the Most High, and an abundance of divine blessings that your nation may continue its journey towards a progress which responds ever better to the aspirations of all those who live in Tunisia.

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