



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 14 November 1992

Mr Ambassador,

With pleasure I welcome you to the Vatican and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of New Zealand to the Holy See. I ask you to convey my greetings to the Governor General, the Prime Minister and all the citizens of New Zealand and to assure them of my profound esteem and cordial good wishes.

In a movement that the Holy See hopes will continue, nations are increasingly recognizing that respect for the dignity of the individual must underlie all social policies (cf. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 5). The more clearly we understand that the person is not an "object" to be used, but a "subject", endowed with conscience and freedom, the more solid the foundation we lay for justice and peace in the world. United with humanity in its pilgrimage through history, the Church sees herself as having the specific task of safeguarding the transcendence of the human person (John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 55), and affirms that respect for man's spiritual dimension is basic to authentic development and progress. Essential to her mission is an unceasing defence of the inherent rights that flow from every individual's God-given dignity. For this reason the Holy See joins all men and women of good will in deploring every form of unjust discrimination—whether racial, economic, cultural or religious.

As Your Excellency has pointed out, the collapse of totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has not rid the world of injustice, oppression and conflict. The role of the international community in guaranteeing world peace is now more crucial than ever. At a time when some nations are tempted to compromise the solidarity that should exist among them by reducing their international obligations, it is heartening to know that New Zealand remains

committed to its responsibilities in the world community, especially in the South Pacific.

Although the possibility of nuclear war has diminished in recent years, weapons of mass destruction still exist in enormous quantities and continue to pose a threat for the future. Your country has been outspoken in its concern about continued nuclear testing and the further proliferation of nuclear armaments. I have repeatedly pointed out the dangers represented by the latter (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 24) and have invited the world community to accept the grave moral responsibility of reducing their number (John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1986*, 2).

As a land blessed by God with beauty and rich natural resources, New Zealand has taken a leading role in drawing the world's attention to the ecological crisis. This particular threat to humanity can only be effectively addressed by solutions based on a morally consistent worldview which respects the dignity of the human person and the integrity of creation (John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1990*, 6). Because the earth is "a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all" (*Ibid.*, 8), international cooperation in managing responsibly the world's resources is to be encouraged and should be increasingly guaranteed in law, as a way of securing a safe and healthy environment.

The Catholic Church in New Zealand is committed to building a more just and caring society, in particular where human dignity is threatened by disregard for the gift of life, and by poverty, unemployment, or social marginalization. Her health-care and educational services, as well as her programmes of social assistance, all spring from the primary commandment of love which her Founder said would be the mark of his followers. As she seeks to play her part in fostering authentic development, the Church is aware that the questions facing humanity at the end of the twentieth century are above all moral questions. It is her ardent hope that society will engage in a wise and respectful dialogue about the ethical foundations of the public policies which are adopted, and she offers her social doctrine as a reasoned point of reference (cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41).

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that in the exercise of your mission you will further strengthen the cordial ties that link New Zealand with the Holy See. I offer you my good wishes and assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you in fulfilling your duties. Upon you, your family and all the beloved people of New Zealand I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

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