



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 28 November 1992*

Your Excellencies,

As you know, circumstances have not allowed me to receive each of you separately for the presentation of the Letters of Credence by which you are accredited to the Holy See as Ambassadors of your respective countries. Yet it is with no less warmth and joy that I greet you this morning and assure you of my esteem and of my heartfelt good wishes.

Because you come from every corner of the globe, our meeting today typifies the *breadth and diversity of relations* which the Holy See maintains with so many of the world's nations. With some, such as Spain, the Apostolic See has had a long history of close and fruitful contacts. With others, diplomatic relations date from independence acquired in the last few decades or from agreements entered into in even more recent times. The latest of this group is Mexico, whose Ambassador I welcome with great pleasure.

The situation of the Catholic Church in the nations you represent is quite diverse. Some of you are from countries which have a venerable Catholic tradition, while others represent places in which the Church has been active for a shorter period. Similarly, the number of *Catholics* in your nations varies considerably – from constituting a majority to being a relatively small group. Whatever their community's history or size, Catholics, as you well know, are committed to their country's wellbeing. With the spirit and energy which come from their desire to *serve their neighbours as God commands*, they are especially keen to support undertakings which advance authentic development. This development has as its foundation the acknowledgment and defence of the innate dignity of every human person. The Church offers a particular contribution to the civil order

by promoting her social teaching and encouraging the faithful to take a responsible role in the life of society. As the Second Vatican Council rightly observed, "there is no better way to renew a genuinely human political life than to encourage an inner sense of justice and of good will and service for the common good, and to strengthen basic convictions on the true nature of the political community as well as the purpose, the right use and the limits of public authority" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 73).

The very fact that the States you represent have diplomatic relations with the Holy See is indicative of their concern with the human and spiritual values which the Holy See constantly proclaims in the international field. I am thankful for that concern, and it is my hope that your diplomatic activity will lead you to understand ever more clearly the Catholic Church's efforts to cooperate with all men and women of good will in the service of humanity. The gravity of the world situation, with the persistence of violent conflicts and with injustices of all kinds affecting millions of innocent lives, weighs heavily upon the consciences of all. I respectfully urge each one of you to be instruments of peace, to work to eradicate the causes of these tragedies and to foster understanding and dialogue between the world's peoples.

Your Excellencies, I am grateful to you for being here today. Be assured that I very much appreciate your willingness to support the endeavours which the Holy See makes in the international community, in accordance with its specific mission and competence. I fervently ask God to pour out in abundance upon all the countries which you represent his blessings of peace and prosperity. Please convey to your leaders my prayerful good wishes that they will have the wisdom and courage which they require in order to carry out their lofty mission on behalf of their people.

May Almighty God sustain each of you in your service to your country and to the cause of peace.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XV, 2 pp. 730-732.*

L'Osservatore Romano 29.11.1992 p.7.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.49 p.10.

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