



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS TO THE HOLY SEE*Consistory Hall

Saturday, 19 November 1994 Your Excellencies, I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you have been appointed Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries to the Holy See. Through you I extend cordial greetings to the Heads of State and the peoples of Denmark, Tunisia, India, Bangladesh, Ghana and of Jordan - which is represented here for the first time after the recent establishment of diplomatic relations. Our gathering in this Hall bespeaks the rich diversity of the human family, the desire of peoples of good will to live together in harmony and, in particular, the firm commitment of your Governments to promote the well - being of their peoples through dialogue and co-operation among Nations. The Church is convinced that the path of human progress lies in the direction of full, effective and juridically guaranteed respect for the inalienable dignity and rights of the human person. Only upon this basis is it possible to construct a renewed society and to solve the complex and weighty problems facing humanity. The Holy See therefore seeks to foster the advancement of what my Predecessor Pope Paul VI was accustomed to call the "civilization of love": a spiritual milieu capable of embracing people of all races, cultures and faiths in an honest search for truth, for justice and for an integral development of all the members of the human family, especially the poor and those who struggle to make their legitimate claims heard. By its presence and activity in the international community the Holy See seeks to bear witness to the spiritual and moral values essential for the building of just and fraternal relations among peoples. Among its concerns, it underlines the importance of the principle, enshrined in various international Agreements, of respect for the fundamental and inviolable right of each individual to enjoy *freedom of conscience and of religion*. I hope that you too, as Representatives of your countries, will work for the effective guarantee of this primordial human right. Likewise, during this *International Year of the Family*, we cannot fail to look to the family, the fundamental nucleus of society, as the first of those institutions which express and consolidate the values of peace (cf. John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1994*, 5 [8 Dec. 1993]). The family is therefore deserving of special care and support from your Governments and from the whole of international society. If we look at the present situation of the world we see light and shadow, signs of hope for true advancement but also dark omens of a new breakdown of relationships, undermined not only by ideological disagreements but also by ethnic exclusivism. Can the international community find a workable way to offset the threat of a new fragmentation? Next year will see the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the *United Nations Organization*. After the horrors of the Second World War, the United Nations sought to be the catalyst and even promoter of an evolution towards a more lively sense of human rights and indeed towards a new "right of nations" (cf. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 21). While down the years its action has often been thwarted by the politics of a world divided into blocs, nevertheless it succeeded in becoming the focal point of a widespread vivid consciousness of the need to address the grave imbalances that undermine world peace because they undermine justice and equity in relations between peoples. The United Nations has

not always succeeded in setting up effective means for the just resolution of international conflicts, nor have its policies of aid for development always been positive; and precisely for these reasons the Fiftieth Anniversary appears as a conspicuous opportunity for necessary reform and amendment. But the Holy See, which has sought to contribute to the realization of the noble ideals of the United Nations Organization, continues to hope that it will be an ever more open and lofty forum of debate and decision at the service of the world's peoples, and therefore a valid instrument of genuine human development. With these brief reflections I offer Your Excellencies my cordial good wishes as you begin your mission as the distinguished Representatives of your countries to the Holy See. My collaborators will be only too willing to help you in this task. I, for my part, cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon yourselves, your families and the peoples which you

represent.

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