



The Holy See

***DISCURSO DEL SANTO PADRE JUAN PABLO II
AL NUEVO EMBAJADOR DE BOLIVIA ANTE LA SANTA SEDE,
ARMANDO LOAIZA MARIACA, DURANTE LA
PRESENTACIÓN DE SUS CARTAS CREDENCIALES**** *Lunes, 31 octubre de 1994*

Mr. Ambassador,

I am sincerely grateful for your friendly words to me on this solemn occasion of the presentation of the Letters of Credence that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bolivia to the Holy See.

It is a happy occasion which reminds me of the intense days of faith and hope I spent with the beloved children of Bolivia during my Pastoral Visit in 1988, which enabled me to know better and to appreciate the nobility and human wealth of the peoples who live in that immense territory and have been able to preserve in their traditions deeply human and Christian values, the heritage of a glorious past which even today has positive effects in the life of society.

You referred to this in your address, recalling the strong presence of the Catholic faith in the life of your people, after almost five centuries since your country was evangelized. Faithful to her mission to bring the message of salvation to all peoples, the Church has been totally dedicated to promoting all that can foster the advancement and protection of human dignity. In fact, respect for the values of the individual, especially all that concerns his dignity as a child of God, should imbue relations between individuals and groups so that the legitimate rights of each may be safeguarded and that society may enjoy stability and harmony.

From its very origins, many strong ties have bound Bolivia to the Church. They have shaped the life and feelings of its people. The Church, moved by her desire for Gospel witness, far from passing or partial interests, will continue to give her valid help to such important sectors as education, aid for the underprivileged, health care and the integral advancement of the individual as a citizen and child of God. Therefore the Pastors of Bolivia, in communion with the Successor of Peter, do not cease to offer their wise and prudent words as a reference point for all, since they spring from a deep knowledge of human reality in Bolivia, interpreted from the standpoint of Christ's Gospel.

You also referred in your speech to the distressing problem of widespread poverty, a challenge for the nation's future which your leaders wish to deal with decisively so that greater social responsibility at all levels may lead to a firmer

commitment to the common good. Bolivia relies on the greatest treasure a people can have: solid Christian values which must give a new impulse to building a society of greater justice, solidarity, brotherhood and prosperity. When the Church speaks her word and embarks upon her initiatives to eliminate the causes of poverty, she is fulfilling her mission, since concern for the social order is «part of the Church's evangelizing mission» (Sollicitudo rei socialis, n. 41) in which human promotion should predominate, since the goal of evangelization is the integral freedom of the person (cf. Inaugural Address, Fourth General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, n. 13; L'Osservatore Romano English edition, 21 October 1992, p. 8).

Mr. Ambassador, by satisfactorily passing on the rich and ever timely heritage of the Church's social teaching, Catholics will be able to set in motion and encourage suitable initiatives designed to overcome the situations of poverty and marginalization which affect so many of our underprivileged brothers and sisters.

I am pleased to know that your country's authorities have a firm intention to build solid foundations, making it possible to establish a more just and participatory social order. I hope that in this development of democratic life the Church's action will be increasingly present with a renewed vocation of service at all levels, especially for the neediest, thus contributing to raising the standards of Bolivians and to safeguard and promoting the highest values. In fact, in order to build a more just and fraternal society, it is necessary that the Christian concept of life and the moral teaching of the Church continue to be values that should be taken into consideration by those people who work for the nation's good. In this way it will be possible to give a satisfactory response to human needs and aspirations, collaborating at the same time with God's plans.

For more than 10 years, the Bolivian people have enjoyed political stability and a relative social calm, while at the same time, with ever greater clarity, the awareness of a greater participation in public life is being demonstrated. There is a peaceful process under way to provide a basic juridical framework in order to obtain the desired effect. This is demonstrated by the recent constitutional reform. Everyone, in accordance with his or her talents and means is called to make a contribution to the country's good: the wide ethnic and cultural range of indigenous peoples, the campesinos of the altiplano, of the valleys and the plains, the youth and also the many categories of the very poor and most vulnerable.

Mr. Ambassador, before ending this meeting, I would like to express to you my best wishes that the mission you begin today will be successful and fruitful. I ask you once again to kindly convey my sentiments and good wishes to the President of the Republic of Bolivia and to your country's authorities, as I invoke God's blessing and the gifts of the Spirit upon you, your family and colleagues, and upon all the beloved children of the noble Bolivian nation, whom I always remember with deep

esteem.

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