



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO H.E. Mr JOEY MAZORODZE BIMHA,

NEW AMBASSADOR OF ZIMBABWE TO THE HOLY SEE*Thursday, 12 December 1996 Mister

Ambassador, It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which His Excellency President Robert Gabriel Mugabe has appointed you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the Holy See. I am grateful for the President's cordial greetings and ask you kindly to assure him of my continued prayers for the progress, peace and prosperity of your country. The fruitful and friendly relations existing between your country and the Holy See have their foundation in the shared conviction that the dignity and rights of the human person must be upheld and defended at all times and under all circumstances. In the international forum, the Holy See seeks to draw attention to the primacy of the human person and to the moral obligations which flow from placing the genuine good of people at the centre of all efforts to foster economic and political development. One of the positive aspects of our times is the increased awareness among large numbers of men and women of their own dignity. As a result, they show a lively concern that their human rights be respected (cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 26). Certainly, it is a step in the right direction when that awareness is placed as the criterion of public policies and development programmes. At last year's World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen there was some indication that such an approach is becoming more generally accepted. On the other hand, as is made clear by the unresolved and even increasing difficulties being experienced in certain areas of the world, progress is not a straightforward and automatic process, as though societies were able to advance endlessly towards some sort of perfection (cf. *Ibid.*, 27). Citizens have to be helped to take an active and responsible part in their own authentic development. They need to be given an awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Here, education is essential; an education which is not merely a matter of acquiring knowledge and information, but is also a question of openness to the world and of respect for others in all their legitimate diversity. I note with full agreement that Zimbabwe's leaders place much emphasis on education as the soul of social dynamism, the support of all effective programmes of development, the key to society's future. Each country is essentially responsible for its own good governance, especially in what concerns the defence of human dignity, the protection of human rights and the administering of justice, But no nation can close itself within its own borders and ignore the rest of the world. The globalization of almost every aspect of life demands new efforts of regional and even continental and worldwide co-operation and co-ordination. Zimbabwe's participation, for example, in the Organization of African Unity, and in the specific Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, enables it to play a constructive role in finding African solutions to African problems. In all of this, of course, Zimbabwe's Catholics are eager to lend their support and make their contribution to the nation's life and development. Their faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ impels them to respond to the cry of the uneducated, the sick, the suffering and the marginalized. This in fact is part of the spiritual mission which has been entrusted to the Church by her

Divine Founder, and in fidelity to this mission she seeks to serve all people, especially those most in need. In union with their fellow citizens, the members of the Catholic community will continue their efforts in the service of the common good; I thank Your Excellency for your grateful recognition of the work of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe and of her positive Influence on society. Mister Ambassador, I extend to you my best wishes for your tenure as your nation's representative to the Holy See, and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you as you fulfil your responsibilities. May Almighty God abundantly bless you and your fellow

citizens.

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