



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE AMBASSADORS OF
GUYANA, NIGERIA, KYRGYSTAN AND MONGOLIA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 17 December 1998

Your Excellencies,

1. I am very pleased to welcome you as you present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries to the Holy See: Guyana, whose representative I am receiving for the first time, Nigeria, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia. On this occasion I greet the leaders of each of your nations as well as your compatriots. I warmly thank your Heads of State for the messages you have addressed to me and I would be great grateful if you would, in turn, express my respectful sentiments and best wishes for them and for their lofty mission at the service of their peoples.

2. In the *Bull of Indiction for the Great Jubilee*, I recalled the need "to create a new culture of international solidarity and co-operation" (n. 12). It is imperative that at the dawn of the third millennium humanity should advance resolutely on this way, so that all peoples will experience new hope in an ever more equitable society.

In this perspective, I again express my hope that the debt question which weighs on so many poor countries will be re-examined; it prevents them from making significant progress in the well-being of their people and leads to situations of often uncontrollable violence. Nevertheless, vigorous action should also be taken on the causes of indebtedness, particularly by reducing pointless and excessive expenditures, by equitably repaying the producing countries and by ensuring that the funds of international solidarity effectively reach the people for whom they are intended.

3. This year, when we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I salute the advances made in the quest for greater justice and freedom among individuals and in societies. All men and women and all peoples now have the same rights formally recognized. Scorning them has become an intolerable attack on human

dignity for every conscience. However, tragic situations of injustice, extreme poverty and the violation of human rights are still an open wound in humanity's side. New forms of slavery, the result of a culture of death, are appearing in our day, depriving many men, women and children of their freedom and marginalizing them. It is the duty of national leaders to work tirelessly to eliminate these scourges which demean and enslave the human person, so that social relations can be established which will allow each individual to live in dignity and respect for his nature as a child of God.

4. Lastly, I once again express my ardent desire to see lasting peace established everywhere, particularly on the African continent. The ongoing conflicts there can only foster a spirit of hatred and revenge between nations and the human groups which comprise them. Peace is also threatened again in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, from where we have received alarming news. Reconciliation, based on dialogue, justice and the right of every individual and every nation to live in security and the recognition of their specific identity is more urgent than ever. It is up to the international community in particular to promote solutions that will lead to harmony and the renewal of life in society, and to take responsibility for preventing the deviations that make populations innocent victims.

5. I hope that the mission you are beginning today to the Holy See will give you many opportunities to discover the life and concerns of the universal Church. On you and your families, on your staffs and on the nations you represent, I invoke an abundance of God's blessings.

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