



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR JEAN-CLAUDE MICHEL
AMBASSADOR OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO***

Thursday, 20 May 1999

Mr Ambassador,

1. I am particularly pleased to welcome Your Excellency as you present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Principality of Monaco to the Holy See.

I warmly thank you for your courteous words that show the spirit in which you are undertaking your new mission. Touched by the cordial message of His Most Serene Highness the Prince of Monaco, I would be grateful if in turn you would convey to him my best wishes for his person and his mission, especially this year when your sovereign is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his reign. Prince Rainier has guided the Principality of Monaco in all these years with courage and generosity, assuring its continuance. Neither have I forgotten my last meeting with His Most Serene Highness and his family on 19 December 1997, marking the seventh centenary of the Grimaldi dynasty, which historically has borne witness to the Christian ideals that pervade Monégasque culture. I hope that all the residents of the Principality will be able to achieve their deepest aspirations, constantly relying on the basic human, moral and spiritual values that are sources of personal happiness and of a life of fraternal solidarity.

At the time when you are taking up your duties, Mr Ambassador, may I recall with you your late predecessor, Mr César Charles Solamito, who made a lasting mark on relations between the Holy See and the Principality, thanks to his cordiality and his constant concern to strengthen our bonds of mutual esteem and deep friendship. He was one of the authors of the Convention of 25 July 1981 which renewed the sincere and deep attachment to the Church of the princes and people of Monaco.

2. The human and spiritual dimension of the Principality of Monaco that you mentioned is essential to all human communities, which cannot be founded on their activities alone. Those who live in the Principality, like the residents of all countries, must be aware each day of what constitutes a people's soul, the

priceless treasure that derives from tradition and must be passed on to future generations. Indeed, it is primarily by giving every individual the respect he is due, by showing concern for others, by having a sense of hospitality and by witnessing to basic human values that they will maintain their essential characteristics and make their vocation resplendent, as they take their inspiration from the humanist ideal and the demands of the Gospel that lead to true happiness and reject the easy life offered by consumer society.

I am particularly sensitive to your concern for the conflicts that are wounding humanity and for the serious plight of many peoples. You have stressed that because of its history and geographical location, the Principality, as an integral part of the European continent, is open to the world and is challenged by human poverty; in particular, it is a beacon turned towards Africa, where many countries urgently need the aid of Western nations for their human and economic development and for a truly democratic transformation of their institutions. As a member of the UN, Monaco is called to make its contribution to the international community, especially to peace and understanding between peoples, by encouraging an active and intense solidarity. As the world undergoes ever more rapid changes, it is important to show that a witness of tangible brotherhood is possible. The young generation should be prepared through suitable formation to take their place in social life, so that in the future they can play a leading role in their own country and in international life.

3. The Principality's Catholic community, attached to its tradition, pursues its spiritual activity but is also concerned with the human and Christian formation of youth, especially in Catholic educational institutions, which, in addition to quality formation, ensure the transmission of values essential for the growth and development of each young person's personality. In public institutions, while the Church respects their specific purpose and the parents' wishes, she would like to guide the young by helping them to reflect on the essential human questions and by opening their hearts to the Gospel. It is also by their example that educational and catechetical teams offer young people an ideal and a way to enjoy a happy life. Through you, Mr Ambassador, I take this opportunity to extend an affectionate greeting to the Archbishop, the priests, the religious and the Catholic faithful of Monaco, whose devotion I know so well.

4. Mr Ambassador, at the end of our meeting I offer you my best wishes for the success of your mission. Be assured that my assistants will always offer you the attentive and understanding help you may need.

I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to Your Excellency, to His Most Serene Highness, to his family and to all the residents of the Principality of Monaco.

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