



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF ARGENTINA TO THE HOLY SEE*

Friday 14 April 2000

Mr Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to receive the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Argentine Republic to the Holy See. I am deeply grateful for your words to me, which are a sign of the good relations between this Apostolic See and that noble nation of the

"Cono Sur", whose inhabitants, as you have mentioned, preserve profound human values in their traditions and feel deeply rooted in the Catholic faith, which offers them meaning for life and moral guidance, with beneficial effects for Argentine social life. I am also grateful for the kind greeting from President Fernando de la Rúa, expressing his personal sentiments and desire to increase the traditional cooperation between the Church and the State for the common good. Mr Ambassador, please convey my gratitude for this to the country's Chief Executive, to whom I extend my best wishes for his important and sensitive responsibility. 2. In recent years you have represented your nation in Israel, which I recently had the opportunity to visit on my great pilgrimage to the places linked to the history of salvation. Now, after completing your diplomatic mission in the land of the Son of God made man, you have come to continue your work in this Apostolic See, at the same diplomatic legation where you served for several years. In these circumstances you will be familiar with the nature of this new and important responsibility which your Government has entrusted to you. In a certain way it is a unique mission, considering the role which the Holy See plays in the concert of nations to improve relations between peoples and to achieve a more peaceful coexistence and closer collaboration among all. Its eminently spiritual activity is inspired by the conviction that "faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 11). For this reason, besides showing concern for the particular Churches of each nation, the Holy See is also interested in the good of all the citizens and endeavours to promote in the international forums those rights of individuals and peoples which honour their dignity and the sublime vocation that God has given every human being. 3. I would like to assure you, Mr Ambassador, that in my concern for all the Churches I feel very close to Argentina; its achievements give me joy and I share in its anxieties. In this regard, I am pleased that the nation has enjoyed a tranquil political climate in recent years without any great shocks,

even when it had to face a legacy of serious problems in society and a critical economic situation. In this way the country has shown that it can pursue its destiny with normal democratic activity, which guarantees its citizens' participation in political decisions and the orderly succession of leaders, while recognizing the contribution made to the nation's life by each individual. I ardently hope that this civic maturity will be accompanied by a correct idea of the human person. A profound knowledge of these values will encourage the different political forces, despite their legitimate differences, to work together on resolving the most pressing issues that affect the nation's general interests and, above all, the demands of justice and peace. In this task, your Government is aware of the importance that should be given not only to administrative or financial measures but also to increasing the citizens' awareness so that they can participate in the common good with hope and a spirit of collaboration, without their legitimate differences becoming irreconcilable antagonisms. This calls for truly profound and lasting ideals that are based on the objective truth about the human being, to which society's highest authorities must bear witness by their zeal for service, openness and integrity, influencing the whole people in a way by their own commitment to building a better future.⁴ It is also important that government programmes for giving a decisive impetus to the nation's growth take into account the integral progress of the human person, who is both an individual and a social being for whom spiritual and religious values are just as essential as material ones. In fact, a country's development cannot be measured merely by the wealth it produces, even when this is an indispensable condition and, therefore, an objective to pursue. Thus, when one of the essential dimensions of integral development is ignored, there is a risk of creating new imbalances and, eventually, of jeopardizing the achievements and successes. Your Government is aware that an increase in production is not enough if it does not bring true prosperity to everyone, and that there is no true prosperity without adequate and universally accessible education at the various levels, or without a just social order and the prompt administration of justice. Nor can a solid and hopeful future be built by abandoning the values and institutions that are the basis of every society, such as the family, the protection of minors and the most neglected, much less by destroying the very foundations of law, freedom and personal dignity, or by attacking life from the moment of its conception. As you have mentioned, these values are the common heritage which must also be defended in international forums in order to offer the entire human race a more hopeful future.⁵ Mr Ambassador, as you take up the important office to which you have been appointed, I hope that your work will be fruitful and will contribute to further strengthening the good relations between this Apostolic See and the Argentine Republic. You can always rely on the welcome and support of my collaborators. As I ask you to convey my sentiments and good wishes to your country's President and to the beloved Argentine people, I assure you of my prayer to the Almighty, through the intercession of Our Lady of Luján, that with his gifts he will always assist you and your distinguished family, the staff of the diplomatic mission and your country's authorities and citizens, whom I remember affectionately and on whom I invoke the Lord's abundant

blessings.

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