



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Friday, 13 December 2002

Your Excellencies,

1. I am happy to welcome you to the Vatican for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries: Sierra Leone, Jamaica, India, Ghana, Norway, Rwanda and Madagascar. As I thank you for conveying the cordial messages of your Heads of State, I would be grateful if you would kindly transmit my respectful greetings and fervent good wishes for them and for their important mission at the service of all their compatriots. Through you, I cordially greet the civil and religious authorities of your countries, as well as all your fellow-citizens, assuring them of my esteem and sympathy.

2. Peace is one of the most precious goods for human persons, peoples and States. You who keep abreast of international events know that all human beings ardently desire it. Without peace there can be no true development of individuals, families, society or the economy itself. Peace is a duty for all. To will peace is not a sign of weakness but of strength. It is achieved by means of respect for international order and international law which must be priorities for all who are responsible for the welfare of nations. Similarly, it is important to consider the fundamental value of joint and multilateral action to resolve conflicts on the different continents.

3. Forms of extreme poverty and injustice are the source of violence and contribute to maintaining and developing many local or regional conflicts. I think particularly of the countries in which famine takes place so regularly. The international community is called to do all it can for the gradual elimination of these scourges, mainly by providing the material and human means that will help the peoples who have the greatest need. Greater support for the organization of the local economies would certainly empower the indigenous peoples to gain greater control of their future.

Today poverty poses an alarming threat to the world, endangering political, economic and social balances. In the spirit of the *International Conference of Vienna* on Human Rights in 1993, poverty undermines the dignity of persons and peoples. One must recognize the right of each person to what is necessary for life, and to benefit from a share of his nation's wealth. Through Your Excellencies, once again I desire to launch a pressing appeal to the international community so that it can reexamine without delay the twofold issue of the fair allocation of the planet's wealth and of a technological and scientific assistance to the poor countries, which is a duty incumbent on the rich countries. Furthering development involves the education in all areas of expertise of the local leaders who in the future will be responsible for the welfare of their people, so that they may benefit more directly from the raw materials and the wealth to be extracted from beneath and above the ground.

It is in this perspective that the Catholic Church desires to continue her action, in the diplomatic world and by her presence in various countries of the world and her closeness to the people, working for the respect of persons and peoples and for the advancement of all, especially through integral education and the creation of social structures.

4. As you begin your mission to the Holy See, I offer you my cordial good wishes. As I invoke an abundance of divine Blessings on you, your families, your collaborators and the nations you represent, I ask the Most High to shower his gifts upon you.

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