



# The Holy See

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## **ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO H.E. MR MIHAIL LAUR, NEW AMBASSADOR OF MOLDOVA TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Thursday 15 May 2003* Mr Ambassador, I welcome you with pleasure, Your Excellency, on this solemn occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Moldova to the Holy See. I was touched by your words to me, and I would be grateful if you would convey my greetings to President Vladimir Voronine. I greet all the Moldovan people very cordially, and I express fervent wishes that by working for solidarity and harmony among all the nation's members, they will find the way to true human and spiritual fulfilment. I thank you for the presentation of the situation in your country, independent since 1991, which is endeavouring to find its place in Europe and in the symphony of nations. After the tragic experience of two world wars in the century that has just ended, the millennium which is beginning has been unable to avoid either the unleashing of terrorism or the recourse to war. As I recalled in my *Message for World Day of Peace 2003*, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of *Pacem in Terris*, the Encyclical of my blessed Predecessor Pope John XXIII, the building of peace is a long-term task that is never concluded, and relies on "the four precise requirements of the human spirit: truth, justice, love and freedom" (n. 3). That is why it must mobilize the energies of the political leaders of nations to combat terrorism and its blind violence, to denounce the weapons trade and military rivalry, but also to encourage reconciliation between people in all places where hotbeds of tension are found. "Honest, patient negotiations which respect the rights and aspirations of all involved can lead to a peaceful resolution of even highly complex situations" (*Message on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War*, n. 9); it is always preferable to war and to all the evils it can give rise to, as we see only too often. In union with all partners of good will, the Holy See intends to make a contribution to the unity of the European Continent, so that the peoples of which it consists may develop harmoniously, in mutual cooperation and respect, to enable each one to benefit from the fruits of peace and development. Mr Ambassador, you emphasized how committed your nation is to the European values as well as to its Christian roots, and expressed your gratitude to the Catholic Church for her support in the consolidation of peace and, in particular, her assistance in the efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts and her action promoting human rights. I am impressed by this attention. The Church bases her commitment to man and his dignity on the Revelation of which she is the guardian. Indeed, biblical tradition teaches that man is created in the image of God, brought to life by the divine breath and capable, despite the wound of sin, of acting freely with a view to good (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 17). It is in the light of this conviction of faith, and with the wisdom of experience that comes from the lessons of history, that the Church has learned to consider human life "as the most sacred and inviolable earthly reality" (*Message for World Day of Peace, 1 January 2001*, n. 19). Our duty is to defend and respect it. Therefore, at the beginning of this new millennium, the Catholic Church intends to encourage men and women

to build a civilization of love that gives priority to the values of convergence between individuals and cultures as well as to dialogue between the protagonists of civil society. To build a truly human society that honours the dignity of each individual and permits authentic dialogue among all its members, it is necessary to give proper training to citizens, especially the youth. It is education that will enable them to acquire true humanism open to the ethical and religious dimensions, to a correct concept of democracy and of human rights, and to knowledge and respect for the cultures and spiritual values of the different civilizations. I express the wish that the leaders of nations and the persons who participate in this noble educational mission may be imbued with a spirit of service to humanity. Mr Ambassador, on this solemn occasion, I am pleased, through you, to greet the members of the Catholic community of Moldova. Gathered round their Bishops and the priests who serve them, they show true dynamism, and I know that they maintain fraternal relations with the members of the other Churches and ecclesial communities. May they keep alive their desire for Christian unity and contribute to it with their initiatives! The Catholic community also has good relations with the civil Authorities which delights me; I hope that through their active participation in the life of the country and their solidarity with the poorest, Catholics will feel ever greater joy in serving and sharing, thus cooperating in the human and spiritual development of their country. At the time when you are inaugurating your mission to the Holy See, I offer you my fervent good wishes for the accomplishment of your mission. I would also like to assure you of the cordial and attentive support you will always find here in my collaborators. I cordially invoke upon you, Your Excellency, and upon your family, as well as upon the Moldovan people and their leaders, an abundance of divine

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Blessings.

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