



The Holy See

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

Thursday 15 May 2003

Your Excellencies,

1. I welcome you at the time when you are presenting the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries: Australia, Zimbabwe, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Ethiopia, Latvia, the Fiji Islands, Burundi, Georgia, Vanuatu, Moldova, and Pakistan. I thank you for the courteous words you have conveyed to me from your Heads of State; I would be grateful if you would reciprocate by expressing my respectful wishes to them, for themselves and for their important mission at the service of their countries. Your presence also gives me the opportunity to offer a cordial greeting to the civil and religious Authorities of your countries, as well as to all your compatriots, and to pass on to them my most fervent good wishes.

2. Our world is going through a difficult period, marked by many conflicts of which you are attentive witnesses; this disturbs many people and invites the leaders of nations to be more and more committed to promoting peace. In this perspective, diplomacy is of the first importance.

Indeed, attention to persons and peoples and in addition concern for dialogue, brotherhood and solidarity, are the basis of diplomatic activity and of the international institutions responsible above all for promoting peace, which is one of the most precious benefits for individuals, peoples and States themselves, whose lasting development must be founded on security and harmony.

3. In the year in which we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of Blessed John XXIII, who was also a diplomat at the service of the Holy See during the troubled years of the Second World War, it is particularly timely to listen once again to his invitation to base social life on "four pillars": the concern for truth, justice, love and freedom. Peace cannot be achieved at the expense of individuals and peoples; it is built when everyone becomes partners and protagonists in building the national society.

4. Since the period of the great World Wars, the international community has set up specific institutions and legislation to prevent any further outbreak of war which kills innocent civilians, devastating regions and leaving wounds that are slow to heal. The United Nations is called more than ever to be the central place for decisions concerning the rebuilding of countries, and humanitarian aid organizations are asked to renew their involvement. This will help the peoples concerned to take charge of their future sooner, enabling them to pass from fear to hope and from bewilderment to the active construction of their future. It is also an indispensable condition for restoring confidence to a country.

Finally, I appeal to all persons who profess a religion to make their spiritual and religious sense a source of unity and peace that will never set people against one another. I cannot fail to mention the children and young people who are often the worst hit by situations of conflict. Since they find it very difficult to forget these experiences, they can be drawn into the spiral of violence. It is our duty to prepare for them a future of peace and a land of fraternal solidarity.

These are some of the concerns of the Catholic Church which I wanted to share with you this morning; you know how committed she is in international life, in relations between the peoples and in humanitarian support, which are expressions of her essential mission: to manifest God's closeness to every human being.

5. During your noble mission to the Holy See, you will have the possibility of discovering its action more concretely. Today I offer you my best wishes for your mission. I invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, your families, those who work with you and the nations you represent.

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