



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MRS VERA BARROUIN MACHADO
AMBASSADOR OF BRAZIL TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 11 October 2004

Mrs Ambassador, I welcome you with great pleasure today at the Vatican for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Brazil to the Holy See. This happy occasion enables me to see once again the sentiments of spiritual closeness that the Brazilian People feel for the Successor of Peter. At the same time, it gives me another opportunity to tell you of my sincere affection and high esteem for your noble Nation. I am deeply grateful for your kind words. I thank you in particular for the respectful thoughts and greetings that the President, H.E. Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has desired to convey to me. I ask you, Your Excellency, kindly to reciprocate on my behalf my greetings and best wishes for his happiness, and to convey to him the assurance of my prayers for his Country and People. Of course, the goals of the Church, with her exclusively religious and spiritual mission, and the goals of the State, whose aim is the common good of each person, are distinct. But there is a point of convergence: the person and the good of the Homeland. Moreover, as I mentioned on one occasion, "understanding and respect, mutual concern for independence and the principle of serving the human person in a better way, within a Christian conception, are factors which will produce a harmony for the benefit of the People themselves" (*Address to the President of Brazil*, in Brasília; *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition, 28 October 1991, p. 2). Brazil is a Country of which the vast majority has preserved the faith in Christ that arrived in the early days of its People, through their evangelization by those who discovered it more than five centuries ago. Thus, I am pleased to consider the convergence of principles, of both the Holy See and your Government, concerning threats to world peace when it is affected by the absence of the Christian vision of respect for the human dignity of one's neighbour. I pray, therefore, that Brazilians will continue to promote and spread the values of faith, especially when it is a matter of explicitly recognizing the holiness of family life and safeguarding unborn infants from the moment of their conception. Poverty is a problem that has serious effects on a vast number of Brazilian citizens. The commitment to meet the needs of the most underprivileged must be considered a fundamental priority. I see with satisfaction that your Government considers it a goal for which it seeks to combine the best of efforts and resources. In this regard, accepting the invitation of the President of the Federal Republic of Brazil, the Cardinal Secretary of State took part in the Conference on *Action against Hunger and Poverty* at the headquarters of the United Nations, giving the Holy See's unconditional support to this project, to be a sign of living hope

for all the peoples affected by the scourge of hunger. On the other hand, for a Country that is going through a period of sustainable development, the recent news that the Brazilian Government has taken an initiative to cancel the foreign debt of some countries is a practical demonstration of solidarity and an incentive for peoples who are living on the fringes of the developed world. This initiative serves to show that all the nations involved in this undertaking must be aware that only courageous action prepared for sacrifices for the common good will enable the poorest countries to recover. Sharing, therefore, in the hopes of all Brazilians, I would like to assure them of the Church's firm determination to collaborate, in her own capacity, with all projects that aim to serve the cause of "the whole person and every person". Likewise, the Church will persevere in her commitment to promote awareness that the values of peace, freedom, solidarity and the protection of the neediest must inspire both private and public life. Faith and the adherence to Jesus Christ require that the Catholic faithful in Brazil return to being instruments of reconciliation and brotherhood, in truth, justice and love. Madam Ambassador, Before concluding this meeting, I repeat my request to convey to the President of the Republic my very best wishes for prosperity and peace. And I would like to tell you, Your Excellency, that you may rely on the esteem, welcome and support of this Apostolic See in the fulfilment of your mission, which I hope will be successful and fully satisfying. My thoughts now go to all Brazilians and to their leaders. I wish all of them prosperity, together with increasing progress and harmony. I am sure that you will convey my sentiments and hopes to the most High Mandatory of the Nation. Through the intercession of Our Lady, *Nossa Senhora Aparecida*, I implore for you, for your mission and for your relatives, as well as for all the beloved Brazilians, an abundance of Blessings from Almighty God.

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