



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN XXIII  
TO THE EMPEROR OF IRAN, H.I.M. MOHAMED REZA PALHAVI\****

*Monday, 1st December 1958*

The visit of your Imperial Majesty to Us – which is so great a mark of courtesy – inspires in Us feelings of gratitude which We feel compelled to express to you. We are also aware that the respect for the Holy See to which your presence attests is heightened today by the delicacy with which your Majesty postponed for several weeks the trip you proposed to make to the Eternal City. This decision was especially affected by the great loss which disturbed Christianity and echoed sadly throughout the world. We are indeed aware of this attention of your Majesty, of this tribute which you rendered under these circumstances to the memory of the illustrious late Pontiff.

It was Our venerated predecessor who received you on your previous visit ten years ago, and We know the faithful memory that your Majesty preserves of that audience. It was he also who more recently agreed to the establishment of official relations between Iran and the Holy See, which We on Our part are happy to support with all Our power.

We should like to salute in the person of your Majesty the entire nation of Iran over which you preside with such distinction. Although We have not personally had the privilege of getting to know your country and its capital, dominated by the imposing heights of the Elburz mountains, We once did approach its frontiers. Contained between two seas, guarded by high mountain ranges, this land was in the course of centuries the crossroads of numerous peoples and the crucible of the oldest civilizations. In our day she remains rich in resources, those of the soil and subsoil and those still more precious riches of the mind.

To these last the Church, present in these lands from her beginnings, is happy to contribute her spiritual life, her cultural heritage, and the human ideals which she has always served. With generous and loyal devotion, of which We most willingly reassure your Majesty, Our Catholic sons of Iran have placed themselves wholeheartedly in the service of the noblest causes, most notably

the instruction and education of youth, the care of the sick, and various charitable ventures.

We are pleased to learn that your Majesty, who has always been benevolent toward Christian institutions, has recently taken an interest in the foundation of new hospitals and scientific institutions which, We are sure, will be developed for the greater good of all. It is God's wish that such a spirit of peaceful cooperation, so much in conformity with the traditions of the Church and with the native qualities of your people, should continue to bear the best fruits on the earth of Iran. In this confidence We invoke upon your Majesty, on the distinguished persons who accompany you and upon your empire, the most abundant favors of Almighty God.

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\**The Pope Speaks*, vol.5 n°2, p.159.

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