



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THE CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY ****

Monday, 13 July 1970

Mr. Chancellor,

We wish to give a word of heartfelt greeting to you and to the members of your suite and the Federal German Ambassador to the Holy See. We thank you for your visit and the significant address which you have just delivered to Us.

In spite of historical vicissitudes in the past, relations between the Holy See and your country have been able to develop fruitfully and grow deeper on the basis of respect for rights and friendly cooperation.

We consequently declare Our conviction that current problems which lie close to Our heart can also be solved in a satisfactory manner. We are above all thinking of the schools problem, of education of youth, defence of the family and care for those who have need of assistance. The Catholic Church in Germany will make a valuable contribution to the true good of the German People, in close union with the Holy See and under the guidance of its Episcopate, which is fully aware of its responsibilities and is open to all problems. The Pastoral Letter on "The Church in Pluralistic Society and in the Modern Democratic State", which the German Bishops issued last year is to some extent a concrete application to local conditions of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. As is well known, many pertinent suggestions were made in it.

We take pleasure, Mr. Chancellor, in greeting in your person the hardworking people of your country. After the harsh reality of the war it has been able to find an honourable place among the nations for itself once more. Our heartfelt greeting goes out to all your fellow citizens, above all to those who still have to bear the consequences of the war.

You referred to these consequences, Mr. Chancellor, when you mentioned those tensions which still exist in Europe and which the Federal German Government is ready to face, in order to make its contribution to peaceful coexistence among the peoples.

Ever since the beginning of Our Pontificate We Ourselves have ceaselessly striven for the things of peace and have given Our best wishes and blessing to all efforts aimed at peace in Europe and in the world. The Church certainly has a mission to fulfil here a mission which distinguishes it from among those States. In accomplishing its mission the Church will seek to build bridges from people to people. It directs men's hearts to God, to peace between man and God and to peace in man and among men. When We turn Our mind to Europe, We gladly take this opportunity to renew Our assurances that the Holy See gives its full moral support to the problem of uniting Europe. This is a problem which many consider to be necessary and urgent, in spite of the present difficulties. As We said some time ago, it is a question "of union in the economic field and then if possible – in view of the present historical situation – in the political field" (Allocution to the Members of the European Common Market and Euratom: A.A.S. - LIX - 1967, p. 624) .

In these circumstances We note with satisfaction that the Federal German Government is truly working for achievement of this goal. Prominent political men of your country have devoted themselves to this task. That great "European", the late Federal Chancellor Conrad Adenauer, above all, deserves mention at this moment in this regard.

Work for peace, however, also demands understanding by all of the social needs of the present time and readiness to make sacrifices for the sake of developing peoples. The German People has done great things, especially since the war, in giving generous help for the sake of development, not least by means of Church organizations: We are glad to be able to take this opportunity once more to express Our admiration and appreciation.

In Our Encyclical "On the Development of the Peoples" We, like Our Predecessors, drew the attention of world public opinion to these pressing problems, as is Our responsibility. In spite of all technological progress, large sectors of indigenous populations of many parts of the world are still being left in inhuman living conditions, are being treated badly and are being exploited. Such unbearable social conditions are a danger to peace. We therefore thank the German People for the successful work it has undertaken for fostering economic, uplift and cultural advance among peoples of the Third World.

You come, Mr. Chancellor, from a land where two great Christian communities have lived side by side – and together – for centuries. The ecumenical movement has happily led to deeper reciprocity and greater rapprochement on the part of both Christian Confessions. The Holy See has done much to collaborate in these efforts.

So We express Our wish, Mr. Chancellor, that it shall be granted to you to lead your country to

true progress in far-reaching work for peace on the political and social levels and on the religious level too. To this end We invoke God's lasting protection and blessing upon the Federal President, upon yourself, on your Government and upon the German People which We continue to hold in the highest esteem.

*ORa n.30 p.3.
