



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF IRAN
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 16 December 1971

Mr. Ambassador,

We greatly appreciate the noble words you have just uttered and are happy to welcome here today in your person a highly qualified representative of a people that can rightly be considered one of the most ancient in the universe. Has not Iran just celebrated the two thousand five hundredth anniversary of Cyrus the Great?

We were fortunate enough to have a contact with the Iranian land on the occasion of our journey to the Far East this time last year, and we had the privilege of meeting your Sovereign, His Imperial Majesty the Shahinshah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who accredits you to us today. We will be grateful to you if you will be our interpreter to him, telling him once more of our excellent memory of his welcome at Teheran. The few minutes' conversation we had with him then; enabled us, in fact, to appreciate not only the elevation of his sentiments, but also his concern to be present at the problems that the rapid evolution of society raises for all rulers today.

These concerns are partly ours. It is true that the mission of the Church is above all a religious mission. But God, who Created man for an eternal destiny, makes it incumbent on all of us not to disregard his temporal destiny and to struggle in order that he may be assured conditions of life corresponding to his dignity, at all times and places. It is natural, therefore, that the great questions, that torment humanity today – development and peace, to quote only these two – should have a considerable place in the concerns of the Catholic Church, as is attested by the documents she dedicates to them and the initiatives she takes in this field.

This tells you, Mr. Ambassador, that collaboration between the Holy See and your noble country

on the plane of these great human problems is established quite naturally and that in the exercise of your duties you will find allies and friends here. We know furthermore that you bring to this function a competence and talent that have rightly won you high esteem in the missions you have carried out for many years at the highest international levels. And you have even had, in this capacity, relations with the Holy See that were deeply appreciated.

Personally, we are ready to facilitate your task in everything that depends on us. We warmly invoke the favour and the protection of Almighty God on Iran and on the person of its Sovereign, as well as on Your Excellency and on the mission that you are inaugurating today.

*ORa n.52 p.4.