



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 5 February 1973

Mr. Ambassador,

We thank you warmly for the respectful words that you addressed to us on presenting the Letters that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Spain to the Holy See, and the Letters of withdrawal of your illustrious predecessor Don Antonio Garrigues, whose long mission has left such a pleasant memory with us.

Your Excellency can expect the same benevolent reception and attention from us in the execution of your mission, which, as you recalled, is one of "dialogue" and "permanent and qualified meeting", in your capacity as Representative of Spain to the Holy See. A dialogue that is all the more solicitous on our side and – we hope – fruitful and beneficial in that Spain is worthy of the particular interest of the Holy See.

We listened attentively to your reference to the temporal changes that are taking place in your country and the desires animating the Spanish People with regard to their greater and more harmonious progress.

The Church, faithful to her mission of disinterested service, could not be indifferent to the just aspirations that are felt more deeply and consciously every day in the human spirit, nor could she remain neutral before the processes of change which are going on in the world and in which fundamental spiritual and moral values are at stake, such as brotherly love, justice, civic and religious freedom. For this reason she responsibly undertakes to collaborate in real progress, endeavouring to imbue the whole social context with the vital and inspiring force of her eternal message and of her vocation to renewal in the midst of the world.

Her mission to form the hearts of men in conformity with the evangelical ideal, cannot but be expressed in a salutary ferment of change in the very heart of society, where as a result of the active witness of faith by bishops, priests and faithful. Christian commitment is an effective element of well-balanced growth and real improvement.

By means of freedom and independence in the accomplishment of this task of service, the Church wishes her voice, disinterested and convincing, to reach, with ease and credibility, the depths of the human soul in order to guide it along the straight path of personal fulfilment and work for the common good.

Viewing the present and the future from this religious perspective, which is peculiar to us as Father and Pastor, we see with confident optimism the action of the Church in Spain for the good of the whole nation. We admire the latter for the many glorious chapters of its history and we warmly esteem its sons for their generous spirit, their sturdy honesty and their universal and dedicated service to the Church as well as for their characteristic faithfulness to this Apostolic See. For this reason our wishes for the prosperity and complete progress of Spain are marked by particular fatherly affection.

Expressing to you, Mr. Ambassador, our best wishes for the successful accomplishment of your high mission, we are happy to express our respectful greeting to His Excellency the Head of the State, who has entrusted it to you.

We willingly impart the implored Apostolic Blessing to all our beloved sons of Spain, who have always a particular place in our affection and in our prayers, to the high Authorities of the nation, to Your Excellency and to your collaborators and their families.

*ORa n.7 p.2.