



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE AMBASSADOR OF BURUNDI*

Thursday, 21 October 1976

Mr. Ambassador,

If the mission entrusted to you by His Excellency Lt. General Michel Micombero is a motive of particular satisfaction for you, allow us, too, to express to you our joy in receiving you. and to thank you for the noble words you have just uttered. We are very pleased, in fact, at the sentiments in which you are preparing to carry out your duties as Representative of Burundi. They show that you have a high conception of your task, and that you will make every effort to accomplish it as well as possible. Welcome, then, to the Vatican, to the one who has been placed at the head of the Catholic Church as well as to his collaborators. May the periodical contacts you will have here always turn out to be cordial and fully fruitful!

You bring us, on this first day, the greeting of your compatriots and the good wishes of the President of the Republic. This message of friendship moves us deeply. It comes from the very heart of Africa, a continent full of anxieties but also of hopes, whose problems, projects and achievements are followed attentively by everyone. In this difficult context, characterized by a rapid evolution on all planes, it seems to us that we can discern the aspiration of peoples to more freedom, justice, brotherhood, in a word, to peace. We can discern a difficulty in going beyond divisions in order to reach effective mutual aid, but also a desire among peoples to be sustained further on the way to economic, social and cultural progress, in order to be capable of mastering themselves all the elements of their destiny. This cry re-echoes like an urgent appeal made to all ruling authorities: it invites them to revise their attitude constantly and face up to their responsibilities. The Holy See, faithful to its mission and to the extent of its possibilities, constantly encourages them, on its side, to collaborate in pursuit of this aim. It has done so and will continue to do so through our voice or through its various means of expression.

But you very rightly recalled, Your Excellency, the specific contribution that the Catholic Church makes to mankind, in addition to her cooperation in the building up of peace. Thus you spoke of the "civilization of love", because love is this new word drawn from God, this Good News that Christians are burning to proclaim to their brothers and, even more, to put into practice. How well it characterizes the flame we would like to see lit in the heart of everyone, and which we would like to revive when need be! How we would love our dear Sons of Burundi, under the guidance of their Bishops and in respect of the freedom of everyone, to continue to transmit it eagerly and enthusiastically! We know already what they have accomplished, through God, for the service of their fellow-citizens and their native country. We thank them and renew to them our confidence that this testimony will be even more pure and generous.

Mr. Ambassador, you have all our warm support and our esteem, both today and in the future, for the exercise of your mission. Assuring you of this, we venture to request you to convey to the Head of the State of Burundi our respectful and deferential wishes. And we invoke for you the light and blessings of the Lord Almighty.

*ORa n.45 p.2.