



The Holy See

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

Saturday, 3 December 1977

Mr Ambassador,

In accepting the Letters accrediting Your Excellency as Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq, we welcome the esteemed envoy of His Excellency President Hassan Albakr, whose kind good wishes we deeply appreciate and cordially reciprocate, and we greet the representative of the Iraqi people and Government, heirs of traditions in which can be found inspiration for advancing the true peace that cannot exist without justice and respect for the human person.

We have confidence in the valued contribution that your country can make to that cause, especially in the Middle East. Far too long has that part of the world been a center of mistrust, hatred and conflict. We hope that everything will now be done to clear away injustices and animosity and to build the foundation of understanding and generosity on which can rest a lasting peace. We pray that the peoples of the Middle East, who acknowledge the greatness and love of the one God, may soon live fraternally together, with wholehearted respect for each others' human and religious rights, especially in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The Catholic Church will not fail to do whatever it can to further this hope, in accordance with the principles of Christianity that it exists to teach. It is the Church's duty to educate its members in the knowledge and practice of these principles. In the schools for which it is in some way responsible, "it aims to create for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by the gospel spirit of freedom and charity . . . So it is that the Catholic school educates its students to promote effectively the welfare of the earthly city, and prepares them to serve the advancement of the reign of God" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 8). The Christian, educated in accordance with his faith, is a devoted worshipper of God and a loyal citizen of his country, whose welfare he feels duty bound to

promote.

In the fulfilment of your mission, Your Excellency can rely on the full support of the Holy See in the pursuit of your noble aims and in the further deepening of friendship between the Holy See and the Republic of Iraq and their cooperation for the good of all. Upon you and upon the beloved Iraqi people and their leaders we invoke the blessings and guidance of the Almighty.

*AAS 70 (1978), p.112-113.

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XV, p.1141-1142.

L'Osservatore Romano 4.12.1977, p.1.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1977, p.380-381.

ORa n. 50 p.2.
