



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND TO THE HOLY SEE*

Monday 24 January 1977

Mr. Ambassador,

The words that you have just addressed to us on presenting the Letters that accredit you to us as Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Finland, manifest the high ideal with which you wish to inspire your action at the Holy See. We thank you warmly for this, as well as for the kind sentiments you manifested in our regard.

The relations that the Holy See maintains with various nations have always the purpose, in addition to their specifically religious finality, of promoting everything that may bring about or increase a spirit of peaceful cooperation among peoples, as well as the desire to ensure all persons interior and exterior freedom, which is inseparable from human dignity.

That is why we appreciate the policies of your Government which you have just recalled briefly. They contribute to uniting men of good will. It is important therefore that they should not let themselves be discouraged by disappointments or difficulties, for they meet the irrepressible requirements of mankind. We are convinced that a trusting collaboration which tries to establish itself gradually and which aims at putting a real sense of man at the very principle of political relations, will end up by imposing the conviction that the selfish pursuit of particular interest cannot suffice, either for States or for persons, to ensure this peace to which everyone aspires.

Precisely because of her religious mission, and in conformity with the teachings of the Gospel and the will of her Founder, the Church endeavours to contribute, with the peaceful arms that are hers, to this work of persuasion and change of hearts in order to see really a brother in every man. This is the conviction that has always inspired the appeals that we launch every year for World Peace Day. These appeals are addressed to the conscience of political leaders and to that of all men, to

remind them tirelessly where the real paths to peace are. It is the same conviction that also animated the participation of the Holy See in the Conference which drew the attention and the hopes of many peoples to the capital of your country. We hope that this expectation will not be disappointed and that the Helsinki agreements will be applied completely and loyally by all their signatories.

We know that our Catholic sons in Finland share this ideal fully, and we rejoice that it permits them to cooperate in this way, with their brothers, in service of their country and of the whole human community.

We receive with satisfaction the sentiments which His Excellency the President of the Republic charged you to convey. We ourselves have an excellent memory of his visit, and we entrust to you the care of expressing to him, with our gratitude, the warm wishes that we extend, in prayer, for his person and for the happiness of the dear People of Finland.

Be assured, Mr. Ambassador, of the cordiality of our reception. As we bid you welcome, we address to you our good wishes for the accomplishment of your high mission.

*ORa n.6 p.2.