



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 2 June 1977

Mr. Ambassador,

It gives us particular joy to be able to greet you on receiving your Letters of Credence today as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See. We bid you a sincere welcome on this first official visit of yours to the Vatican and warmly return the expression of gratitude and esteem which you have just manifested to us in your words.

The existing relations of trust, which are strengthened anew by your accrediting, and the friendly meetings with many personalities in the political and cultural fields who have paid us a visit from your country during our pontificate, are an eloquent testimony not only of the good understanding between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Holy See but also of the well-regulated relations and fruitful cooperation between State and Church in your homeland. On this occasion we wish to note this with particular satisfaction and appreciation.

The foundation that makes this collaboration between the Church and the modern state possible even nowadays, is the happy fact that the essential goals of most state constitutions – such as protection of human rights, the promotion of justice and of social progress, peace and understanding among peoples – correspond in many respects to those conceptions which the Church pursues in following out her mission with regard to the earthly world and human society. We recognize in these common ideals, as you yourself indicated briefly, the echo of a centuries-old Christian tradition. The friendly relations which the Holy See maintains with a large number of States are based particularly on confidence in the active collaboration of the Church in promoting and protecting the common spiritual and moral values, without which it is impossible to construct a community of the State and of peoples really worthy of man.

In this spirit of solidarity and of mutual trust, the Church and the Holy See offer your country and

its Government their willing and sincere collaboration. We are following particularly, with great interest and hope, the present important discussion between leaders of the State and of the Church on the due recognition and preservation of universally binding fundamental values in society, on protection of the family as well as the betterment of public morals. The Holy See supports, within the sphere of its possibilities, the justified expectations of the German people at home and in the international community of States. At the same time it hopes, on its side, for the helpful support and collaboration of the German Federal Government, in order that, through common world-wide efforts, the deep wish of mankind for a more just social order and a lasting peace may gradually become a reality. The numerous initiatives and aid projects with which the Federal Republic of Germany, and in particular also German Catholics, have endeavored already in the past to meet the necessities and the development of peoples in the Third World, ensure your country an honourable place in the decisive struggle of the nations for a more immune and brotherly world tomorrow.

Mr. Ambassador, it is our sincere wish that, through your diplomatic activity, which you are now beginning officially as Ambassador to the Holy See, you may deepen further and develop more the hitherto good understanding and trustful collaboration in mutual relations and in the important international questions between the federal Republic of Germany and the Holy See. For this purpose we assure you of the same support as we gave to your esteemed predecessor, and accompany your future activity with our best wishes and our prayer.

While we reciprocate gratefully the respectful good wishes which the President of the Federal Republic charged you to express to us, we implore God's special protection and assistance for you and your collaborators.

*ORa n.24 p.5.