



The Holy See

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

Monday 10 July 1978

Mr. Ambassador.

We hear with deep satisfaction Your Excellency's remarks at the moment when you are inaugurating your office as Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Rwanda to the Holy See.

Expressing our gratitude to you, we entrust you with the care of thanking also His Excellency General Major Juvenal Habyarimana, for whom you have acted as interpreter. We keep an excellent memory of his visit and we warmly renew on his behalf the good wishes we formulated, two years ago, for his person and his work of peace and progress in the service of all the people of Rwanda.. - You pointed out realistically, Mr. Ambassador, several conditions of progress which claim our attention. It is in the first place the mobilization of all the living forces of Rwanda for a positive action: to develop the resources of the country as much as possible in order to ensure to its thronging population the foodstuffs it needs. We are happy to see that, after the meritorious efforts they have made to understand one another better and better, the different racial groups can now collaborate in this noble programme, under the impulsion of the Government. We hope with you that this peace will be strengthened, that everyone will be able to benefit from it and that unity will be consolidated in legitimate respect of regional particularities. Other natural limits, you say, make economic progress difficult and slow. But you rightly stress the courage of the people of Rwanda, determined to overcome the precariousness of its situation through work, the coordination of the efforts of all and good understanding with other nations, and, we hope too, international aid, which will safeguard your independence.

Then, too, you do not want material progress under conditions which would scorn respect of persons, rational freedom, spiritual and moral values. We are happy to hear this affirmation, and

we know, in fact, that, on certain serious family questions for example, your Government has the wisdom to take into account the convictions of believers. A civilization is great only through its soul. It is all to the honour of Rwanda to understand this. Your people can be proud of taking this courageous and clear-sighted way.

We like to think that the Catholic Church contributes to a considerable extent to these orientations. She is witnessing a remarkable development in your country, not only because of the impressive number of her sons, but owing to her vitality. Certainly, her mission must always remain distinct from that of the State; she aims at the proclamation of the Gospel, the complete salvation of men, their participation in divine life in Jesus Christ. But it is clear that her message, when it is respected, assimilated and lived, has the consequence of raising spiritual and moral forces, fostering a climate of respect and brotherhood for all, the spirit of service, honesty in work and social relations, courage in adversity. And she cannot preach charity without putting it into practice herself, in priority areas which are particularly indicated for her sphere of competence, such as education, medical and hospital care. Your Excellency did not scruple to express your pride at the deep roots of the Catholic Church in the country and your satisfaction at the witness and aid she brings. We, too, hope that the civil Authorities will continue to maintain these friendly and fruitful relations with the local Church – which has all our esteem and our affection – as with the Holy See itself.

It is with these sentiments, Mr. Ambassador, that we form our best wishes for your mission at the centre of the Catholic world. Assuring you of our benevolence, we invoke the abundant blessings of the Lord on your person, your country and its rulers.

*ORa n.29 p.11.