



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI
TO AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE HOLY SEE****

Monday 26 June 1978

Mr. Ambassador,

We thank you heartily for the respectful words you have just addressed us, at the moment when you present to us the letters which accredit you to the Holy See as Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands.

Your Excellency has just recalled briefly, in lofty terms, the noble concerns which inspire the international action of your country, and in particular its determination to take part actively in the struggle against poverty in the world, in the upholding of human rights and in the progress of peace. It is also a satisfaction and a comfort for us to have heard Your Excellency bear witness to the efforts already carried out, and stress that the Netherlands will continue to contribute, particularly within the various international authorities, to the union of all men of goodwill in pursuit of effective and disinterested collaboration.

Owing to her supernatural vocation and the specifically religious mission that are hers, the Church owes it to herself to take part in the efforts being made to ensure to all peoples, with security, a human life worthy of the name. That is why we feel deep joy on seeing a remarkable sense of charitable and social action grow among our dear Catholic Sons, in the Netherlands, on the national and on the international plane.

For Christians, in fact, this attention to the underprivileged is not mere humanitarian altruism. They are able to recognize the mysterious presence of the Lord in the person of the poor, the sick, aliens, and all those who are waiting for the Good Samaritan to pass and help them. It is this evangelical outlook which motivates and fixes the deep attention of Dutch Catholics on all those suffering from difficult social conditions: old or isolated persons, the forsaken, outcasts, migrants

and so many other people affected with physical or moral misery.

How can we be astonished if such a sense of one's neighbour goes beyond the national frontiers and extends to the essential needs of mankind: the problems of human rights, of disarmament, of the development of the underprivileged nations? And the specifically Catholic inspiration which we like to recognize in the social action of our Dutch sons – is it necessary to emphasize? – does not lead in any way to any competition with initiatives taken by other religious communities or by other movements in aid of human distress. According to the Gospel the very requirements of love call, on the contrary, to generous collaboration with the joint action you so rightly exalted.

This harmonious collaboration is possible, we are particularly glad to acknowledge here, Mr. Ambassador, thanks to the atmosphere of freedom that the institutions of your country guarantee to all citizens. In fact, in the important field of education, your fellow-countrymen enjoy this freedom, which in many respects is exemplary, as also in the different private or collective initiatives in the service of the common good,

We are happy to present our respectful greetings to Her Majesty the Queen, who has entrusted your mission to you, and to express to you the wishes for prosperity that we willingly form in prayer for the Netherlands. And we assure you yourself, Mr. Ambassador, of the cordiality with which we receive you in the eternal City, bidding you a hearty welcome.

*ORa n.27 p.5,