



The Holy See

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

Friday, 5 May 1978

Your Excellency,

we have pleasure in accepting the Letters of Credence with which His Excellency Dr Kenneth Kaunda, President of the Republic of Zambia, appoints you as your country's Ambassador to the Holy See. With grateful recollections of his visit of last year, we express our thanks for the kind greetings that you bring from him and from the people of Zambia, and we ask you to assure them of our deep interest in their welfare and our prayerful wishes for their happiness.

Your Excellency has spoken eloquently of the harmful results for a people's happiness that follow from a refusal to recognize God's place in the lives of human beings. God is the founder and perfecter of human dignity, and the loftiest reason for that dignity is his call to communion with him. It is but natural therefore that any attempt to exclude God will be detrimental to man, both as an individual and as a member of society. By ignoring God, the individual is encouraged to turn a deaf ear to the promptings of the law that God has written in his heart in order to direct him ever upwards to greater nobility. God created man in his own image and likeness, crowned him with glory and honour and put him over the works of his hands. But in a society that does not sincerely acknowledge God, as all too many examples show, attempts are made to despoil man of that God-given grandeur: he is removed from his central position, treated as no more than a means for the attainment of other ends and subordinated to what should be at his service.

Recognition of God, who is the father of all, means recognizing also the brotherhood of human beings and their fundamental equality, without distinction of origin or race. In this respect, when addressing the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See last January, we spoke of the concern that we feel at situations of racial discrimination on the African continent. The Church, we said,

“cannot encourage or justify violence, which sheds blood, sows destruction, generates hatred without measure and triggers off reprisals and vengeance. But the Church cannot keep silent with regard to her teaching, namely that all racist theories are contrary to Christian faith and love. The very horror that Christians have of violence must urge them to reaffirm the equal dignity of all men more clearly and courageously” (AAS 70 (1978) 173).

We have confidence that the Zambian people will value and preserve the necessary foundations for their true happiness. We are encouraged in this not only by the Christian commitment of many of your country’s citizens but also by the thought that they will not wish to be unfaithful to their ageless traditions, which have never considered man as mere matter limited to earthly life. We invoke upon them God’s richest blessings as they build on these precious foundations.

We pray God also to grant Your Excellency success in your important mission, in the performance of which you can count on our wholehearted assistance and that of our collaborators.

*AAS 70 (1978), p.336-338;

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XVI, p.326-327;

L’Attività della Santa Sede 1978, p.117-118;

OR 5-6.5.1978, p.1;

ORa n.20 p.2.