



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THAILAND TO THE HOLY SEE*

Saturday, 17 February 1979

Mr Ambassador, FOR THE SECOND TIME in a few months I greet you and assure you of my respect. In October you came to represent His Majesty King Bhumibol and the Government and people of Thailand at the inauguration of my papal ministry. Today you become their permanent representative as your country's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See. I renew my heartfelt wishes for the welfare of His Majesty the King of Thailand and invoke every blessing on the Thai people and their leaders. I know well the high value that your nation has set on freedom and the deep interest it has displayed in man's pursuit of liberation and enlightenment. This attitude indicates a profound respect for man, for his rights and for his possibilities. I rejoice in finding such regard for man, whom the Christian religion sees as made in the image and after the likeness of God and given power over the works of creation. The existence of such regard will prevent man from being made the slave of a system. It will not allow decisions to be made on the basis of ideological conceptions about the abstract man, while neglecting the welfare of the really existing human beings. It will be a safeguard for the dignity of each individual and of each people. It will thus be a firm basis for peace within the State and within the international community. As I stated last October, when addressing the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, the Catholic Church is anxious to put the solicitude of Christ into practice and therefore, while working for man's eternal salvation as her first duty, she cannot fail to take an active interest also in the welfare and progress of peoples in this world. The Church's principal contribution in this field is through the formation of consciences, by making people more spiritually mature, more open to others and ready to assist them in need. She considers the rendering of this service as her duty and she hopes to have the understanding of the civil authorities in performing her task. I am happy to note the cordial relations that have long existed between Thailand and the Holy See and I am confident that these will continue to produce valuable results for the benefit of all. I count on the assistance of Your Excellency in ensuring that they will in the future be even more fruitful, and I assure you of my willing cooperation and that of all the officials of the Holy See in the pursuit of that end. May God bless you and your high

mission.

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