



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Dr ALVARO AGUILAR PERALTA,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF COSTA RICA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 24 February 1979

Mr Ambassador,

I have listened with deep pleasure to the words spoken by Your Excellency on presenting the Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Costa Rica to the Holy See. I bid you in the first place a hearty welcome.

Your Excellency has just referred to the task carried out by the Church in favour of peace. It is certainly a cause to which the Church and the Holy See have dedicated and will continue to dedicate their best energies, in order that this incalculable good may preside over social life within the nations and in the international community. It is an aim which, following my revered predecessors, I have also made mine. For this reason, as I said recently, the Church "wishes to serve peace not by means of political activities, but by promoting the values and principles which are the condition for peace and human *rapprochement*, and are at the basis of international common good" (*Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*, 12 January 1979, n. 5).

I am happy to know that the people of Costa Rica is making effective efforts to cultivate these values and principles which promote and defend peace.

Another point to which Your Excellency has referred is respect for human rights in society today. A subject which in the present period of the history of humanity is becoming an increasingly pressing one as an irreplaceable element of social order, which must be governed by the requirements that spring from the dignity of persons, considered individually and collectively.

The teachings of the Second Vatican Council are clear in this connection: "The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man is an essential duty of every civil authority." (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 6). The Church, in her doctrine and in her evangelizing activity, does not forget, but on

the contrary makes every effort that all men (regardless of race, culture, religion, and social class) may see their rights respected as persons and as depositaries of a transcendent vocation to which God has called them, and which, therefore, no person or human power can suppress or ignore.

Serving this cause, the Church is well aware that she is serving the cause of man. With this conviction, from the beginning of my Pontificate I have laid stress on this line, in order to obtain that man may reach rightful freedom in truth; a truth concerning the human being, society, and concerning his destiny. It is the cause of human dignity, to which I called attention in the third part of my address at the opening of the work of the recent Puebla Conference, and which the Latin-American Episcopate has included in the final Document. These are aims which I am sure the Authorities and people of Costa Rica will make their own, in accordance with the Christian and humanist tradition which they wish to pursue.

May the Blessed Virgin of the Angels, so venerated in Costa Rica, intercede in order that these aims may become a splendid reality.

Mr Ambassador, before concluding this first meeting of ours, I wish to assure you of my constant and benevolent help in the promotion of these ideals and in the accomplishment of the high mission which is beginning today. Kindly convey to Mr President and to the Authorities and people of Costa Rica, the most respectful and cordial regards of the Pope, who asks God to grant this noble nation his best blessings along the way to peace, common life, and pursuit of increasingly higher human and Christian aims.

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