



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF KENYA TO THE HOLY SEE*

Friday, 11 May 1979

Mr Ambassador,

IN ACCEPTING YOUR LETTERS of Credence this morning, it is my intention to manifest my deep respect and esteem for all Kenya – for its people, for its worthy traditions, for the role that it is called to play in Africa and in the world. I also wish to express my gratitude for the greetings and best wishes that you bring me from His Excellency the President, and from the Government and people of your country. Be assured that I reciprocate with the most cordial sentiments.

The words you have just spoken are much appreciated. You have emphasized the fact that Kenya regards the fear of Almighty God as a source of the blessings of stability and prosperity, a basis for the unity that you profess and foster. This is indeed consonant with the view of the Psalmist expressed in the Bible: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (*Psalms 111: 10*).

You have spoken kindly about the Church's contribution to Kenya's development. You have mentioned the satisfaction with which your country takes cognizance of the international role of the Holy See in the master of peace, human dignity and equality. These are all indeed key issues for the Holy See, as well as for the entire Catholic Church, as it pursues its mission of service to man, in the cause of "the Gospel of peace" (*Ephesians 6: 15*).

In particular, the Church attaches great value to promoting the unity of mankind, finding the principle of this unity in the fatherhood of God and in his creative love. At the same time the Church will not cease to concentrate on the exigencies of this unity, which include mutual love, fraternal support, sustained collaboration, as well as the rejection of every theory of practice at variance with this basic truth.

The Church's interest in and service of man is based on the teaching which, in the words of Paul VI, "reflects a whole Christian concept of man himself, who is created in God's likeness and redeemed by Christ..." ([Address of 22 May 1974 to the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid](#)). It is motivated by the concept of true brotherhood that "takes into account the common origin, nature and destiny of all members of the human family and the equality of their fundamental rights" (*ibid.*).

These are the criteria that inspire the Church in Kenya and elsewhere in her efforts to build up Christian communities; these are the principles that she endeavours to put into practice, thus offering the example of Christian leadership. The Church is irrevocably committed to this pattern of service, and she is happy to pursue her activity in collaboration with individuals and nations. Today in your person she welcomes the continued collaboration of Kenya, and before the witness of history she gives the renewed assurance of her commitment to strengthen the unity of mankind, in justice and truth, in freedom and love.

With these sentiments I welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican, invoking abundant blessings on you and all the authorities and beloved people of Kenya.

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