



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE***

7 March 1981

Mr Ambassador,

IT IS A PLEASURE for me to receive you today as Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and to accept the Letters of Credence from His Excellency Chun Doo Hwan. I would ask you to convey to him my good wishes for his person and for his recently inaugurated mission as President.

Korea is one of the countries that I was unable to visit in the course of my pastoral journey to Eastern Asia last month. The journey thus did not give me the opportunity to show my deep esteem and affection for the Korean people, but I am happy to have, so soon afterwards, this occasion to give expression to my warm sentiments in their regard.

In the past, your people showed strength of character in maintaining their identity and culture in the face of adverse circumstances. In spite of the consequent opposition on the part of many to accepting any ideas that came from outside, there were always Koreans who were able to recognize what was good in that field and to accept it. It was members of your own people who introduced Christianity to your country, knowing that the message of Jesus was not in opposition to your own noble traditions but would on the contrary exalt them and bring out what was best in them.

Today also, the Korean people are faced with serious difficulties in their task of being true to themselves and of building a better future. I am happy to hear Your Excellency's authoritative testimony to the loyalty and constructiveness of the Catholics in Korea in working for a society distinguished by justice and progress. Precisely because of his adherence to the teaching of Christ, a Catholic has a deep awareness of his duty to make his own contribution to the welfare of

the society to which he belongs, employing his talents for its betterment. This is the inspiration also for the educational and welfare work of Catholic institutions and of the religious Congregations whose members devote themselves to following as closely as they can in the footsteps of Jesus, of whom it was said that "he went about doing good".

It is my fervent hope that the collaboration of all sectors of the Korean people will, with God's help, lead to a happy future in freedom, justice, enlightenment and harmony. Your people are dear to me, and I pray that the Lord may guide them and their leaders to seek what is right and good and that he may assist them constantly in its pursuit. For yourself too I pray, that your mission may contribute to the welfare of your country and to international understanding.

*AAS 73 (1981), p. 272-273.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. IV, 1 pp. 633-634.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1981 pp. 186-187.

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