



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr FRANCIS JOSEPH CARASCO,
AMBASSADOR OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 26 April 1985

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome Your Excellency as I accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Saint Lucia. It is a special pleasure to greet you today since you come as the first Ambassador of your country to the Holy See. Our relations are already marked by mutual respect and esteem, but this historic occasion expresses our common intention to deepen the bonds of trust which exist and to collaborate in a more formal and stable way, especially in furthering peace and justice in the world.

Over the centuries, diplomatic missions have helped to create more effective lines of communication and dialogue between individual nations and the world community as a whole. The Holy See itself has constantly engaged in international diplomacy, establishing and maintaining full diplomatic relations with a large number of States and participating in the activities and discussions of international organizations. While its role is a unique one in view of the Church's primary task of promoting moral and spiritual values, the Holy See has always prized the opportunity to make a unique and important contribution to harmony and understanding between governments and peoples and to the protection and dignity of every human person. You can be sure, then, Your Excellency, that the Holy See is pleased with the establishment of diplomatic relations with Saint Lucia, and it holds in honour and respect your own distinguished role as its first Ambassador.

The Christian faith, and the Catholic Church in particular, has flourished in a remarkable way in your country. The development in recent years of an ever increasing number of your own indigenous clergy and religious, who are gradually assuming greater responsibility for the pastoral

care of the faithful, is a clear sign of the Church's growth and vigour. In this regard, I have noted with pleasure your reference to the dynamic and vital role which the Church is playing in your island's development - in the spiritual and moral realms certainly, but also in the fields of education, culture and social works. I can assure you that, in a genuine spirit of ecumenism and with appreciation for the existing freedom of religion, the Catholic Church will continually seek to collaborate with the people of Saint Lucia in efforts to promote the common good and welfare of all, while she pursues her specific mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Holy See appreciates the desire of your Government to engage in joint efforts with neighbouring countries in the Caribbean to create a zone of peace. It likewise appreciates your interest in the establishment of a more equitable economic and social order internationally. Perhaps your history of having so frequently experienced influences from without before your independence has made your nation more deeply aware of the importance of international relations, especially at the present period of history which is witnessing an ever increasing interdependence.

I wish to express my gratitude for the cordial greetings which you have conveyed on behalf of the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. John Compton, and I would ask you kindly to reciprocate them. I thank you, too, for the kind invitation to visit Saint Lucia. I would be very happy indeed to accept this invitation and look forward to the day when it might be arranged.

As you begin your new assignment, be assured, Your Excellency, of the full cooperation and assistance of the Holy See in the fulfilment of your mission. I pray that the Lord will grant you much joy and satisfaction in your work. And I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon you and your fellow citizens.

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