



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE AMBASSADOR OF DENMARK TO THE HOLY SEE*

Monday, 23 June 1986

Mr Ambassador, With great pleasure I welcome you to the Vatican and I gladly accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Holy See. I am grateful for the greetings which you have transmitted from Her Majesty Queen Margrethe and I would ask you to convey to Her Majesty the assurance of my appreciation and high regard. You are the second Ambassador to represent your country since diplomatic relations were restored between the Kingdom of Denmark and the Holy See after a long period without official and direct contact. Your presence here today speaks of the firm resolution of both parties to maintain and further develop the excellent relations which we now enjoy. I note with pleasure that in your speech, Mr Ambassador, you made reference to some areas of concern in which your country and the Holy See share a common interest and a common desire to collaborate in the search for adequate solutions. Among these great questions are the urgency of working for the cause of peace, the defence of human rights, the promotion of fundamental freedoms, the cause of justice at every level of relations between people and between nations, or groups of nations. You have also made reference to the vital task of feeding the hungry and of promoting appropriate development in regions still labouring under intolerable need. The Holy See highly appreciates the readiness of your Government and of your people to respond to the needs of less developed nations. In this you manifest a sensitivity and humanitarian outlook which honours you and is in harmony with Denmark's millenary Christian tradition. In this year's Message for the World Day of Peace I sought to underline the fact that, in the present world situation and in the face of grave dangers threatening peace, leaders with responsibility for political and social life need to consider the common good of the entire family of nations as well as the particular common good of a given country. Only by looking at the world with an acute sense of realism and with a sincere desire to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to freedom, human dignity and a just share of the world's goods, can existing tensions and inequalities be resolved. Here and there "an awareness is gaining ground of the fact that reconciliation, justice and peace between individuals and between nations given the stage that humanity has reached and the very grave threats that hang over its future – are not merely a noble appeal meant for a few idealists but a condition for the survival of life itself". Public opinion is at times shocked into realising that events which take place in one place or country sometimes extend beyond political frontiers and become the concern of the human family in its entirety. Some policies are such that their effects go beyond the present generation and will endure for many generations to come. All of which points to the need for an acute sense of responsibility and a heightened sensibility to the ethical implications of public policies and decisions. In that Message I emphasised that "any new international system capable of

overcoming the logic of blocs and opposing forces must be based on the personal commitment of everyone to make the basic and primary needs of humanity the first imperative of international policy." What is required is a new mentality, radically different from the self-interest which often prevails in relations between nations. There is need of a vibrant sense of brother-hood and solidarity at every level of human relations and political engagement. Barriers must be removed and replaced with trust built on truthfulness and on the will to collaborate for the general good of all. It is particularly to the cultural, ethical and moral values present in human affairs that the Holy See seeks to draw the attention of public opinion and of the various international agencies operating for the stability and progress of peoples. In this respect I sincerely welcome your reference to occasions of collaborations between Denmark and the Holy See in the context of international organisations and humanitarian agencies. In relation to another matter, Mr Ambassador, you are aware that the Catholic Church as a whole is irrevocably committed to the task of promoting the restoration of unity among all Christians through the ecumenical movement. In Denmark the number of Catholics is small, but they live in a close relationship of harmony and dialogue with the members of other religious traditions, in particular with the members of the Lutheran Church to which the majority of the population belongs. It is our hope that this privileged forum of dialogue will also contribute to strengthening the climate of mutual understanding and openness in which the Churches will feel drawn to ever increasing collaboration in responding to the challenges of our times. I think with affection of the "little flock" of Danish Catholics, and I express my heartfelt sentiments of good will and esteem towards the members of the other Christian denominations. May the ecumenical path we have begun together lead quickly to our meeting in full unity of faith in Christ Jesus. Mr Ambassador, I give you the assurance of my prayerful best wishes for your happiness in the fulfilment of your lofty mission on behalf of your country, and I gladly invoke God's blessings upon Her Majesty the Queen and upon all your fellow citizens.

*AAS 79 (1987), p. 38-41.

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