



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 4 January 1988

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to offer Your Excellency a cordial welcome as you present your Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to the Holy See. I ask you to express my gratitude to your President, His Excellency Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, for his kind greetings and for the good wishes which you have conveyed to me. I would also ask you to assure him of my own good wishes and prayers for the harmony and well-being of all the citizens of your country.

You have referred, Mr. Ambassador, to the warm and cordial relations which exist between Zambia and the Holy See. And I trust that the cooperation and understanding which have characterized our diplomatic relations in the past will, with your able assistance, be further strengthened and developed in the future.

I wish to thank Your Excellency for the kind tribute which you have paid to my efforts and those of the Church to bring about peace, understanding and reconciliation among all the nations and peoples of the world. Surely it is the duty of every person to work and pray for these desired goals.

As you are aware, the Church's mission is essentially a religious one, but her recourse to diplomacy responds to the pressing need on the international level of affirming and reinforcing the unity of the human family. It is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that "the promotion of unity belongs to the innermost nature of the Church" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 42). This truth is a consequence of the fact that "by her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament of

intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind” (*Lumen Gentium*, 1).

In accord with her mission to bring about an authentic union of minds and hearts, “the Church admonishes her own sons and daughters, and also humanity as a whole, to overcome all strife between nations and races in the family spirit of God’s children” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 42). It is in this context that I wish to assure Your Excellency of the Holy See’s continuing efforts to follow closely the growing political tensions associated with racial discrimination in your region. As I stated in a letter to your country’s President, “Notwithstanding the awareness, so widespread and intense, that racial discrimination represents a grave violation of the dignity of the human person and of his fundamental rights – sanctioned, for example, by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and by solemn international Conventions – it is an unfortunate fact that frequent and systematic violations of these rights and norms can still be found. As long as this scandal endures, the Catholic Church will not shirk her duty of urging the consciences of leaders and citizens to show respect for the moral law, and to accept the serious responsibilities of bringing their conduct into line with this moral law” (Die 10 maii 1985).

Your Excellency has also referred to the serious and complex economic problems which Zambia is experiencing at this time. In this regard I can assure you that the Church, well aware that the resolution of these difficulties requires the commitment of all, is ready to make her specific contribution. She strives to rouse the consciousness of all her members so that they can respond to the necessities of the present moment. Moreover she exhorts every person to promote justice, solidarity and the common good with particular concern for the most poor and needy. Thus the Catholic Bishops in your country, in a recent document concerning “Christian Liberation, Justice and Development”, published in conjunction with the Christian Council of Zambia and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, have affirmed: “Our churches are determined to play their role in helping to overcome the present difficulties and in working towards the attainment of a more just and human society” (N. 1. 32).

It has become increasingly clear also that any attempts at the resolution of economic problems requires the promotion of a new worldwide solidarity. In this way, adequate solutions can best be found to the conflicts of North and South, East and West. As I stated in my Message for the 1986 World Day of Peace: “The right path to a world community in which justice and peace will reign without frontiers among all peoples and on all continents is the path of solidarity, dialogue and universal brotherhood. This is the only path possible. Political, economic, social and cultural relations and systems must be imbued with the values of solidarity and dialogue which, in turn, require an institutional dimension in the form of special organizations of the world community that will watch over the common good of all peoples” (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Nuntius ob diem ad pacem fovendam dicatum pro a. D. 1986*, 4, die 8 dec. 1985: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VIII, 2 (1985) 1468).

As you begin your duties, Mr. Ambassador, I assure you of my prayers for the successful and

happy fulfilment of your diplomatic mission. The Holy See wishes to assist you in the accomplishment of your responsibilities. Upon Your Excellency and the President, Government and people of Zambia I invoke God's abundant blessings.

*AAS 80 (1988), p.1129-1131.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XI, 1 pp. 22-24.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1988 pp. 12-13.

L'Osservatore Romano 5.1.1988 p.4.

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