



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MRS FREDA LULE BLICK
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 16 March 1989

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to offer you a cordial welcome on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda to the Holy See. I am grateful for the warm greetings and good wishes which you have expressed on behalf of your President, His Excellency Yoweri K. Museveni, and I would ask you to convey the assurance of my prayers for himself personally and for the peace and wellbeing of all the people of Uganda.

Your Excellency's reference to the recent history of your country and to the changes which have occurred in the life and outlook of its citizens cannot but encourage the widely shared hope that Uganda will at last enjoy the climate of justice, social harmony and national cohesion needed for the work of rebuilding after so many years of strife and turmoil. The Catholic Church in Uganda has repeatedly called for such a national effort and has offered its full collaboration in the great tasks which confront the Nation.

You have stressed that your Government considers respect for human rights as a prerequisite for the existence of a truly democratic way of life. Indeed, a government which follows the rule of law permits its people to feel secure in the exercise of their rights and freedoms as they work for their country's progress and development. This is the meaning of what I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, namely: "The common good that authority in the State serves is brought to full realization only when all the citizens are sure of their rights. The lack of this leads to the dissolution of society, opposition by citizens to authority, or a situation of oppression, intimidation,

violence and terrorism, of which many examples have been provided by the totalitarianisms of this century" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptor Hominis*, 17).

Unfortunately, Ugandans can bear sad witness to the evil consequences of such a lack of security and respect for human rights. It is therefore my fervent hope that the process of rehabilitation and restoration of a democratic way of life already begun will proceed apace. I wish to encourage your Government and people in the efforts needed to overcome the vestiges of past difficulties and go on to rebuild your country after so many years of destruction and bloodshed.

The Church in Uganda makes available her resources, both spiritual and material, for people to lead a more dignified life in accordance with the inalienable human dignity of each individual. In conjunction with the Church's religious and cultural mission, the Ugandan Catholic community is particularly involved in the areas of health-care and education. Through her charitable agencies the Church seeks to provide for the social development of the people and to seek an improvement of the conditions affecting the poorer and more needy sectors of the population. In this there exists a wide possibility of collaboration between the Church and the State which I am sure will continue to increase and produce excellent results.

In this respect I cannot but repeat the sentiments expressed by my predecessor Pope Paul VI during his historic visit to Kampala in 1969: "Have no fear of the Church; she honours you, she educates honest and loyal citizens for you, she does not foment rivalries and divisions, she seeks to promote healthy liberty, social justice and peace. If she has any preference at all, it is for the poor, for the education of little ones and of the people, for the care of the suffering and abandoned. The Church does not make her faithful sons strangers to civil life and national interests; on the contrary, she trains and engages them in the service of the public good" (Pauli VI *Allocutio in oede Parlamenti Ugandiensis habita*, die 1 aug. 1969: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, VII [1969] 548).

This is the Church's endeavour in every part of the world. And in this regard I am pleased to acknowledge Your Excellency's reference to my recent pastoral visit to Southern Africa and my appeal there for the defence of human rights as well as for assistance to the poor and oppressed in that region. Respect for these rights and effective solidarity at every level of people's needs are foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world. I therefore express the hope that the needs of the Ugandan people too will find a practical response in the solidarity and assistance of other governments and international organizations, so that the legitimate desires of the Ugandan people for peace and wellbeing may be satisfied.

As Your Excellency begins your diplomatic service here, I assure you of the Holy See's assistance and collaboration in the fulfilment of your responsibilities. I offer you my prayers and good wishes as you seek to strengthen the good relations already existing between the Republic of Uganda and the Holy See. And upon Your Excellency and the Government and people of Uganda I invoke

the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

*AAS 81 (1989), p. 1103-1105.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XII, 1 pp. 588-590.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1989 pp. 173-175.

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