



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr EDNEY CAIN
NEW AMBASSADOR OF BELIZE TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 29 May 1989

Mr Ambassador,

I accept with pleasure the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belize to the Holy See. I am grateful for the cordial greetings which you have brought to me from the Governor-General, Her Excellency Dame Minita Gordon, and from the Government and people of your country, and I would ask you to convey my own good wishes, with the assurance of my prayers for the peace and well-being of all the people of Belize.

As I welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican, I am pleased to recall my Pastoral Visit to your country in March 1983. At that time, it was my privilege to experience at first hand the warmth and hospitality of your people. My visit to Belize also marked the establishment of full diplomatic relations between your Nation and the Holy See. It is my fervent hope that the high esteem and mutual respect which exist between Belize and the Holy See will be further strengthened by your mission.

In your address, you made kind mention of my Message for this year's World Day of Peace, a message which spoke of the need to respect the inalienable dignity and rights of minorities in the pursuit of an enduring world peace. As Your Excellency has stated, Belize is composed of people from many ethnic, cultural and religious groups. The desire of your Government to guarantee a peaceful society and to promote unity by fostering the rights of the minorities living in your country is a sign of true maturity. In any genuinely democratic society, respect for minorities remains the cornerstone of true civic concord and growth as a Nation.

In our own days, the task of growing as a Nation in peace and unity is a demanding one. This is

especially so in Belize, given the political tensions throughout your region. It is imperative to seek the path of negotiation and to make use of dialogue for the resolution of all conflicts that may arise. True peace can only be attained when individuals and societies base their life and activity upon a commitment to respect the dignity of each person. As I said in my first Encyclical, “ peace comes down to respect for man’s inviolable rights – *Opus iustitiae pax* – while war springs from the violation of these rights and brings with it still graver violations of them. ...Indeed, it is a significant fact, repeatedly confirmed by the experiences of history, that violation of the rights of man goes hand in hand with violation of the rights of the nation, with which man is united by organic links as with a larger family ” (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptor Hominis*, 17).

In today’s world, the safeguarding of the right to life and the guarantee of educational opportunities are essential conditions for the development of a social order that truly promotes the dignity and well-being of every human person. The Catholic Church in Belize has long dedicated herself to the social welfare and education of your people. Through her efforts, she strives to improve the quality of their life and to secure the blessings of peace, harmony and cooperation. She considers this activity an integral part of her religious mission, according to the spirit of the Gospel.

In this regard, I wish to assure Your Excellency that the Church is ever willing, as far as she can, to help the poor, the sick, the unemployed and the needy. The Church in Belize will also continue her humanitarian aid on behalf of the numerous refugees within your borders. I am pleased to note your mention of the valuable assistance which your Government has received in this area from both the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and from donors in the European Community. These praiseworthy efforts are the fruit of a generous solidarity, and bear clear witness to the inviolable dignity of every human person.

You will recall, Mr Ambassador, that during my visit to your country I expressed a hope contained in the words of your National Anthem: that your nation may truly be a land of the free with the freedom of the children of God (Cfr. *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VI, 1 (1983) 675). Today, I wish to renew that hope on behalf of all your fellow citizens. I assure you of the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Holy See as you seek to serve your country. May Almighty God, the source of all that is good, grant you wisdom and strength in the accomplishment of your mission. As a pledge of his love, I invoke abundant divine blessings upon Your Excellency, your Government and all the beloved people of Belize.

*AAS 81 (1989), p.1319-1321.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XII, 1 pp. 1387-1389.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1989 pp. 417-419.

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