



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr MADHAW KESHAV MANGALMURTI
NEW AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 11 January 1990

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Holy See. Your presence revives the memories of my visit to your country in February 1986, which was above all a spiritual journey of good will and peace. These are sentiments which I now renew towards your President, the Government and the people of India.

One special moment of that journey was my visit to Raj Ghat, dedicated to the memory of the Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. There I paid tribute to the power of truth which leads us " to recognize with Mahatma Gandhi the dignity, equality and fraternal solidarity of all human beings, and ... prompts us to reject every form of discrimination ... (showing) us once again the need for mutual understanding, acceptance and collaboration between religious groups in the pluralist society of modern India and throughout the world "(Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio Delii, prope monumentum Gandhi vulgo "Raj Ghat" cognominatum*, 2, die 1 febr. 1986: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IX, 1 [1986] 247). Your own words here today, Mr Ambassador, have repeated India's position of non-discrimination and equal respect for all religions. It is in this framework that the Catholic Church in your country can continue to fulfil her religious and humanitarian mission, notwithstanding some difficulties, for the advancement of those essential values and freedoms which alone safeguard the inalienable dignity of every human being.

A political society exists to promote the establishment of justice, the advancement of the common good and participation by all its members in the processes which sustain and guide the life of the community (Cfr. *Eusdem Nuntius ob diem ad pacem fovendam dicatum pro a. D. 1982*, 9, die 8

dec. 1981: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IV, 2 [1981] 1191). In a world which daily grows more interdependent, individual countries, as they strive to meet these demands within their own borders, cannot fail to be actively concerned for the promotion of peace, and the conditions for peace such as development and disarmament, on a global level. Without international agreement and cooperation these grave questions will remain without an adequate solution. I take this occasion therefore to recall India's activity in some areas of international endeavour and to express the hope that the religious thought and quest, so much a part of Indian culture, will favour a further strengthening of cooperation between your country and the Holy See in that sphere.

Indeed, religious belief and practice, as well as dialogue between the great religions present in India, are not unconnected with or alien to efforts to meet major challenges affecting the course of present and future development. Public opinion is becoming increasingly aware that development is not just a matter of applying science and technology to questions facing individuals and societies. All such activity has a *moral* dimension, which cannot be neglected without serious negative consequences for the common good. By drawing their members into communion with the Creator and by teaching responsibility for life and the world in which we live, religions play a vital role in stimulating genuine development and ensuring that the voice of wisdom is heard in the market-place as well as in the temple.

Speaking to representatives of the religious, cultural and social life of India, in New Delhi on 2nd February 1986, I recalled that " to pursue integral human development it is necessary to take a stand on what is greatest and most noble in man: to reflect on his nature, his life and his destiny. In a word, *integral human development requires a spiritual vision of man* " (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio Delii, ad homines cultura excultos atque in re sociali, oeconomica et politica peritos habita*, 4, die 2 febr. 1986: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IX, 1 [1986] 280). I expressed the conviction that " India's mission in all of this is crucial, because of her intuition of the spiritual nature of man. Indeed, *India's greatest contribution to the world can be to offer it a spiritual vision of man*. And the world does well to attend willingly to this ancient wisdom and in it to find enrichment for human living " (*Ibid*). As the world undergoes radical transformation, that spiritual insight and wisdom are all the more necessary if the human family is to progress along the path to true peace and well-being.

As you pointed out, Mr Ambassador, the existence of Christianity in India is coeval with its presence in Europe; that is, its presence in your country goes back to the time of its origins, to Apostolic times. The Church today is engaged in many different forms of service to the national community. It is my earnest hope that a spirit of understanding and cooperation will help all sections of the population to view the Church's educational, health-care and social activities for what they truly are: a manifestation of love for human beings, children of God, and a form of profound human solidarity, especially towards those most in need.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that in the exercise of your lofty mission you will endeavour to

strengthen friendship and understanding between your Government and the Holy See. I pray that you will be successful in your task. May Almighty God bless you and your country.

*AAS 82 (1990), p.796-798.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XIII, 1 pp. 55-57.

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