



## The Holy See

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*Discurso al Embajador de HUNGRÍA,  
Excmo. Sr. Don Sandor KERESZTES\**

*15 de septiembre de 1990*

Mr. Ambassador,

With great joy I welcome Your Excellency here today and receive the Letters accrediting you to the Apostolic See as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Hungary. Now the centuries-old bonds are renewed which have united your homeland to the Holy See since the illustrious times of Saint Stephen of Hungary, whom my predecessor Pius XII described in the following terms: «A giant figure of a sovereign, lawgiver, peacemaker, promotor of the faith and the Church, a true 'homo apostolicus'» (L'Osservatore Romano, 11 August 1957)

Your mission begins at a time when your beloved homeland has set off on the path of profound renewal. After years of difficulty, Hungary is mustering all the energies of its people to rebuild a modern State in which each person can have the opportunity to participate in the life of society in freedom, in which fidelity to the most precious values of your past lead all to hope that a constitutional state will afford all its citizens guarantees of their human rights, the chance to develop their best qualities, and the full exercise of their responsibilities to the whole society.

You have rightly emphasized, Mr. Ambassador, your nation's place in the heart of Europe. With your neighbouring countries, you share the inestimable vocation of having been nourished by the noble traditions of East and West, and of thus providing for the fruitful encounter and constructive friendship of the two spiritual families which constructed the civilization of this continent.

With satisfaction and hope I heard you express Hungary's desire to take its place in the concert of European nations. In the past, I have not ceased saying that this continent could be true to itself only in rediscovering the full unity of all its peoples. At present the path is opening for a

cooperation that is more and more intense among the States and for ever richer exchanges among their inhabitants.

You know the Holy See's continued interest in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe because of the prospects it has opened up for the consolidation of peace, the intensification of solidarity, and the protection of the rights of individuals and peoples. Your country is now called not only to benefit from the economic support which it needs, but also to make its own contribution to a community of nations united by the heritage of a common historical and spiritual patrimony. The fact of the presence of energetic minority groups in the various countries will, we hope, be a positive factor for understanding and cooperation among peoples.

Mr. Ambassador, you have chosen to mention the historic role of the Catholic Church in the foundation of the Hungarian State. Now rediscovering their complete freedom of action, the Catholics of your country are ready to play their part loyally in the building up of the modern, dynamic society which all your compatriots desire. The spirit of the Gospel leads them to defend actively their human values, the essential foundations of culture, the virtues needed for a social life that is marked by the generous solidarity of all.

The Catholic Church wishes to be able now to develop her own activity freely. She has no other ambition than to be Christ's faithful witness, to gather people together in the communion which leads them to share with their brothers and sisters their reasons for living and their call to conversion of heart, as well as the love which is God's gift and which leads to service of neighbour.

For quite some time the Church in your country has been conducting her cultural and educational activity, contributing a special concern for the formation of your people, the support of families, and the moral health of all. Desiring to give the national community the service of educational institutions in particular the Church is happy to renew a relationship of trusting collaboration with the State. She hopes that she will be given the concrete means to revitalize her schools and universities through which she wants to be of service to the young people of your country.

Mr. Ambassador, you have said that the Hungarian people are fervently awaiting the visit which I am to make to your country next year. I ardently desire to encourage the faithful of the Catholic Church and greet the whole nation: that is the meaning of such a trip. I am also particularly happy to be able to celebrate the Feast of St Stephen solemnly in Budapest at the conclusion of my pastoral visit in August 1991. I cannot forget that the saintly King of Hungary laid the bases of the Church structure in your country in founding the principal Episcopal Sees. He also greatly promoted veneration of the Mother of God, «Magna Domina Hungarorum», whom I shall invoke, joining with the faithful, that her motherly protection may accompany the sons and daughters of your people on the path which they are courageously taking today.

I ask you, Mr. Ambassador, to express to His Excellency the President of the Republic and the members of the Government my gratitude for the courteous message which they asked you to give me. I truly hope that they may be granted to accomplish their great responsibilities successfully.

As for you, Your Excellency, I bid you welcome. You can be assured that my collaborators will not fail to give you all the support which you need to fulfill your mission to the Holy See. I express my best wishes for yourself, your loved ones and your co-workers I gladly invoke God's Blessing upon you and the entire Hungarian nation.

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