



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI TO THE HOLY SEE****

Saturday, 14 November 1992

Mr. Ambassador,

I am pleased to accept the Credential Letters by which you have been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Malawi to the Holy See. Please assure His Excellency the President, Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda, that I appreciate his warm greetings. I express the hope that our shared desire for the strengthening of relations between the Holy See and the Malawi Government will be realized. At the same time I continue to pray that Almighty God will pour out in abundance the blessings of prosperity and peace upon the people of your nation.

Our meeting today rekindles the memories of my Pastoral Visit to Malawi in 1989. I came as a herald of the Prince of Peace, and I was welcomed with warmth and affection. Today, with no less fervour than when I said it three years ago, I declare myself to be "a friend of Malawi", one who "believes in the ability of her people to face the problems that beset their country and to overcome them with courage and hope" (John Paul II, *Addresses at the Airport in Blantyre*, [4 May 1989](#) and [6 May 1989](#)). Because of this love and respect for the people of Malawi, I am particularly distressed that your nation, like many of her neighbours, is currently facing a serious food shortage. The lack of what is indispensable for the life and activity of the human person raises the spectre of immense suffering. It means delay in the further progress and development of your region. It is my ardent hope and appeal that the efforts of all parties in the area and cooperation on the international level will bring about a timely and adequate response to this threat.

The justice and the peace for which all peoples yearn can only exist when there is harmony and mutual respect among all sectors of society. Dialogue is the obligatory path to such concord. Dialogue "presupposes the search for what is true, good and just for every person, for every group

and every society" (John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1983*, 6) . As a shared quest to identify the true foundation upon which to build an enduring social order, its participants not only renounce violence of every kind but indeed welcome each other's point of view in an objective light.

The Catholic pastors and faithful in Malawi are seeking to encourage just such a dialogue on significant issues facing their beloved nation, including the improvement of the educational system, the promotion of better health care for everyone, and the encouragement of participation in public life, all of which are needed in order to satisfy popular aspirations for greater equality and unity. The members of the Catholic Church intend to continue as trustworthy partners in this dialogue with believers of other faiths and with all men and women of good will. And in order to make their own indispensable contribution to their country, they are resolved to persevere in works of service such as Your Excellency graciously acknowledged in your remarks.

To the civic order, the Church offers the contribution of her teaching and experience, in the awareness that society will flourish only to the extent that it reflects the moral order established by God. Her expertise is the truth which she has received from her Lord about man and his transcendent destiny. It is for this reason that the Holy See speaks so insistently about respect for human dignity and about the pressing need for all peoples to work together ever more generously for authentic human development (cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41). For the achievement of this goal, the Holy See holds up as the essential means the virtue of solidarity – "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself... to the good of all and of each individual" (*Ibid.*38).

The Church's specific competence requires her to defend the whole range of human rights, especially the right to life and to religious liberty. And because of what she has learned about man, she can with full confidence say that "it is entirely in accord with human nature that political and juridical structures be devised which will increasingly and without discrimination provide all citizens with the genuine opportunity of taking a free and active share in establishing the juridical foundations of the political community, in determining the form of government and the functions and purposes of its various institutions, and in the election of the government" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 75).

The Catholic community wishes to cooperate closely with civil authorities whenever they propose to achieve that "sum of conditions of social life which enables individuals, families and associations to reach their own perfection more completely and more readily" (*Ibid.*, 74). This is a weighty challenge, one worthy of everyone's best efforts. Since the time of the Apostles the Church has taught respect for "every human institution" (1 Pet. 2:13), while likewise enjoining that prayers be offered for those who govern (cf. 1 Tim. 2:2), so that they may in justice and truth "direct the energies of all citizens towards the common good" (*Ibid.*).

I assure you, Mr. Ambassador, that the Church will continue to do all in her power to be of service to the people of Malawi. I pledge the complete cooperation of the Holy See in the fulfilment of the mission entrusted to you, and it is my hope that during your term as Malawi's Representative relations between your Government and the Holy See will be marked by ever increasing understanding. Upon Your Excellency and your fellow-citizens I invoke abundant divine blessings.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XV, 2 pp. 604-606.*

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1992 pp. 740-741.

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