



The Holy See

***DISCOURS DU SAINT-PÈRE JEAN-PAUL II
À S. Exc. MONSIEUR HENRI ANTOINE TURPIN,
NOUVEL AMBASSADEUR DU SÉNÉGAL PRÈS LE SAINT-SIÈGE****

Samedi 20 novembre 1993

Mr. Ambassador,

I am very pleased to receive your Excellency, and to welcome you here as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Senegal to the Holy See.

I thank you for your courteous address which bears witness to the noble sentiments I sincerely appreciate. In particular, I am grateful to you for expressing to me the regard your President, Mr. Abdou Diouf, has for the Holy See's work in ensuring that human rights are better respected throughout the world and that an increasingly fraternal cooperation be established between peoples, with the solidarity that has proved indispensable for the well-being of the vast human family. Through you, I am pleased to convey my respectful and cordial wishes to the Senegalese head of state. I will never forget the warm welcome he and all his compatriots gave me last year in the land of Teranga.

Your accreditation to the Apostolic See as Ambassador is a significant tribute to its spiritual mission it also testifies to the importance Senegal attaches to the religious values that in their own way contribute to the development of international relations directed toward an increasingly cordial and beneficial collaboration between partners.

I have no doubt that your appointment, officially inaugurated today, will further strengthen our converging viewpoints and our bonds of friendship, for a joint action to benefit our brothers and sisters. As you know, the Holy See truly respects the dignity of each of the world's nations, both those who have inherited a long history and those who have more recently come to join the

international community, bringing their own culture heritage. Its objective is to encourage everywhere the spread of certain basis principles of civilization and humanity of which the Catholic religion is a vigilant guardian, and which she tries to instil in souls as well as in institutions. The harmony of international rights and duties rests on these principles; the establishment of true peace for the great human family depends on their observance.

I like to think that the Holy See's various initiatives to promote justice, brotherhood, understanding and peace between peoples, while respecting their particular civilizations, are favourably echoed by your compatriots, who are esteemed for their qualities of openness and their interest in human relations. Indeed, because of its geographical location, Senegal does not only serve as a sea port for the African continent, but its role is to act as a link between Black Africa and White Africa. In addition, its inhabitants are also to be credited with their attachment to the harmonious coexistence of people with different creeds.

Calling to mind the religious families of your country, my thoughts go first of all to the Catholics of Senegal, whose vitality I was able to appreciate during my Pastoral Visit. Recently, a certain number of them made a pilgrimage to Rome to renew their faith and, in my absence, I had my best wishes and encouragement conveyed to them. Allow me, Mr. Ambassador, to convey through you my heart-felt greetings to the Pastors and faithful of the Catholic Church in Senegal. You can be assured that your Catholic compatriots are eager to make their contribution to the nation's progress and development, joining with the efforts of their fellow citizens of other religious traditions. Spurred by their Christian faith and their love for their homeland, they will continue to work diligently where they are already active, in the areas of education, health care and social assistance. As far as their means permit, they will contribute to facing the challenges to which you referred. May they be the heralds of hope and the artisans of peace so as to restore courage around them, in order to overcome the difficulties your country is experiencing like so many others on your continent!

At the beginning of your mission, I offer you my best wishes. I can assure you that you will always find here in my co-workers an attentive welcome and cordial understanding.

I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine blessings on Your Excellency, your family and the members of your embassy, as well as on the Senegalese people and their leaders.

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