



The Holy See

***DISCURSO DO PAPA JOÃO PAULO II
AO NOVO EMBAIXADOR DO BRASIL JUNTO
DA SANTA SÉ POR OCASIÃO DA APRESENTAÇÃO
DAS CARTAS ECLESIAIS****

Sábado, 11 de Novembro de 1995

Your Excellency,

1. I welcome you with great pleasure on this occasion when I have the pleasure of receiving you here in the Vatican for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Holy See. I would like to assure you that you will always find doors and hearts open here to help you to fulfil your lofty mission of fostering and encouraging the fruitful relations between the Holy See and your country. Everything possible will be done to ensure that your mission is successful and your stay in the Eternal City happy.

I would like, first of all, to thank you for your friendly words. I thank you in particular for the respectful greeting and best wishes which you have conveyed to me from the President of the Republic. Please be kind enough to bring him my greetings and best wishes for his well being.

2. Mr Ambassador, in your address you referred to the important changes that have occurred since President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's plan of economic stabilization to the challenges and hopes which have arisen at the end of the first year of his presidential mandate. I am convinced, within the broad framework you have described of the needs with regard to which the country has begun to make progress on a large scale at all levels of society, with the goodwill and consensus of the leaders of all categories of Brazilian society, it will be possible to achieve the consolidation of integral human values in a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere, with respect for his dignity, especially that of the life of the unborn child from conception to natural death, the advancement of the foundations of the family the cell of society, a just and reasonable distribution of wealth, and the preservation of the environment for the sake of the greater prosperity already envisaged for

Brazil in the Year 2000.

3. What Your Excellency said about the Catholic Church, i.e., that she played an important inspirational role in Brazil's formation as a nation, and that her doctrine and teaching have shaped the Brazilian conscience, confirms my deep conviction that the Brazilian soul will continue to be faithful to this rich religious heritage, in order to build the nation's future with respect and a desire for its good, serving the country with a Christian spirit.

Her patient and courageous action to raise your people's cultural and moral standards through a tradition of religious educational institutions more than a century old and through the Christian formation of the people in Dioceses and parishes throughout the vast national territory certainly deserves mention. At the same time, we cannot forget the firm determination of the Brazilian Episcopate to defend the poor and the humble, those most neglected by society, who have a right to aspire to a better, more dignified life. This problem, which has always been present in the life and conscience of the Church in Brazil, is now receiving a new impetus from the various non-governmental organizations, which are collaborating, despite the innumerable difficulties, in a true mobilization of Christian solidarity, and are seeking to alleviate the burden of suffering for a large section of society. For this reason I am grateful to God for the news that you have wished to give me on the «Community of Solidarity» programme.

4. In looking at the panorama of the Latin American continent and the new plan for economic and social integration to be carried out, there is no doubt that Brazil is and will be playing an increasingly important role as the common market in the Southern Cone is finally being set up. In this regard, its role in the concert of nations in the southern hemisphere will be of exceptional importance to the extent that it can wisely promote «values, attitudes and concrete initiatives of solidarity which prove capable of raising the level of relations between nations» (Address to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization on its 50th Anniversary, n. 14, 5 October 1995; ORe, 11 October 1995, p. 10). Thus, in addition to economic integration, it is necessary to face the challenges it poses: social, immigration, cultural and aid interchanges which require generous readiness to collaborate with creative genius in helping people, especially the neediest. This is why I express here my heartfelt wish that conditions be created for supra-national friendship and mutual understanding, which will herald peace throughout the continent.

Mr Ambassador, as you know, the Catholic Church's sole objective is spiritual and religious. She seeks no other interest than to build Christ's kingdom: "a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace". The desires, which motivate the life of the Catholic community, seek always to be based on the inspiring principles of her identity, her traditional virtues and her own institutions.

In this regard, the Church in Brazil, in her own mission and in all her projects, will constantly strengthen her commitment to serve the cause of «every man and all men». Thus she will

continue in her efforts to promote an awareness that the values of peace, freedom, solidarity and the protection of the most deprived should inspire private and public life. Faith in and adherence to Jesus Christ require the Catholic faithful in Brazil to become instruments of reconciliation and brotherhood, in truth, justice and love.

Before bringing this meeting to a close, I again ask you kindly to convey my best wishes to the President of the Republic. I would like to tell Your Excellency that you can be sure of the esteem, welcome and support of this Apostolic See in the fulfillment of your lofty tasks, as I wish you happiness, success and joy in abundance.

Finally, may I address my thoughts to all Brazilians and to those who guide their destiny. I offer all my very best wishes for ever greater progress and prosperity. I hope that Brazil may contribute, on the threshold of the third millennium, to strengthening the atmosphere of cordial relations and sincere co-operation in Latin America, the continent of hope. I am sure that you will express these sentiments and hopes on my behalf. Through the intercession of Our Lady, Nossa Senhora Aparecida, I implore abundant blessings from almighty God on you, your mission and your family, as well as on the beloved people of the Brazilian nation.

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