The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO H.E. Mr Marc A. Trouillot, AMBASSADOR OF HAITI TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 12 December 1996

Mr Ambassador,

I welcome you here, where I am pleased to receive Your Excellency on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Haiti to the Holy See.

I am most grateful to you for conveying greetings to me from President René Préval of the Republic of Haiti, whom I had the pleasure of receiving here a few months ago. I would be grateful if you would kindly express to him in return, my good wishes for his person and for the accomplishment of his lofty mission at the service of the nation. I also cordially greet the Haitian people, as I remember my visit to their country and the unforgettable welcome they gave me.

In recent years your country has undergone many changes and I am pleased with the efforts made to lead it on the difficult paths of democracy and development. I am aware of the considerable challenges which the nation must still face today. I therefore encourage all those men and women who are working generously for the advancement of the human person, and who are struggling against all forms of poverty, obstacles to man's growth and the renewal of society. One of the indispensable requirements in this struggle for man is the unity of the entire people in harmony around ideals of fraternity and co-operation and the establishment of justice.

In this spirit I hope to see the Haitian people find the conditions to live with dignity in a peaceful and supportive society. This requires those who have a responsibility in the nation's life to devote all their effort to help build a better future for the whole group of their compatriots, and most especially for the underprivileged among them. Thereby creating an atmosphere of trust, they will facilitate the concrete fulfilment of the people's just aspirations and enable them actively to lead a social life in conformity with their wishes.

Mr Ambassador, in your address you stressed that the Haitian people is a people of believers. I therefore hope that they

will discover in God profound reasons for loving life and for establishing true brotherhood among all the members of the nation. Your accreditation to the Holy See is proof of the importance your people attach to spiritual values and to the Gospel message. I have no doubt that your mission which you officially inaugurate today, will strengthen the ties of understanding and friendship between your country and the Apostolic See, to the advantage of all Haitians. In her proper capacity, the Church, faithful to her mission of service to man, desires to help promote the dignity and integral development of individuals so that each may be completely fulfilled according to God's plan for his whole creation. Her message is the Good News of the Gospel which is addressed to all and proclaims peace, love and freedom. She puts this into practice through her different commitments, especially by giving priority to society's poorest. Through her educational institutions for the young, she helps to free people from that serious form of poverty which is the lack of cultural and religious formation. Through her works in the field of health care, she seeks to foster respect for human life and to show God's love for those who are suffering. Further, working in other forms of social advancement, she makes her contribution to the nation's development and to the progress of justice.

May I take this opportunity, Mr Ambassador, to address through you my warm greetings and encouragement to the Catholic community of Haiti and its Pastors. I invite them with their compatriots generously to pursue their commitment to the service of their fatherland. In the dynamism of their faith they will find the courage to spread around them the great Gospel values in which they believe, for the good of the nation.

As you begin your mission, I offer you my best wishes for its success, and I can assure you that you will always find here, in my co-workers, an attentive welcome and cordial understanding.

With all my heart I invoke abundant divine Blessings on Your Excellency, on the Haitian people and on its leaders.

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