



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 11 December 2000

Mr Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to receive the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Dominican Republic to the Holy See. At the same time, I offer you my most cordial welcome and best wishes for the mission which your Government has entrusted to you. I am grateful for your kind words and, in particular, for the respectful greetings you have brought me from President Hipólito Mejía. Please express to him my appreciation and my best wishes for the beloved Dominican people.

I cannot forget that it was the first American land to receive me at the beginning of my Pontificate, as I followed the route of the first evangelizers. It was the entrance, in a sense, to a part of the world filled with human wealth and hospitality, where the Cross of Christ put down strong roots and the Church, to whom I wanted to bring "new hope in its hope" (*Arrival Address in the Dominican Republic*, 25 January 1979), has flourished.

This first meeting was followed by another particularly important one for the Church and for America, when I celebrated the fifth centenary of the first evangelization, once again in the Dominican Republic as the continent's threshold. On that occasion I invited the Bishops, who were meeting for the Fourth General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, to accept the legacy of the first missionaries' immense effort with another, that of the new evangelization, no less involved and important for the new millennium.

2. In this perspective of evangelization, which is the Church's particular mission, diplomatic relations with the Holy See, which your Government has entrusted to you, take on particular

significance. In this regard, Christ's message offers salvation for the whole human person, and therefore preaching the Gospel means bringing light, instilling hope and giving new initiative to people, with their possibilities as individuals and as essentially social beings. For "faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 11).

The Church, then, while strictly respecting the competence of civil authorities, seeks the good of individuals, families, social institutions and the national community. Close collaboration with those responsible for administering the people's common good will undoubtedly benefit the human, social and spiritual progress of all.

3. The points of convergence and cooperation between the Church and States are well known and involve, more than practical or particular interests, those areas in which full human dignity is decided and those values are fostered on which a world of ever greater justice, solidarity and peace should be built. At a time like the present, when many factors are prompting people to think only of immediate results, causing confusion in individuals and instability in society, it is highly important to be on guard against losing what is most genuine and deeply rooted in human nature.

For this reason, the Church asks everyone to make an effort, so that society, which must nurture and bring to fulfilment the life of every human being, does not become a threat to life because of deceptive solutions. The inviolability of human life, in its various phases of development or in any situation, presupposes the other human rights, limits all human power and grounds the conscious and tireless quest for peace.

4. The Church in the Dominican Republic has always shown concern for the good of its people and the country's human progress. She does so with her educational, cultural and charitable institutions, but above all, by instilling a spirit of Christian hope and social commitment, so that all will feel responsible for building a better future. By doing so, she only seeks to carry out her mission of evangelization, firmly convinced that this is the noblest and most effective way to guide the profound vocation of each Dominican to the sublime dignity that God has given him.

5. Mr Ambassador, I offer you my best wishes for the fulfilment of your important diplomatic mission, and I hope that you and your distinguished family will have a very happy and beneficial stay in Rome. You have arrived at a special time, when the Jubilee of the Year 2000 of Christ's Incarnation is drawing to a close. The Church of Rome has been open to the world, to every sector of society, to the faithful of all ages and social conditions. They came in search of an inner peace which only reconciliation with God and our brethren can give. However, at the same time, they have filled every corner of this most ancient See of Peter with their profound experiences and enriched it with their diversity.

As I ask you kindly to express my greetings to the President, I assure you of my prayers to the

Almighty, through the motherly intercession of Our Lady of Altagracia, that with his gifts he will always assist you, your staff and your noble country's leaders and citizens, whom I always remember with special affection.

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