



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PRESIDENT AND DELEGATION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC****

Monday, 18 December 2000

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The exchange of the instruments of ratification for the Basic Agreement between the Holy See and the Slovak Republic has just taken place. I cordially welcome you, Mr President, with the distinguished members of the official Delegation and the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the Holy See. I also greet you, Cardinal Ján Chryzostom Korec, the Apostolic Nuncio, the President and the members of the Episcopal Conference who spoke at the formal ceremony.

With the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the Basic Agreement, signed on 24 November 2000, a new stage has begun in the mutual relations between the Holy See and the Slovak Republic. It is now the task of the Church and the State to apply what they have agreed. It is to be hoped that a deep spirit of constructive cooperation will continue to inspire all those who will be entrusted with accomplishing this important task.

The basic reason for collaboration between Church and State is the good of the human person. This cooperation must safeguard and guarantee human rights. A Church which fully enjoys the freedom to which she is entitled is in the best possible condition for cooperating with all the other living forces of society "for the spiritual and material good of the human person as well as for the common good", as the Preamble of the Agreement says.

I hope that everything done today will help consolidate the social coherence and the spiritual and material development of Slovak society. I accompany my wishes with a prayer for God's blessing upon those taking part in this meeting and upon the whole of Slovakia, which has always had a special place in my heart.

I cordially wish everyone happy Christmas holidays!

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