



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR EDGARD STEPHANUS RAGOENATH AMANH,
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 27 May 2004

Your Excellency,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican today and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Suriname to the Holy See. I greatly appreciate your reference to President Venetiaan's desire for close cooperation between your country and the Holy See, and I would ask you kindly to convey to him my cordial greetings. To the Government and people of Suriname I offer the assurance of my prayers for the peace and prosperity of the Nation. The Church's diplomatic relations form part of her mission of service to the human family and are specifically intended to promote peace and harmony among the world's peoples. These are essential conditions for progress in attaining the common good and integral development of individuals and nations, which can only be achieved to the extent that the dignity proper to every human being is protected by a nation's legislative structures and affirmed by its civic institutions. In your own country, Mr Ambassador, with its especially rich and varied cultural and religious traditions, the importance of recognizing the innate human dignity of every individual is immediately apparent. Without a vigorous defence and promotion of the common values rooted in the very nature of the human person, the peaceful coexistence of communities of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds would lack a solid foundation. Furthermore, in situations of cultural and religious pluralism, it is increasingly apparent that mutual understanding and respect for differences play a vital role in maintaining the national unity necessary for genuine progress and for ensuring that the dreaded spectre of interreligious or interethnic conflict does not occur. In this regard, I am glad to note the commendable contributions of the long-established Council of Christian Churches and of the Interreligious Council, both of which are particularly active in helping Surinamese society to develop more closely in conformity with the dignity and rights of its citizens. As you have noted, Suriname together with the rest of the world community is facing the pressing problems of today's ever more globalized world and the emerging new international order. While globalization in itself is a neutral phenomenon, I have not hesitated to make known my concern at witnessing a globalization that exacerbates the conditions of the needy, that does not sufficiently contribute to resolving situations of hunger, poverty and social inequality, and that fails to safeguard the natural environment. To counteract these injustices the international community must strive to ensure that globalization is ethically responsible,

treating all peoples as equal partners and not as passive instruments. In this way globalization can serve the whole human family, no longer bringing benefit merely to a privileged few but advancing the common good of all (cf. *Plenary Meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, 2 May 2003). A heightened sense of economic, political and cultural interdependence demands an increased solidarity between the developed and developing nations. One sure sign of the international community's positive commitment to the common good, which such solidarity upholds, is the growing recognition of the urgent need to alleviate poverty wherever it is found (cf. Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 14). The Holy See for its part will continue to support the Millennium Development goals as well as new initiatives such as the International Finance Facility, which has as its dual purpose the financing of sustainable development projects and the realization of the target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income in aid. Reduction of the crushing debt which entraps many developing countries is essential if their economic potential is to be harnessed. The exercise of solidarity also demands a wholehearted effort within each society (cf. Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, No. 39). If genuine international progress is to be made along the path of equal partnership, then practical gestures of assistance by wealthy nations must be met with political transparency and accountability on the part of the receiver. Responsible government, the maintenance of law and order across the country, and the participation of all sectors of society in support of the civic institutions committed to the genuine development of the nation, all have their particular role in contributing to a culture of peace and collaboration. In your own Nation these are among the conditions necessary to attract the investment required to stimulate the economic growth necessary to enable Surinamese living abroad to return to their homeland with the prospect of employment and a secure future. For her part the Catholic Church in Suriname will likewise continue to assist in the attainment of the goals of peace and prosperity. Faithful to her spiritual and humanitarian mission, she takes an active role in the interreligious initiatives and multicultural activities which endeavour to serve the well-being of the people. Through her numerous schools, health-care facilities, and community development programmes the Church seeks to build a better future for the country. In this service she desires neither power nor privilege, but only the freedom to express her faith and love in works of goodness, justice and peace. Mr Ambassador, as you enter the diplomatic community accredited to the Holy See, I assure you of the ready assistance of the various offices and agencies of the Roman Curia. May your mission serve to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation between Suriname and the Holy See which have deepened since the establishment of diplomatic relations ten years ago. Upon you and your fellow citizens I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty

God.

* *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XXVII, 1, p. 679-681. *L'Osservatore Romano* 28.5.2004 p.5. © Copyright 2004 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana