



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Monday, 8 June 1970

Excellencies and dear Sirs,

This meeting is a very great joy for Us. We were really touched by your spontaneous step, your desire to join in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Our priestly ordination, and the personal part you wished to take in it.

Such a circumstance makes Us more aware that together We form a family, which shares the joys and sorrows of all. You are not only, in fact, the representatives of the interests of your respective countries, actuated only by the concern to present to the Holy See what directly concerns them, according to the duties of your high diplomatic mission. But you are men of feeling, attentive to what concerns Our life, even in its most personal aspects.

Allow Us to confide in you this morning that all the Pope's activities, all the obligations inherent in his pastoral charge, his universal ministry, all that has no *raison d'être* for Us except in the priesthood, which is the heart of Our most intimate and deep life.

And We are particularly sensitive to the fact that, beyond differences of religious attitudes and beliefs, you have realized this, and that you wished to take part in this spiritual event, this joy of the priest that We are.

In connection with this remark, to which our particular meeting this morning has given rise, We would be tempted to repeat the two fundamental principles that justify and characterize the relations We have the honour of maintaining with you, with the countries you represent so worthily at the Holy See, and with international life.

The first of these principles is the conviction, humbly but firmly rooted in Our mind, that We can in the course of Our conversations recall incessantly the supreme principles, on which the life of the human community should be based, to be good and always progressing: We mean justice and law, which stem from a certain and sacred ethical conception of the life both of individuals and of peoples. In civil society these principles find their application on the temporal plane, and it is on this plane that Our dialogue with you takes place; but for Us they have their origin and their strength in the religious faith that We bear in Our heart and which it is Our duty — at once grave and sweet — to profess as a believer and as a minister, as a priest, and particularly in the post that has been assigned to Us in the Church.

Secondly, this religious character that is Ours and which, so kindly, you wish to honour today, gives you the assurance that Our relations both diplomatic and human with you and with your countries, have a quite particular aspect. These relations are not established on conflict, nor on interests opposed to your own interests, nor on emulation or prestige; but they are relations of service, and therefore of love for your peoples. In fact, by reaffirming these universal principles of which We have spoken and to which We unceasingly appeal, We seek to collaborate in the welfare of your peoples – in their development, and in their civil, social and moral progress. These relations, in a word, are made up of friendship for peace; peace for each of your countries, and peace for the whole world. Such are the perspectives opened to Us and imposed on Us as a duty by Our priesthood, this priesthood honoured today by your visit which is so agreeable to Us, and for which We are so grateful.

We wish to tell you too how touched We were by the choice you made in this circumstance of a scholarship for a young priest or seminarian, who will thus be able to prepare himself better for the great and grave responsibility that will be his in the world of tomorrow. As a result of your functions at the Holy See, you are in fact better qualified than anyone to know intimately its concerns, its problems, its plans. And you know that at the present moment of her history, the Church is more concerned than ever about her priests; her future priests, their formation, their lives. So We greatly appreciate your delicate attention, this collective gift that manifests your deep human understanding of what is at the heart of the life of the Church, and your desire to take a share in it.

This tells you with what gratitude We accept your gesture, happy to see the human and spiritual ties that unite us thus become closer, beyond the requirements of protocol and the duties of our office. You are, Gentlemen, men of feeling. Is this not one of the most eminent qualities of the diplomat, the most necessary, too, perhaps, for the exercise of his high functions in the service of his country, as well as of the common good of men: concord, in mutual respect; of the different groups that constitute the large human family? If We do not always have the opportunity to talk to you about your personal and family life, about what you have set your heart on in the world, We can at least assure you all this morning that, in Our priestly prayer, We take your intentions to God Almighty, from whom come "whatever gifts are worth having, whatever endowments are perfect of their kind" (James 1, 17). Recommending to the Most High, with your persons, those who are dear

to you, We call down the abundance of divine blessings on all of you.

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