



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF IRAN TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 7 January 1971

Mr. Ambassador,

The kind words you have just addressed to us are all the more appreciated as We recall the cordial and hearty welcome and the gracious hospitality extended to Us a few weeks ago when We landed in Teheran as the humble successor of the Apostle Peter and as a pilgrim of peace. We have already had the occasion to express Our deep gratitude to His Imperial Majesty Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shahinshah Ariamehr, who accredits you today as Ambassador to the Holy See. We welcome you to the Apostolic See, you and all the noble people whom you represent.

We were pleased to hear you recall the personality and work of Cyrus the Great, whose two thousand five hundredth anniversary you are preparing to celebrate. The Bible bears witness to the deeds of this illustrious Emperor who remains for us the symbol of a man who carries out a plan dear to God: respect for minority groups, their freedom from slavery and exile – in short hope.

Throughout all the vicissitudes of its history, your country has remained a home of civilization and has kept its original character in the heart of Asia. We appreciate the efforts made today by His Imperial Majesty, not only in technical progress, but also in the basic elements of education – is it not significant that the UNESCO Congress of 1965 was held in your capital? – efforts made to improve land reforms, to provide better living conditions for everyone, to protect them against whatever dehumanizes and degrades man, and finally to promote justice and peace. Our own spiritual mission prompts Us to encourage and foster, as far as We can, this study of the full-rounded development, of man always open to the Absolute. We consider this as the will of God and a response to His love. Do not your people still honour the cult of mystical authors?

We give credit to your leaders and to the people of Iran for giving evidence today of a fraternal dialogue with people of all origins and all religions. The Catholics in your country, and especially the religious congregations, ask only for the possibility to live and bear witness to their faith, to be free to serve their fellow-countrymen in all those educational, cultural and medical works which their means will allow, in that spirit of universal charity which is joined to an old tradition of your country.

With, these sentiments, We express Our best wishes for the mission which Your Excellency begins today at the Holy See, in this city of Rome where so many Embassies are located and which is a sort of meeting-place in which We like to see an augury of the peace we all desire. We renew Our respectful greetings to His Imperial Majesty, and with all our heart We invoke upon the people of Iran and upon you the assurance and blessing of the Almighty.

*ORa n.3 p.9