



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE AMBASSADOR OF ALGERIA TO THE HOLY SEE**

Monday, 10 July 1972

Mr. Ambassador,

We thank Your Excellency for the kind words you have just addressed to us. How could we fail to be sensitive to the tribute you pay to the collaboration of the Catholic Church, and to your wish for an increasingly fruitful dialogue, in favour of the welfare of your noble country and of international peace?

We also accept with pleasure the cordial sentiments of H.E. President Houari Boumedienne, and we entrust to you the care of renewing to him the assurance of the wishes that we have just expressed to him, on the occasion of the festivities of the tenth Anniversary of the Independence of Algeria.

Yes, it is a new stage, and, we hope; a promising one, that is inaugurated today in the relations between the Holy See and the young Democratic and Popular Algerian Republic. Your Excellency has the honour to be the privileged witness of it and the first picked co-operator, in the capacity of Ambassador. Welcome, and be assured of our benevolent assistance for the accomplishment of your high mission.

In a language at once pithy and firm, you have echoed the efforts and ideals, the cares and the hopes of your dear compatriots, as regards the all-round prosperity of their country, so rich in vitality, and their active commitment in the family of nations.

Your Excellency knows, and was kind enough to stress, that the Catholic Church takes to heart very much the rights of persons and peoples, and likewise the conditions of freedom, dignity, racial equality, justice, responsibility and solidarity that their full development calls for. For this destiny is

inscribed by the Creator in human nature, as a vocation, which men must fulfil together, with the help of the Almighty. That is why, from this Apostolic See, we do not wish to lose any opportunity of testifying in favour of the oppressed or the poor of every kind, by appealing indefatigably for understanding, peaceful settlement, international guarantee of rights, the concerted action of goodwill, the mobilization of energies for urgent constructive tasks, above dangerous tensions, sterile violence and murderous hatred. We are particularly glad to hear you evoke a fruitful cooperation, respectful of the rights of everyone, among those whom so many historical and cultural bonds unite around this Mediterranean basin.

But, we are well aware, sentiments, words and projects are not sufficient. It is at the heart of concrete realities that Christians are called to put into practice their consideration of the dignity of others, their desire for peace, brotherly mutual help, their concern with supreme values (Cf. *Populorum Progressio*, n. 21). Those who are now working within the new Algeria, priests, brothers, sisters and laymen, have no other ambition. Is it necessary to recall the noble figure of our dear Brother, Cardinal Duval, whose sentiments of loyalty and generous service are known to your compatriots? We are grateful to the Authorities and people of your country for the esteem, the sympathy and the trust they testify to the Christian community of which he is in charge, together with the other Bishops of Algeria. Assured of this benevolence, Catholics can continue to live their specific faith, in a respectful and fruitful dialogue with their Moslem friends. With the same impetus, they will contribute, individually and thanks to the necessary support of their associating, to the great implementations of development that are in progress: access to basic education for everyone, the blossoming of the spiritual and cultural heritage, assistance for the sick and handicapped, the exploitation of national wealth to the advantage of everyone, training for responsibility, the promotion of social justice, the increase of the prosperity of persons and families, the pursuit of a quality of life open to the absolute.

This fruitful collaboration between Algerian citizens of different faiths will find a guarantee and a stimulus, we firmly hope; in these special relations that are established today between the Holy See, the Centre of the Catholic Church, and your Government. Assuring Your Excellency once more of the confident wishes we form for this future, we warmly implore the Blessings of God on your person, Mr. Ambassador, on the members of your family and on the whole of Algeria.

*ORa n.30 p.3.