



The Holy See

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

Monday, 27 March 1972

Mr. Ambassador,

We listened with deep attention to the deferent expressions you kindly addressed to us on presenting the Letters that credit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to the Holy See.

We cannot but appreciate in them a demonstration of the Christian sentiments and the devotion to Peter's See that have always distinguished the Venezuelan nation. In return we express our deep gratitude and we take advantage of the opportunity to testify to our particular affection for the children of your noble country, to whom we feel very close in their aspirations, work and longing for further spiritual and material progress.

For that reason when Your Excellency, mentioning our Exhortation for Peace Day, referred to the ideals of peace, justice and development, we were certainly thinking of the worldwide dimension that these ideas have reached, but we could not help keeping in mind your nation, with its great hopes and its consoling realities.

In the midst of them, sharing them and encouraging them, is the Church, which embodies also in this way her mission of continuing of redeeming work of Jesus Christ not inspired by a personal interest in rule or power, but out of a perennial desire for generous and disinterested service for the common good and the complete progress of peoples. Free of material bonds that would disfigure her face and vocation, she continues her specific mission: the proclamation of the evangelical message, the eternal values of which, intended for all men and for all social groups, must more fruit in this world.

The Church is well aware of living in the midst of earthly realities, where serious new problems are constantly arising through a continual situation of change. In connection with these problems, she does not claim to formulate solutions of the economic or political type, but to illuminate the human spirit in order that man, proceeding along the path of complete promotion, may succeed in dominating the earths (cfr. Gen. 9, 2), so that, beyond his material limitations, he may have the possibility of aiming higher, at the transcendent goals that give human life fullness and complete meaning, as well as an inescapable impulse to serve his brothers.

Every Christian, all Christians must feel committed by their faith to unite their efforts in the common task of progress. For a Christian, no man can be a stranger, an outsider; every man must be his brother. And if there is a scale of preferences among all the brothers, it must always be in favour of the poorest and neediest the workers, the peasants, the outcasts. We said to them during our journey in Latin America: «We wish to be in solidarity with your good cause, which is the cause of humble people, poor people».

In this line, our words can only be of encouragement to attain increasingly high and universal aims.

We know the work of Venezuelan Church very well, inspiring with its words, serving with the work of its sons; what has been achieved must be an incentive to greater enthusiasm and dedication to service of the national community, which Christian ideals have guided in the glorious pages of its history and which must find in them a criterion and a guarantee on its way towards a prosperous future of deep brotherhood and progress.

Formulating our best wishes, Mr. Ambassador, for the successful accomplishment of your lofty mission, we invoke on your person, on His Excellency the President of the Republic, and on the Government and people of Venezuela, continual divine assistance, in token of which we impart our fatherly Apostolic Blessing.

*ORa n.15 p.2.