



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO FRANCIS A. COFEY
AMBASSADOR OF IRELAND
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Jeudi, 19 June 1980

Mr Ambassador,

I cordially welcome Your Excellency as Ambassador of Ireland and I assure you of my appreciation of the kind good wishes that you have brought me from His Excellency President Hillery. I recall with great pleasure the many courtesies that he showed me during my pastoral visit to your country and I renew my prayers for his welfare.

The three days that I spent in Ireland are among my happiest memories. I visited centres connected with both a glorious past and a thriving present. I had contact with your civil authorities and with people from all parts of your country, including leaders of other Christian Churches as well as the Catholic bishops, clergy, religious, missionaries, seminarians and young people.

These contacts gave me the opportunity to know the Irish better. They are a nation that is at the same time ancient and young. They possess a heritage of splendid traditions, in the shaping of which the Christian faith played a great part. It is a heritage that includes openness to other countries and awareness of belonging to a wide community that is not restricted within the boundaries of a single nation.

I am happy to see Ireland making her important contribution to the religious advancement of peoples and to ensuring economic, cultural and social progress through her active membership of continental and global organizations and through the response of her government and people to the call of those in spiritual and material need. As I said to President Hillery in Dublin, "Ireland has inherited a noble Christian and human mission and her contribution to the well-being of the world

and to the shaping of a new Europe can be as great today as it was in the greatest days of Ireland's history".

Since true happiness and progress depend on moral and spiritual values, I confidently hope that Ireland will continue to safeguard and advance these values both at home and, to the extent that she can, throughout the world. The world needs awareness of and respect for human rights, the surpassing dignity of each individual person, freedom to seek and adhere to the truth, and the duty to cooperate with others for the good of all in understanding, brotherhood and peace. These are some of the values that have been fostered by the work of Irish men and women, including the zealous missionaries who, today as well as in the past, have been heralds of the spiritual dimension of man and of the relationship with God without which human dignity can not be fully comprehended.

Your Excellency has spoken of your Government's opposition to violence and its commitment to the pursuit of just and lasting solutions by peaceful means. I too pray for reconciliation and peace, which cannot be established by violence, or in a climate of terror. but only through justice, forgiveness and love.

On this occasion I renew my prayerful good wishes for the Irish everywhere. On Your Excellency and on all your fellow countrymen I invoke God's richest blessings.

*AAS 72 (1980), p. 634-635.

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