



## The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. Mr FRANCIS SOMMERVILLE MILNE  
AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRALIA TO THE HOLY SEE\*Saturday, 28 March 1987**

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am very pleased to accept your Letters of Credence and to welcome you as Australia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. I do so with vivid memories of my recent pastoral visit to your country, which enabled me to witness at first hand the warm and generous spirit of the Australian people. As I mentioned during that visit, I rejoice in the harmony, friendship and cooperation that characterize the relations between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Holy See.

Certainly we must continue to make it our common aim to seek those values which Your Excellency has mentioned: peace, justice and human rights. You spoke of the search for world peace through the control of weapons and through the creation of a more just and equitable world economy. I am grateful to you for expressing these aspirations, which echo the sentiments of the Church and indeed of all people of good will. The values underlying them transcend the interests of any one nation and are meant to serve the spiritual and material well-being of all humanity. At the heart of the search for justice and peace is the deep truth to which I referred in my [Message for the 1987 World Day of Peace](#), that as one human family we are called to recognize our basic solidarity as the fundamental condition of our life together on this earth. This solidarity must be reflected in our attitude towards our fellow human beings, individually and collectively, and in the practical steps that nations take to foster the good of humanity or simply to promote good will. Among these we may include policies and programmes that encourage openness and honesty among peoples, particularly in their alliances for just purposes and in their cooperative endeavours. The promotion of human solidarity in our attitudes and actions is a key to the peace we all seek, not only in the search for arms control and an end to war, but also in the search for ethical and just solutions to problems such as the international debt question. I note with satisfaction the consideration given by the Australian Government to the series of reflections on the last-mentioned subject recently published by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace.

There can be no doubt that Australia has its own role to play in promoting solutions to this problem. As I said to the members of the Australian Parliament on the occasion of my visit: "I take the liberty of asking from you, who have received so much from God, something more than a generous response to the crises that afflict other people. Seize the initiative to go out to other people everywhere. You are a very important part of a world that needs to experience reconciliation and solidarity". As you have rightly noted, Mr Ambassador, the pursuit of a more equitable and peaceful international order is extremely demanding. I believe, however, as I am sure you do, that it is possible to move people, as individuals and as nations, to act in ways that truly promote peace and dialogue rather than violence and injustice. One of the deepest motivating forces in this regard is the truth of our common humanity and common responsibility for the survival and well-being of the human family. I share the conviction of the Australian people and their Government that the patient and persevering dedication to the constructive social, economic and diplomatic initiatives can make a significant difference in a world that yearns for the blessings of justice and peace. The Catholic Church in your country has contributed to this process and will continue to do so, by supporting and participating in those endeavours which truly promote the good of Australia and the larger good of the family of nations. In this spirit I wish to assure you of my prayers and best wishes for the success of your mission. Through the fulfilment of your diplomatic duties you will be rendering an important service not only to your own country but to all people who believe that there are other alternatives besides violence and oppression for resolving the conflicts that arise between nations. The Holy See willingly pledges its full cooperation with you in your responsibilities. I ask you kindly to convey my cordial greetings to the Governor-General, to the Prime Minister and to all the members of the Australian Government. And upon yourself and all the people of Australia I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

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*\*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. X, 1 pp.852-854.*

*L'Attività della Santa Sede 1987 pp. 208-209.*

*L'Osservatore Romano 29.3.1987 p.5.*

*L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.15 p.17.*

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