



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de CHILE,
Excmo. Sr. Don Javier CUADRA LIZANA**

16 de noviembre de 1987

Mr. Ambassador,

I am particularly grateful for the kind words expressed by Your Excellency as you present your Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chile to the Holy See. In them I am reminded of my recent apostolic journey throughout the length and breadth of your beloved country. At the same time my thoughts go back to those days in which the people of Chile expressed their faith and hope, giving ample proof of their inalienable Christian vocation to fraternity and the search for peace in living together.

1. Your Excellency alluded to the important work of evangelization both in Chile and in the rest of Latin America. I would like to recall what I said to the Chilean episcopate during my visit, as we looked towards the future: « The Church in Chile is known for her great sensitivity in perceiving that the Truth of Christ really illumines all aspects of the life of the individual and society» (L'Osservatore Romano 21 April 1987). This is something to which, today as yesterday, the ecclesial community has got to devote all its energies, out of respect for the demands that derive from her very nature as the sacrament of intimate union with God and the instrument of the unity of the whole human race (cf. LG 1). In this way, the Church of Christ, incarnate in history, will carry out her mission in every place and time; she is the pilgrim people of God and the gospel leaven in society.

After the example of the Apostles, the first missionaries in the New World were sent to preach the truth about Jesus Christ, implanting the Church in the rich soil of Chile. Right from the outset the greatest Christian sign, the cross, marked the path of that noble people through history. Thus we see how Pedro de Valdivia, when he founded the city of Santiago in 1541, as we learn from the

documents of the time, « pointed out the place to be occupied by the church, on the western side, which he reverently marked with a cross». During my visit to the southern part of Chile» I had the pleasure of blessing the majestic Cross of the Seas (Cruz de los Mares) on Cape Froward, which serves as the beacon and guide which goes on guiding and illuminating this people in their journey towards reconciliation.

2. The proclamation of the Gospel, to which you alluded, cannot leave aside the individual human person and his surroundings, since it is the human person, in his historical existence who is the direct recipient of the gospel. Hence, the Church, the «pillar and foundation of the truth» (Tim 3:15~, in her journey towards the heavenly city, cannot ignore this earthly city. Rather, by being faithful to the supreme commandment of love, she goes on preaching fraternity among people, and defends their rights in the name of truth and justice. This is a part of her mission in which, in not belonging to any one political system (GS, 76, she seeks the good of everybody without distinction.

She is moved to this by the knowledge she has of the dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:27). That is why any form of offence committed against man's physical or moral integrity, in the denial of his fundamental rights, in his being reduced to conditions of inhuman poverty and abandonment, is nothing other than the denial of the divine will. On the other hand, the promotion of man's good and dignity is to give glory to God and to make his name holy. The Church does this «by using all those means which are in conformity with the Gospel and the good of all» (GS, 76).

Those whose task it is to govern, respecting the divine plan for mankind, fulfil their true mission for the good of all when they guarantee «all those conditions of social life which enable people to achieve a fuller measure of perfection with greater ease. It consists "specially in safeguarding the rights and duties of the human person» (Dignitatis Humanae, 6).

3. Mr. Ambassador, I have been interested to hear that the highest authorities of the State have proposed a process for the renewal of its institutions. This Apostolic See follows with great attention your internal social and political evolution and trusts that, thanks to the deep sense of responsibility and understanding between the government and the different political forces, points of convergence will be found « which will make possible, in the not distant future, the full and responsible participation of all citizens in the decisions which affect the life of the nation" (Address to the Bishops of Chile, n. 6).

Likewise, I can assure you of the firm support of the Church in Chile in the endeavour to achieve something which will be for the benefit of all and which must be guided and enlightened by ethical principles, excluding every temptation to violence, from whatever source.

4. I am happy now to state again on this occasion how the Chilean authorities worked with

particular commitment to overcome the difference with the sister nation of Argentina in relation to the situation which arose in the south. This meant that it was possible to sign the Peace and Friendship Treaty which is still in effect today between Chile and Argentina. This peace, with the temptation to armed conflict overcome, is a real source of joy, because both parties were able to be committed to the search for justice, inspired by feelings of mutual respect and brotherly love, which find their origin in Christian principles.

May Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel; the Queen -and Patron of Chile be for you now and always the Star which guides her children on the path of goodness; may she transform your hearts and help you to live as one, in peace and harmony.

Mr. Ambassador, in offering you this expression of good will and in wishing you success in the important mission which has been entrusted to you by the President of the Republic, whom I thank for his good wishes, I ask you to convey my greetings to him and to the Government and people of Chile on whom I invoke the constant protection of the Most High.

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