



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO NEW AMBASSADOR OF NEW ZEALAND
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 8 January 1988

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you today for the presentation of your letters of Credence as the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of New Zealand. I thank you for your kind words about my visit to your country just over a year ago. I will never forget the warm welcome extended to me nor the gracious and respectful manner in which my words were received not only by Catholics but by all the people of New Zealand.

You have alluded to the many material advantages that your nation enjoys as a result of God's bounty and the stewardship which the people of New Zealand exercise over the gifts they have received. Through hard work and respect for the common good they have achieved a high standard of living. I join you and your fellow citizens in giving thanks to God for his many blessings.

At the same time you rightly point out that New Zealand also has a duty to fulfil within the family of nations. Working together with other countries on both the international and regional level, it has an important role to play in promoting true human development for all mankind. As I stated on the occasion of my pastoral visit: "Today we are becoming increasingly aware of the interdependence of all peoples and nations. The social and economic problems of one country have an impact far beyond that country's borders. The fruits and achievements of more advanced nations give rise to a greater responsibility towards citizens of poorer and needier nations" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Homilia in urbe "Christchurch", in nova Zelandia habita*, 6, die 24 nov. 1986: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, IX, 2 (1986) 1589..

More and more the conviction is growing that peace and well-being are either for all or for none.

The desire to act responsibly and generously to promote justice and peace in the world develops within an ever wider circle of human relationships. It begins with the family and the local community, and then embraces all the fellow citizens with whom we share a common homeland and national identity. It must ultimately include all other nations and peoples as well, if mankind is ever to experience the fruits of true justice and peace and to attain human development that is worthy of the dignity that every person enjoys as a child of God.

In concrete terms, the noble desire for peace and justice requires that all should strive to live and work together with mutual respect and fraternal love. It is heartening to know that in a land like New Zealand, which brings together people of both Polynesian and European backgrounds, there is a growing awareness that the different cultures should complement one another within the unity of one society. As I said in Christchurch: "The presence of these two roots of your civilization gives you a great, even a unique, opportunity... (to) show in this land how these two great cultures can work together with other cultures... in the spirit of harmony and justice..." (*Ibid*).

Within the larger world community, the search for justice and peace requires that international relations be based on respect for the fundamental right of nations and peoples to pursue their own destiny peacefully and without hindrance by others. It requires a willingness on the part of the developed nations to facilitate the full participation of less developed countries in the world economy so that there is the possibility of establishing and maintaining a decent standard of living for all. The desire for peace and justice also demands that nations learn to act responsibly by resolving their differences through patient negotiation rather than violence and war. This can happen only when armaments far in excess of what is needed for reasonable defence cease to be added to throughout the world, among the smaller nations as well as the great powers. Nor can I fail to mention the continuing need for a further reduction of nuclear weapons.

I am grateful to you for your assurance that the Government and people of New Zealand are determined to work for world peace. The Catholic Church in your country makes a positive contribution to this effort by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its message of peace and good will (Cfr. *Luc. 2, 14*). She seeks to bear witness in word and deed to the fact that the dignity and rights of every person come from God and are inalienable from the first moment of conception until death. By promoting respect for human life and by teaching the spiritual truths upon which that respect is based, the Church in New Zealand helps to lay a solid foundation of faith in God and obedience to his law of love, without which there can be no lasting peace. By insisting on our heavenly citizenship and the passing nature of all created things, she seeks to instil in people an awareness of their transcendent vocation and their need to have trust in divine providence, without which there can be no true justice.

Your Excellency, I am confident that in the days to come the cordial relations that exist between

New Zealand and the Holy See will not only be maintained but will be further strengthened. As you begin your mission at the service of harmony and peace in your country and in the world, I assure you of the Holy See's full cooperation and support. May Almighty God assist you in fulfilling your responsibilities, and may he continue to bestow upon New Zealand an abundance of spiritual and material blessings.

*AAS 80 (1988), p. 1131-1133.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XI, 1 pp. 52-54.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1988 pp. 28-29.

L'Osservatore Romano 9.1.1988 p.5.

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