



The Holy See

***DISCURSO DE SU SANTIDAD JUAN PABLO II
AL SEÑOR FRANCISCO JOSÉ FÍALLOS NAVARRO
NUEVO EMBAJADOR DE NICARAGUA ANTE LA SANTA SEDE***

Jueves 3 de enero de 1991

Mister Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to bid you a most cordial welcome to this ceremony of the presentation of the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nicaragua to the Holy See. You come here to represent a Nation which is characterized as Catholic and with which the Holy See already began official relations in 1908, at the level of Internunciature, which was elevated in 1933 to the rank of Apostolic Nunciature.

First of all, I want to express my gratitude for the heartfelt words which you addressed to me; they allowed me to see once again the noble sentiments of nearness and adherence to the See of Peter on the part of so many citizens of that beloved Nation. I would also like to thank you for the deferential greeting which you expressed to me from Mrs Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, President of the Republic, to whom I in turn express my good wishes and the assurance of my prayer to the Most High for the prosperity and spiritual good of all Nicaraguans.

2. Your Excellency referred, among other things, to the vitality which the Nicaraguan Church community shows; it wants to be faithful to its Christian vocation and remain united with strong bonds of fidelity to Peter's Successor. No doubt the coming celebration of Nicaragua's Second Plenary Council will contribute to this, it will seek to give renewed impulse to the Gospel message on all levels of society.

In reality, a profound communion with God gives people the capacity to construct a new society. Only when God is truly the centre of the life of mankind, of its history and of all creation, is it possible to fulfil this task. The Church - in obedience to her divine Founder's command - devotes the best of her energies to this task. In this regard, it is common knowledge that in recent years the Church has played an important role in the difficult process of bringing peace to Nicaragua, also offering equitable criteria for responsibility in the exercise of civil rights.

In the face of the current challenge the Church in Nicaragua, guided by her hierarchy – which continues to shed light on events with the Word of God and the Church's social doctrine – wants to collaborate loyally with the various civil bodies

so that through dialogue on political and economic problems in their constant search for the common good of all, the beloved sons and daughters of this Nation may find the proper responses to the needs of the present moment.

3. In this regard, it should not seem strange that the Catholic Church continues to defend the cause of man and human dignity. In fact, her pastoral concern has been and is to serve everywhere generously and selflessly, all people without distinction of race, class or culture, because in this difficult task of bringing about the total liberation of the human being the Church wants to use only «Gospel means, (and not to) resort to violence of any sort, or to the dialectics of class struggle» (Puebla, 486).

Therefore, Mister Ambassador, it is desirable that all those who exercise public responsibility in your Country, motivated solely by the protection of the common good and the religious and ethical principles which are your people's common heritage, may become ever more committed to promoting peace and more concretely, social peace, as a value which must be constantly preserved through respect for the inviolable rights of the human person, created in God's image and likeness.

4. This Apostolic See has repeatedly addressed urgent appeals for peace to the peoples of the geographic area. Therefore, at this time when there are serious threats of war on some of the world's horizons, the Church fervently implores the Lord, «the Prince of Peace» (Is 9:5), that He may inspire in all hearts feelings of peace, harmony, and fraternity among all people. As an echo of the World Day of Peace which we just celebrated on the first of the year, my fervent wish is that the Lord may strengthen in every Nicaraguan the firm desire to face the present problems with a calm and positive spirit with a desire to find solutions through the path of dialogue, solidarity, reconciliation and forgiveness. Making my own the appeals for reconciliation which the bishops of Nicaragua have repeatedly made, I encourage everyone to continue on this path so that the faith may enlighten the future of this beloved people and that they may build on Christian love the bases of peaceful and fruitful co-existence.

To the expectations of humanity, and especially to the young people who are particularly sensitive to the signs of the times, it is necessary to respond with political and social determination which will help everyone understand and observe that peace will not be an achievable goal until security imposed by arms or other forms of coercion is gradually replaced by a security based on a correct juridical social and economic order which reinforces the bonds of solidarity and the common destiny to which people are called. This is certainly a responsibility which no State can evade. In this regard Pope Paul VI explicitly stated: «Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God which implies a more perfect form of justice among people» (Populorum Progressio, 76).

5. This justice in turn opens up the path to development which also becomes one of the constitutive elements of peace, due to the fact that it helps to achieve what is good for the person and the human community. Therefore, through true development one can promote lasting peace. For this, however, it is necessary to create an awareness of solidarity that will lead to an integral development and which will protect and care for legitimate human rights. Besides, as the Bishops of Nicaragua stated in a joint document last June, «the Nation's economic recovery does not depend solely on foreign help or donations, but most of all on the spirit of work and unity of programmes in the line of national production».

Mister Ambassador, before ending this meeting, I want to assure you of my goodwill and support that the noble mission which you begin today may be successful. Through the mediation of La Purisima, Patroness of Nicaragua, I offer my prayer to the Most High that with His gifts He may always assist you and your distinguished family, those in government in your Country, and its beloved people, who are so close to the Pope's

heart.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n. 3 p.4, 6. © Copyright 1991 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana*

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana