



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF SAINT LUCIA
H.E. Mr. DESMOND ARTHUR MACNAMARA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 28 October 1991

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to receive the Letters of Credence by which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has appointed you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Saint Lucia to the Holy See. I am grateful for the kind sentiments you have expressed on behalf of your Government, and I ask you to convey to the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and all the people of Saint Lucia my best wishes for their peace and prosperity.

This occasion brings to mind once again my visit to your country in 1986, and I recall with joy and satisfaction the warmth of my meeting with your fellow citizens. It was just over a year before my visit that I received the first Ambassador from your country. In these intervening years relations between your Government and the Holy See have been marked by increasing respect and esteem, thus fulfilling the hopes we shared in establishing diplomatic relations. I am confident that in building upon the solid foundation laid by your late predecessor, Ambassador Carasco, whom you have recalled so affectionately today, you will be the worthy diplomatic representative of your nation.

In the course of pursuing the mission entrusted to her by her Divine Lord, the Church in Saint Lucia manifests her readiness to offer "honest assistance in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to . . . their destiny" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 3). The activities of the Church in your country, her proclamation of the truth about the human person and his relationship with the Creator, her schools and programmes of education, her care for the poor and needy, all *contribute to strengthening this brotherhood* and, at the same time, they *invite all men and women of good*

will to join in working for the common good.

You spoke of the commitment of the people of Saint Lucia to the cause of peace both at home and abroad, and of their determination to preserve democracy in a stable social climate. These noble goals set the stage for your nation's true growth and development. Only by acknowledging the dignity of all its citizens as free participants in their country's life, only by recognizing the rights of all men and women, independently of social condition, can a nation fulfil its destiny and lead its people to full freedom and well-being.

It is precisely within this higher context that the task of achieving *economic development* has to be understood. As one, albeit very important, ingredient of the complex reality of human progress - which necessarily entails a social, cultural and religious dimension-*material development must be guided by a moral understanding of man and his destiny*. Man is called to transcend himself by entering into a relationship with God and neighbour built on respect for the truth and expressed in loving service to others. Economic development is a means to the achievement of these higher goals. It brings an increase of the material goods which help to sustain and free people so that they are better able to foster these relationships. Development which *loses sight of man's true destiny, far from alleviating his misery, aggravates it*. Any increase of material goods which is not directed towards serving the moral good of individuals and families would merely increase occasions of conflict and would undermine that communion in knowledge and right action which constitutes an essential part of human happiness (cf. *ibid.*, 12; John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 29).

The contrary of that selfish desire which would hinder true development is *solidarity*. This is the name for that *moral virtue* found in the human person whose actions are freely and habitually directed to the common good. It should not be confused with a vague feeling of distress at the misfortunes of others. It is rather a readiness *to imbue the* affairs of our communities and society with the most profound *human and spiritual values*. Solidarity is seen in the commitment of men and women to serve those whose lives and destinies are bound up with their own. For believers, acts of service to the common good in solidarity are elevated to a new dimension of self-transcendence by the working of Christ's Spirit (cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38 and 40). The members of the Church in every nation are happy to contribute the energy which is the fruit of the graces poured out upon them by the Heavenly Father. Solidarity is a theme to which the Church has given much prominence in her social teaching as she seeks to respond to the concrete challenges of our age. Just as it is an essential aspect of relations within each community, so also is it essential in relations between nations. The Holy See is pleased to note the efforts of the countries of your region to give life to new forms of cooperation and unity. By acting rightly together on the basis of the recognition of mutual interdependence, a group of countries secures peace not only within its own geographical region but contributes greatly to the cause of peace for all the nations of the earth.

Mr Ambassador, your words concerning the desire of the young people of Saint Lucia to take a full and active part in the life of society find a ready understanding in my heart. Efforts to enlist the young in mankind's struggle against the forces of despair are admirable. The aim of these efforts is both to rescue the younger generation from an attitude which would blight the hope they ought to have for the future, and to prepare leaders who will devote themselves consistently and courageously to building up a just social order.

As you take up your mission, I assure you that all the departments of the Holy See will offer you their fullest cooperation so that you may successfully discharge your responsibilities. I renew my own cordial good wishes, and I pray that the Lord God will ever bestow his abundant blessings upon the people of Saint Lucia.

*AAS 84 (1992), p.959-961.

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