



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER  
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR  
OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL  
TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Friday, 18 May 2001*

*Mr Ambassador,*

It gives me great pleasure to accept the Letters of Credence by which His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev has appointed you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Nepal to the Holy See. I am grateful to His Majesty for the greetings which you have conveyed in his name, and I reciprocate with good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the peace of your country and the well-being of your fellow-citizens.

Your Excellency has referred to the Holy See's efforts in the field of international relations to build a world based on the culture of peace, fraternity and religious values. The Holy See's activities in this area are motivated by the particular nature of its religious and humanitarian mission, which underlies its concern for the integral good of every human being. The new Millennium is an invitation to peoples everywhere to look to the future with hope and to cooperate in building a world in which all the members of the human race can occupy their rightful place and live in peace and harmony.

The challenges facing the international community in this regard are immense. Unspeakable suffering has been caused by the tragic sequence of wars, conflicts and instances of genocide which have affected various parts of the world, even in the recent past. Yet these tragedies should not discourage people from working to overcome the factors which produce them: the desire to dominate and exploit others, ideologies of power, exaggerated nationalism and ethnic hatreds. The cause of peace, today as always, should be at the very heart of our efforts to improve the lot of humanity and guarantee a better future for the coming generations.

Peace is possible, but only "to the extent that humanity as a whole rediscovers its fundamental calling to be one family, a family in which the dignity and rights of individuals – whatever their status, race or religion – are accepted as prior and superior to any kind of difference or distinction" (*Message for the Celebration of World Day of Peace 2000*, No. 1). A shared conviction that humanity is a single family should lead to a greater acceptance of legitimate political and cultural differences, and produce a united will to work for respect and reconciliation between groups wherever relations have been marred by hostility and conflict. It is not merely the absence of war which ensures true peace; peace calls for fairness, truth, justice and solidarity. A greater sense of fraternity among the world's peoples, which finds concrete expression in gestures of solidarity and commitment to authentic human development, is necessary in order to overcome excessive economic and social inequalities and the corrosive effects of distrust and pride.

Fortunately, the conviction is being ever more widely accepted that an essential condition for peace is respect for the dignity of the human person and for human rights. Only when the unique value and the rights of the person are recognized, safeguarded and promoted is the social fabric truly strengthened, the priorities of individuals and nations properly ordered, and the quality of international relations improved. Human rights are inscribed in the very nature of the person and reflect the objective and inviolable demands of a universal moral law. They are not conferred by society or the State. They precede laws and agreements, while determining their value and correctness. The future of the human family requires a common acceptance of the universality and objectivity of human dignity and rights, if the world's peoples are to have the possibility of engaging in meaningful dialogue for the genuine good of all. From this there follows the duty incumbent on the State to defend the moral and spiritual dimensions of life, without which human beings can neither reach fulfilment nor build a society which respects their transcendent nature.

Recognition of the spiritual and transcendent dimension of human life and of the right to religious freedom is at the very heart of the structure of human rights. Due attention to that aspect leads to greater awareness of the inalienable worth of the human person, greater openness to others, a more just and humane society, and a wiser and more responsible use of resources for the common good. Your own country, with its ancient spiritual traditions and religious patrimony, is blessed with a wisdom capable of offering insights and inspiration for a balanced development, respectful of the common good of all its citizens.

In this regard, the Catholic community in Nepal, though small in numbers, is happy to play its part, through its spiritual mission and its work in the areas of education, health care and social assistance. Its members seek no special privileges, but only the guaranteed freedom to follow the dictates of conscience and freedom to practise their religion openly and peacefully in a spirit of respect for the followers of other spiritual traditions.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that during the term of your mission the friendship and understanding which have characterized relations between the Kingdom of Nepal and the Holy

See will continue to grow, and I assure you of the full cooperation of the various offices of the Roman Curia. Upon yourself and your country I invoke abundant divine blessings.

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*\*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XXIV, 1 p.989-991.

*L'Osservatore Romano* 19.5. 2001 p.6.

*L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English* n.23 p.7.

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