



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED
TO THE HOLY SEE ON THE OCCASION OF THE
PRESENTATION OF THE CREDENTIALS****

Friday 17 May 2002

Your Excellencies,

1. I am pleased to receive you today and to receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries; Belarus, Niger, Sweden, Thailand, Benin, Sudan, Iceland, Jordan. I would like to thank you for conveying to me the courteous messages of your respective Heads of State. I would be grateful if you would express in return my respectful greetings and cordial wishes, for them and for their high mission at the service of their compatriots. Through you, I would also like to greet the civil and religious authorities of your countries, and your citizens, assuring them of my esteem and friendship.

2. Our world today is confronting a certain number of serious crises and acts of violence, which the media bring to our attention every day. It is the duty of the international community and of all people of good will to be mobilized more intensely to bring about the changes to which the people aspire who suffer the most. Peace must be the first priority for all countries on all continents so that they bring to a halt the armed conflicts which only jeopardize the future of nations and peoples, some of whom are subject to degrading and shameful living conditions. No one can ignore the destiny of their brothers and sisters, nor act as if they knew nothing.

Undoubtedly, there are two essential elements on which it is right to exercise a joint influence: dialogue and negotiations between the peoples who are called to live together on the same land; and the phenomenon of globalization with the growing contrast between the rich and poor countries that create the inequalities that are becoming much more evident.

Long-term peace presumes that the least developed countries benefit from economic growth and appropriate aid. The first prospect must be to support the local economies and to form people who will take charge of the future of their national community to bring about the country's necessary autonomy. From everyone, this calls for much greater solidarity and coherent behaviour.

3. In this perspective, the mission of diplomats is of the greatest importance. They are called to create bonds with one another and to build bridges between their respective countries, thus making a significant contribution to friendship among the peoples, respecting persons and populations, and favouring negotiation and exchange. Your new mission admits you to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See which, thanks to its own diplomats and the local Catholic communities, is present throughout the world, working for the common good and for respect for the dignity of every human being. Here you will be able to grasp from within the Holy See its concerns and actions. You will also find the doors open to meeting personalities from around the world and to forging brotherly bonds. In addition, with the birth of the new modern States, new permanent diplomatic missions have been established which expand international relations and bring countries closer to one another, inviting them to cooperate much more for peace in the world.

4. The inequality between peoples challenges us constantly and must be for all the object of special attention. Countries whose soil and sub-soil contain a wealth of resources and many raw materials are subject to pressures that prevent entire sections of their people from drawing any benefit whatever from them. If changes are to take place at the international level, this implies that each one agree to change his lifestyle. I therefore warmly appeal for a beginning of solidarity and fraternal charity from all people of good will. Indeed, peace goes equally with the elimination of poverty and the suppression of inequalities among people.

Likewise, it implies education for everyone. The young generations, particularly sensitive to such tragic situations, need strong signs if their hopes are not to be in vain.

Through her active participation in the work of diplomacy and through the local communities, the Catholic Church in the various countries of the world is involved in teaching the respect for the dignity of the person and the recognition of peoples, striving with every peaceful means to establish peace, understanding and brotherhood among all the nations, to offer each one a land that is pleasant to live in, where he can lead a personal, family and social life and in his way take part in public life.

5. At the time when your mission to the Holy See is beginning, I offer you my cordial wishes. As I invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, upon your families, upon those who work with you and upon the nations you represent, I ask the Most High to crown you with his gifts.

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