



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR ALGIRDAS SAUDARGAS
AMBASSADOR OF LITHUANIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 6 December 2004

Mr Ambassador, It is a cause of great joy for me to receive the Letters with which the Republic of Lithuania accredits you as its Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See. Welcome! I would like first of all to express to you my appreciation for your words conveying the sentiments of the Nation that you now represent here. I accept with gratitude and respect the message that the President of the Republic has addressed to me through you, also on behalf of the Lithuanian People. Mr Ambassador, please convey my constant cordial thoughts to the Authorities of your Country which I had the joy of visiting in September 1993, together with the assurance of my remembrance in prayer for all the Lithuanians, to whom I am bound by cultural and spiritual ties. Your presence, Mr Ambassador, evokes indelible memories of the many contacts I have had with the Lithuanian People. The Apostolic See, as you pointed out, has never ceased to follow their vicissitudes throughout their long and chequered history. One of the tasks of the Successor of Peter is to sustain the faith of believers in every part of the world and, at the same time, to remind them constantly of those universal values on which it is possible to build a just and supportive society. Sustained by the age-old conviction that the universal moral law is a sure path to civil coexistence, the Holy See never tires of defending the right of peoples to enter the scene of history with their own particular features and respect for the legitimate freedom of each one. I know that in the social and cultural debate that concerns your Country at this time, there is a growing awareness of the need to emphasize its Christian roots, which have nourished the social fabric with vital energy down the ages. I am eager to express anew my hope that the Representatives of the Lithuanian citizens, continuing to draw on the noble patrimony of human and Gospel ideals that marks the Nation's history, will work with sincere dedication to build a free society on sound ethical and moral foundations. In this perspective, I urge the Catholics who make up a large part of the population to collaborate with all people of good will to prevent Lithuanian society from being heavily influenced by the secularist and hedonistic model of life and its deceptive attractions. Knowing that they cannot be content with fighting the consequences of evil, believers are prepared to walk side by side with those who, through the appropriate legislation and balanced conduct, work to safeguard the family and life, from conception until natural death. May I likewise express my deep pleasure to you at the entry of the Country that you represent to the community of the European Union. May God grant that this Continent find the ways and means to build peace and prosperity in an atmosphere of fruitful collaboration, with

respect for the cultures and legitimate rights of all, pursuing as a goal the good of individuals and of the whole of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals. As I renew to you my fervent good wishes for the lofty mission that your Country has entrusted to you, I would like to assure you of the full, loyal and cordial collaboration of those who assist me in the fulfilment of the tasks incumbent on the Apostolic See. In my co-workers you will find an attentive partner with regard to bilateral issues, and more generally, to the pursuit of the international Community's common good. The Apostolic See, which has signed several Agreements with Lithuania on matters of common interest, considers the method of cordial and loyal dialogue the best way to overcome any possible difficulty that might emerge in our mutual relations. As I offer you my fervent good wishes for your exalted service that begins today, I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, to those who work with you and to your loved

ones.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.51/52 p.4. © Copyright 2004 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana*

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