



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF SENEGAL
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Tuesday, 22 April 1969

Mister Ambassador,

We thank Your Excellency warmly for your noble words. In receiving from your hands your Letters of Credence as Ambassador from Senegal, We are happy to greet the distinguished representative of a country which is dear to Us in many respects, and to extend to you Our welcome to this City with which you are well acquainted through having fulfilled important functions here.

You are the envoy of a nation, which when it had scarcely gained independence, was one of the first in Africa to request establishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See. This step which manifested the esteem of the illustrious Head of your State and its government for the place and mission of the Catholic Church in the destiny of your Country then afforded the Pontifical authority an opportunity to greet with joy the birth of the new and vital Senegalese nation. The Holy See greatly appreciated its attitude of respect for the dignity of man, and his right to advance his vocation as the responsible agent of his progress human and religious: conditions indispensable for justice and universal peace. Your Country, through maturity acquired in long engagement in inter-African political responsibilities, and through its attention to development and the spread of African culture, seemed particularly amenable to these grand ideals. Perhaps it feels more keenly than others the uncertainty of seeing their realization compromised or too long retarded in certain regions of Africa.

We Ourselves share the suffering of seeing prolonged on the African continent the conflicts in which there are bleeding or starving so many human beings called to the joy of life. We deplore the precarious conditions of life which, despite many efforts, prevail among so many urban and rural

peoples in Africa, with limitations opposed to their development and their dignity. Of even greater concern it seems to Us is the situation of the young African who becomes discouraged and exasperated, faced with uncertainty about his professional future.

We are not, however, yielding to pessimism, because We also know the efforts which your Country, in particular, Mr. Ambassador, is expending to organize with neighbouring countries economic cooperation beneficial to each of them. We consider too that the appeals full of wisdom and nobility addressed by the Head of your State to the attention of the nation favoured will result in opening new ways to a more equitable distribution of the obligations and resources of each of the members of the family of nations. Such was Our urgent desire in addressing to the world Our Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* and Our Message to Africa which was so well received in Senegal.

We like to see another reason for hope in the consideration shown by the Senegalese authorities toward the Catholic communities and their cultural and charitable enterprises in the service of your Country. In the climate of understanding, of dialogue and of trust which fosters beneficent concord among the different spiritual families of Senegal, We are confident that Our Catholic sons will always have it at heart to cooperate with all their strength for the advancement of your Country. The Holy See, for its part, intends to serve it in the line of its spiritual mission, and is happy to have you for a direct interlocutor in this collaboration. With Our best wishes for the happy accomplishment of your high mission, We invoke upon your Country, your family, and your person the blessing of Almighty God.

*ORa n.18 p.5.