



The Holy See

*Address of His Holiness Paul VI
to the President of the Republic of Austria**

Thursday, 18 November 1971

Mr. President.

On the occasion of your official visit to the Vatican, we present our compliments to you and your suite. We bid you welcome and thank you for the friendly words you have addressed to us. In your person we greet also the whole Austrian people, which is particularly near to us because of its century-old Christian tradition. We are thinking here of its millenary history, of the wonderful Austrian landscape and the time-honoured cathedrals. That attract many thousands of visitors every year, and last but not least the famous artists and composers who have spread the fame of their homeland all over the world. At this hour we therefore extend, through your Excellency, our best wishes for their happiness and prosperity to the whole Austrian people, so dear to us.

With your visit today, Mr. President, you wish to express the friendly relations that exist between the Holy See and Austria on the basis of the Concordat and other juridical agreements. As you have just stressed in your address, the vast majority of the population of your country have professed themselves Christians, Catholics, for generations. This historical fact has had a decisive influence on the cultural and political evolution of Austria in the past, to its great advantage in fact. For though State and Church are independent in their own sphere, a trusting collaboration between the two institutions cannot but be advantageous for the peoples, which only in this way can fully develop their best capacities. It is a question here of that Christian humanism that humanity needs so urgently today. A humanism withdrawn within itself, looking only to the values, of the intellect, closing them, however, to God, can achieve only apparent success. True, man can organize the world apart from God, but "without God man can organize it in the end only to man's detriment. An isolated humanism is an inhuman humanism" (cfr. *Populorum Progressio*, n. 42).

Your Excellency referred in terms of praise to our efforts as regards the social issue on the world

plane. This fully corresponds to the mission that is entrusted to us. In fact, it has always been the concern of the Church and is so particularly today, as the Synod of Bishops, which has just ended, expressly stressed, to make a valid contribution to the integral development of individual man and therefore of the whole of mankind. On our visit to Bombay we emphasized: "Man must meet man. The peoples must meet one another as brothers and sisters, as God's children. In this mutual understanding and in this friendship, in this holy companionship, we must construct the common future of mankind in common work" (Address to the representatives of the non-Christian religions, 3 December, 1964).

It seems to us that the Austrian people also has an important task to carry out and is in fact already carrying it out in this very field. It is well known among other things, that your capital Vienna has long given hospitality to international meetings and conferences. In the same line individual citizens, too, must know how to utilize the rich historical heritage of their country to meet the needs of modern times.

Everyone is called to contribute to social development and to be an example to others in the civic virtues of uprightness, unselfishness and helpfulness towards all men indiscriminately.

In this sense we would like to express the wish that you may be granted, Mr. President, to continue to lead the country and people of Austria, so highly esteemed by us, to real progress, in peace and freedom, in collaboration with other peoples. For this purpose, we invoke God's abiding protection and blessing upon you and upon the Foreign Minister present here and all the members of your suite, upon your Ambassador to the Holy See and upon the whole Austrian people.

*ORa n.48 p.3.