



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

Monday, 26 March 1973

Mr. President,

We present to you and to those of your suite our respectful greeting and thank you for the words which you addressed to us, also on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Your visit, as you pointed out, is a new proof of the friendly relations that have long united the Federal Republic of Germany and the Holy See. These relations also confirmed by agreements, are based on mutual esteem and harmonious collaboration of long standing in the national and international field.

At this moment our cordial greeting goes to your country, which we visited years ago. We recall with joy the beautiful landscape of Germany, the cities with their venerable old cathedrals and churches, the hard-working and tenacious population.

We would like to mention here, too, the German Universities and Academies which give your people an honourable place in the history of civilization and culture and which make an essential contribution to Europe and even to the world. In the same way the economic and technical progress of your country deserves our sincere admiration.

It is our wish that spiritual development should keep up with technical development. The history of all the centuries teaches us that the real welfare of a people and its legitimate political, economic and cultural efforts must necessarily be based on moral foundations, the foundations described so well by our Predecessor John XXIII in his Encyclical *Pacem in terris*, namely, the principles of truth, justice, love and freedom (cf AAS LV, 1963, pages 257-304).

The premises for a true and lasting peace, worthy of man, are also based on these foundations. For this reason we have great confidence in the German people and trust that it will make a precious and important contribution to the maintenance of peace in Europe and in the world

In this connection we would like to stress a further thought which we have at heart. The vast majority of the population of the Federal Republic belong to Christian denominations. The State certainly cannot ignore this fact. For even though we live in a pluralistic society, the moral principles which God inserted in the nature of men still exist, in the first place the dignity and rights of every human person.

We express the wish that also young people in Germany may always be guided by these principles. Youth, which enjoys our particular sympathy and our particular comprehension, is often very critical with regard to the Church and the structure of society today. It often sees in them only a collection of prescriptions and prohibitions, a clinging to outdated concepts. The young are looking for new ways, with the enthusiasm and disinterested commitment of which they alone are capable. There is a great danger, however, that they will waste energies and pursue false ideals. It must therefore be the duty of everyone to set before the eyes of the young values for which it is worth committing themselves.

We would also like to say a word of acknowledgement to you, Mr. President, for the great help that the German population has been giving for years in real Christian brotherly love for the countries of the Third World struggling towards development. We also thank you for all the measures in favour of the many thousands of foreign workers living and working in Germany. To them, too, can be applied the words we assigned to one of the last World Peace Days: "Every man is my brother".

Allow us, Mr. President, at the end of this meeting to renew to you and your wife, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his wife and to the Ambassador to the Holy See, the expression of our deep esteem.

Trusting that your country will continue to enjoy peace and prosperity, we willingly invoke upon you and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as upon the whole German people, whom we so highly esteem, the abiding protection and blessing of God.

*ORa n.14 p.3.
