



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE AMBASSADOR OF SYRIA ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 4 October 1973

Mr. Ambassador,

The tribute you have just paid to the Holy See, the trust you express with regard to it on behalf of the Syrian people, deeply touch us. With our thanks, we offer Your Excellency our good wishes for a cordial welcome. We gratefully receive the respects of His Excellency the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, whose interpreter you have been on presenting to us these Letters of Credence.

The place you take today in the line of the Ambassadors of your country bears witness to the will of your government and of the Syrian people to maintain and strengthen a sincere and fruitful collaboration with the Holy See, in order to develop and implement the highest ideals of justice, peace and brotherhood. We do not doubt that your high mission will contribute to serving this noble purpose.

Among these human values inseparable in our eyes from a spiritual attitude, Your Excellency made a point of stressing the universalist spirit. That is, in fact, an essential characteristic of the message of which the Catholic Church is the bearer. If no people can be excluded from the spiritual family of those embraced by God's mercy, no one can be excluded from the human family either everyone must be able to win recognition, to vindicate his inviolable rights to existence, to life, to the dignity of its members, without forgetting his obligations towards other partners.

Unfortunately, this work of reason and justice, the only way to lasting brotherhood, is very often scorned. No man worthy of the name, no believer particularly, no nation either, can ignore situations that weigh so heavily on many civil populations and endanger the common good of mankind. It is necessary to lead everyone to see a brother in each man, to form consciences to this essential duty, to obtain the consensus of the widest public opinion, to seek without respite the

agreements and legal instruments guaranteeing justice for all.

It is in this field, Your Excellency knows, that we carry out our mission of love, peace and brotherhood, and we do so with renewed fervour for the benefit of the Middle East, which is so dear to us for so many reasons. In this spirit, we are very attentive to the hopes and sufferings of your peoples, which you have echoed in our presence.

We think with particular affection of the Catholic communities of Syria, happy to see them share the culture and the aspirations of their fellow countrymen, in faithfulness to their Church, to their faith and to every thing that permits its expression. We cordially greet their Christian brothers who are also anxious to live according to the Gospel demands. We likewise express our esteem for all believers eager to seek the will of the just and merciful God. We implore the Blessings of the Almighty on the whole Syrian people and its rulers, and in the first place on you yourself, Mr. Ambassador, who will represent them before us, in order that He may lead them, protect them and accompany them along the ways of justice and peace.

*ORa n.43 p.2.