



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT
VISITING FOR THE FIRST TIME THE APOSTOLIC SEE****

Thursday, 8 April 1976

Your Excellency,

It is a great pleasure for us today to extend to you our cordial greetings. Your visit is all the more significant for us because it is the first time that an Egyptian President has come to this Apostolic See.

We welcome you indeed as the honoured representative of a great country endowed with the culture of various millennia, which has effectively enriched the entire World.

We are also pleased to recall the Christian contribution to the history of Egypt, as well as the Egyptian contribution to the history of the Church, especially in regions of Africa.

And today in modern Egypt, Christians-and we speak specifically for Catholics-wish to collaborate with their Moslem fellow-citizens for the progress of their country. We are happy to note and encourage Catholic activity particularly in the sphere of education and in the field of social services; we know that such activity is generously undertaken, and sustained with selfless motives, for the common good.

On this occasion we express the hope that ever greater progress will take place in your country for the benefit of the Egyptian people and their constant advancement in conditions truly befitting their human dignity and aspirations.

We also express at this time our great desire that the Moslem- Christian dialogue should continue and make progress among your people, in that fraternal spirit which ought to characterize all those

who adore the one God-just and merciful.

Your Excellency knows the profound solicitude that is ours for the problem of peace in the Middle East. With deep concern for this generation and for generations yet to come, we extend our sincere encouragement to continue to seek the peaceful and just solution also to the Arab-Israeli crisis. This must include an equitable solution also to the problem of the Palestinian people, for whose dignity and rights we have repeatedly expressed humanitarian and friendly interest. And the question of Jerusalem and of the Holy Places must be resolved with due regard for the millions of followers of the three great monotheistic religions, for whom these represent such exalted values.

We would not omit this opportunity to restate our anguish and preoccupation for the destiny of Lebanon. This conflict also finds its tragic place within the framework of the problem of peace in the Middle East. In addition to the deplorable destruction of human life, this civil war does incalculable harm to fraternal coexistence, and can have very sad effects on Moslem-Christian relations in the entire region.

These, Your Excellency, are some of our hopes and concerns. They are the object of our prayers and the constant solicitude of our ministry.

We reiterate our satisfaction for your visit, expressing the trust that, under your leadership, the Egyptian people will make a unique contribution in helping to build a more equitable world, a world of brotherhood, peace and justice-or what we have so frequently called : "the civilization of love".

For the attainment of these aims, we invoke upon Your Excellency and all the beloved people of the Arab Republic of Egypt the choicest blessings of Almighty God.

*AAS 68 (1976), p.274-275.

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XIV, p.235-237.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1976 p.88-89.

L'Osservatore Romano 9.4.1976, p.1.

ORa n.16 p.1.

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