



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE PRESIDENT OF RWANDA**

Monday, 17 May 1976

Mr. President,

We are very honoured by the visit you pay us today, because in your person we are receiving the high representative of a nation that is dear to us. We extend to you and to all the members of your suite a hearty welcome. Your visit takes on a family character that we find very pleasing.

We are anxious to express to you without further delay our feelings of satisfaction at the friendly understanding that prevails between your government and the Christian communities of Rwanda. This comprehension and this esteem for the activities of the Catholic Church in your country are for us a great cause of joy, comfort and thanksgiving. The Church of Christ, you are convinced, Mr. President, has an essentially spiritual mission, dedicated to the proclamation and realization of his message of salvation. But, without having a specific task in the social order, she makes an effective contribution especially in the field of education, and health and hospital care, a contribution which proceeds directly from her efforts aiming at the elevation of man, in growing respect for his human and cultural roots. Yes, the Church accepted and respected in her own mission, wishes to serve the national community always and everywhere.

We also wish to express to you our fervent wishes for the prosperity of Rwanda. May all its children be happy to live there, to help one another to develop all their economic, moral and spiritual potentialities in concern for national justice and sharing – as far as possible – with nations that are worse off! May God help you, Mr President, to consolidate peace and concord, in your people, with the patience and courage of real artisans of brotherhood among men! These are the wishes that spring from our heart, on the occasion of your kind visit. They are intended for you in the first place, but you will be happy to impart them to your dear Rwandese populations.

We willingly invoke the abundant blessings of almighty God on your person and your high mission, your family and your nation.

*ORa n.22 p.2.

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