



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI TO THE AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN TO THE HOLY SEE*

Friday, 7 January 1977

Mr. Ambassador,

It is a pleasure for us to receive Your Excellency today, at this ceremony during which you present to us the Letters which accredit you as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Spain to the Holy See. On this occasion we bid you a warm welcome, and thank you for the kind words you addressed to us and for the appreciation you expressed for our role in the service of humanity and in favour of peace.

Your Excellency arrives as the representative of a nation with which this Apostolic See has maintained fruitful and close relations for centuries, in accordance with the deep and vigorous religious spirit of your people. Already at the dawn of Christianity it received the faith of Christ, endeavoured to put it into practice resolutely on both the personal and the community level, spread it beyond its own frontiers and fashioned it into so many ecclesial models of holiness, ancient and recent.

These strengthened and fruitful relations, which could not but feel the influence of temporal vicissitudes, have found a new and happy expression, still to be completed, in the recent Agreement in the month of July last, a milestone for an appropriate mutual independence, which does not exclude but demands wholesome and opportune collaboration between the Church and the political community, to the benefit of its subjects, who have both a temporal and an eternal vocation (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 76).

This was the purpose which the Apostolic See and the Church in Spain has pursued and pursues at every moment, in an effort aimed at "fostering and elevating all that is true, all that is good, and all that is beautiful in the human community" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 76), thus promoting the

consolidation of a social atmosphere in which concord, justice and charity are strengthened to the benefit of men and to the glory of the Creator.

For this reason, you can be sure, Excellency, that in the new stage in the life of your country – to which we look with friendly interest and hope – the Church, while respecting the various legitimate options, will not fail to adequately enlighten the conscience of the faithful, on the basis of the Gospel and the Magisterium. In this way Catholics may assume, freely and responsibly, the concrete and just civic decisions which are incumbent on them.

Mr. Ambassador, in your presence we wish to formulate our best wishes for your country, so that, faithful to Christian nature, it may present itself punctually at the rendezvous of history and, proceeding along paths of concord and of united effort on the part of all its sons, move towards a future of peace, prosperity, internal integration and rightful recognition on the international plane.

Assuring you of our benevolence for the successful and fruitful accomplishment of Your Excellency's high mission, we request you to transmit to His Majesty the King our deep appreciation and thanks for his respectful message, while we implore the abundant blessings of the Almighty on his Person, his Family and all our beloved Spanish sons.

*ORa n.3 p.8.