



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H. E. BEN EDWARD MWANGI
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KENYA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Monday, 19 November 1984

Mr Ambassador,

It is my pleasure to greet you today as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kenya to the Holy See. I deeply appreciate the sentiments which you have just expressed and I thank you for the cordial greetings you have conveyed on behalf of your President, His Excellency Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, as well as those of the Government and the people of Kenya. I would ask you in turn to give them the assurance of my own cordial good wishes.

My pastoral visit to Kenya a few years ago gave me the opportunity to experience the warm hospitality of the people of Kenya, a people so rich in promise, proud possessors of a wealth of noble human qualities which distinguish them and endow them with a character of greatness.

The democratic guarantees provided by your nation's Constitution include freedom of conscience and worship for all citizens and residents. This constitutional protection for the free practice of religion manifests an attitude of respect for spiritual values, values which are deeply rooted in the hearts of your people. It implies acceptance of the truth about man, of his dignity and eternal destiny. It is likewise a recognition of the valuable contribution that true believers in God can make to the future of your country.

I am grateful to you for kind reference to the important contribution that the Catholic Church has made in Kenya over the years. It is indeed the task of the Church to work for the well-being and harmony of all the citizens.

I look forward with anticipation to the celebration of the Forty-third International Eucharistic Congress in Nairobi in 1985. I thank you, as representative of the Government and people of Kenya, for your assurance of support and cooperation so that this important event for the Church in Africa, and indeed for the universal Church, will achieve its goals and bring numerous spiritual benefits to those who participate.

Mr Ambassador, the Holy See too wishes to collaborate with the Government of Kenya and to assist, in ways proper to its mission, all efforts which promote authentic human development. Through its intense commitment to the fostering of mutual understanding among all peoples and nations, the Holy See desires to further the cause of just progress for everyone, regardless of race, colour or creed, as well as to foster the conditions whereby Kenya may ever enjoy its rightful place in the community of nations.

For yourself I pray that God may assist you in your high mission of working for the continued deepening of understanding and friendship between the Holy See and the Republic of Kenya. You may always be assured of my ready willingness, and that of the offices of the Holy See, to give you all the cooperation in our power so that you may effectively fulfil your duties. Upon the people of Kenya I invoke God's choicest blessings.

*AAS 77 (1985), p. 479-480.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol.VII, 2 pp. 1252-1253.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1984 pp. 888-889.

L'Osservatore Romano 20.11.1984 p.4.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.50 p.4.

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