



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 28 December 1985

Mr Ambassador,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. This meeting strengthens the bonds already existing between the Holy See and your beloved country, the homeland which your people are building on the foundation of the noble values and traditions which have characterized their cultural and religious life for so many centuries.

I thank you for the kind words of greeting which you expressed on behalf of His Excellency President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, and I warmly reciprocate with the assurance of my esteem and of my prayers for the happiness and well-being of the entire people.

You have mentioned, Mr Ambassador, the coexistence in Bangladesh of various religious traditions side by side. May the Most High God, the Father and Creator, bestow on them an ever increasing harmony and mutual understanding for the common good of all.

Such a climate of understanding and peace is essential if, as the peoples of the world ardently hope, the dignity and unique value of every human person is to be recognized, defended and promoted. There is a growing awareness in world opinion - flowing from the deepest aspirations of the human heart - of the existence of certain universal rights and duties in the exercise of civil liberty and in the attainment of the common good. These rights include freedom of expression, of assembly and of religious belief and practice, to which correspond equivalent duties on the part of individuals, groups and nations.

It is the task of the political and juridical order to encourage and make possible the exercise of these liberties. Only when the integral spiritual as well as material well-being of peoples is promoted will human dignity be upheld and Almighty God's eternal will be respected and obeyed. For it is he, the Creator, who has impressed his image on every member of the human family, conferring on each one a destiny that cannot be reduced to material and economic factors.

It is especially in the field of the defence of fundamental human rights that the diplomatic activity of the Holy See endeavours to promote dialogue and collaboration among people and nations. The Holy See rejoices to see progress in the cause of peace, justice and the service of humanity. In this cause all people of good will, of whatever religious conviction, will find ample opportunities for cooperation and commitment.

In accordance with that view, the Catholic Church in Bangladesh is actively involved in serving the common good through its manifold activities of a religious and social nature. While Catholics form a small minority in your country, they are loyal citizens who have the well-being of the nation very much at heart. With all the other citizens of Bangladesh they respond willingly to the challenges of development and progress.

Mr Ambassador, your mission as the representative of your people to the Holy See requires a particular sensitivity to the spiritual, cultural and social nature of their welfare. I pray that God will assist you in this task and I assure you of the willing collaboration of the various departments of the Holy See.

May the beloved people of Bangladesh live in peace and harmony under the protection of Almighty God!

*AAS 78 (1986), p. 630-631.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol.VIII, 2 pp. 1625-1626.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1985 pp. 1075-1076.

L'Osservatore Romano 29.12.1985 p.4.

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