



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THAILAND  
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE\****

*Thursday, 9 January 1986*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am pleased to greet you and to welcome you to the Vatican on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Holy See.

I wish to thank you for the kind sentiments which you expressed on behalf of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. I have vivid memories of my meeting with His Majesty and the members of the Royal Family during my visit to your country in May 1984, and I would ask you to convey my cordial greetings and best wishes for their well-being and that of the entire Thai nation.

My visit to your country was an excellent opportunity for me to appreciate further the profound sense of human values on which Thai society is built. As I stated at that time: "In our contemporary world, the history of Thai freedom and Thailand's legendary spirit of tolerance are a reminder of the deepest aspirations of the human family to live in peace, harmony and brotherhood. In particular, your respect for man's right to religious freedom renders immense honour to your land".

In that climate the ancient religious traditions of the Thai people grew and thrived, and Christianity, which arrived later, found itself a home. It is my ardent hope that the spirit of religious and cultural openness, the friendliness and goodness which characterize your people will continue to be the basis for a fruitful dialogue and for effective collaboration between citizens of different faiths, as they respond to the challenge of building a world of peace and justice.

You yourself, Mr Ambassador, have mentioned how the Thai people firmly believe in the dignity of

the human person and in respect for the rights and freedom of all. In the present circumstances of the world community, characterized by global tensions and numerous local and regional situations of conflict, the peoples and their leaders have need of just such a sense of respect, tolerance and a love of freedom and peace.

In this respect I appreciate the role which Thailand and other States are making to promote a just settlement of the continuing strife which affects the lives of millions of human beings in South East Asia.

The Holy See, responding to the particular character of its mission, follows with special interest, and indeed gratitude, the humanitarian work being carried out in your country in favour of thousands of refugees seeking shelter and safety away from neighbouring zones of combat.

I was deeply impressed by my visit to Phanat Nikhom, where I was able to meet some of the refugees and to say a public word of recognition and gratitude for what has been done by the Government of Thailand, the many national and international organizations, and the numerous volunteers actively involved in this urgent mission of mercy. It is important that these victims of a violence which they have not sought and do not support should not be forgotten by public opinion throughout the world. Many thousands are waiting to be accepted by third countries able and willing to give them a new start in life. I take this opportunity to make an appeal on their behalf. And I pray to Almighty God that they will always be treated with the human solidarity and brotherhood which is their right. I wish to assure you that the relief organizations of the Catholic Church will continue to offer all the service and support of which they are capable.

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your mission as the Representative of your country to the Holy See, I wish you success and personal happiness in the fulfilment of your responsibilities. I am sure that the relations of profound mutual esteem which exist between Thailand and the Holy See will continue to grow and flourish in our shared desire to serve the cause of peace and the common good of the human family.

I pray that Almighty God will abundantly bless your people and their leaders as they work for the well-being in justice and harmony of the entire Thai nation.

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\*AAS 78 (1986), p. 638-639.

*Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. IX, 1 pp. 45-47.

*L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1986 pp.16-17.

*L'Osservatore Romano* 10.1.1986 p.5.

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