



The Holy See

DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II

A S.E. IL SIGNOR LARS J. T. BERGQUIST,

NUOVO AMBASCIATORE DI SVEZIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE* *Venerdì, 16 dicembre 1988*

Mr. Ambassador,

Welcome to this residence! I am happy to receive you as Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of his Majesty King Carl Gustaf of Sweden to the Holy See. I would be grateful to you if you would offer to His Majesty my sincere thanks for the attention his country gives to the persevering action of the Holy See in favour of respect for human rights and of world peace.

As to yourself, Your Excellency, be assured that I welcome you with great satisfaction and hope. The dispositions of mind and heart with which you are undertaking your high mission and which you have just expressed to me are altogether worthy of the ideal that should inspire diplomats accredited to the Holy See.

It is indeed a question of strengthening the good relations which already exist between your Government and the Apostolic See of Rome. We hope that these relations will be useful especially for the effort expended by your country to cooperate in the development of the Third World, an immense task to which the Holy See devotes constant attention and support. These relations contribute likewise to the good of the Catholic Church, which is present in your land of Sweden through a minority which, I am happy to note, has its recognized place in the nation.

Without further delay, I would like to express my gratitude to your Government for having decided to establish in Rome itself the chancellery of its Embassy to the Holy See. This happy initiative will allow you, Mr. Ambassador, to devote yourself more easily to your noble mission, to be in direct contact with your peers in the Diplomatic Corps, to follow with an interest increased by proximity the efforts and activities of the Holy See. Here also you will discover better its spirit, that is to say, the fact that the Apostolic See is conscious of its ability to contribute, through diplomatic channels, specific points of view and often, too, an invaluable moral support to the ever sacred cause of the defence and the promotion of every individual, of every people, as well as to peace among nations. I need hardly add that your residence in Rome will give you the opportunity to develop a more profound knowledge of the origins and history of Europe, of which this city has for so long been an eminent home. Also the presence of the Diplomatic Corps, into which you are entering today, will allow you fruitful contacts with representatives of the peoples of all continents. You will become better acquainted here

with the ecclesial institution in its desire to serve humanity, while rendering testimony to a mystery which transcends all generations.

Mr. Ambassador, you made a very kind reference to the pastoral journey which I will undertake next year to your country, thanks to the greatly appreciated invitation of His Majesty the King of Sweden and his Government. I assure you that my joy is great at the prospect of being received on Scandinavian soil, so unique in character and so rich in history. It is true that my primary objective is of the spiritual order, as I go to meet and to encourage the local Catholic community. I also look forward with pleasure to the meetings I will have with the worthy representatives of the other Christian communities and, more generally, with the Swedish authorities and people. Your Excellency, you have expressed your willingness to do all in your power to ensure that the entire course of this first papal journey to your country will be to the satisfaction and for the good of all: I thank you for this!

I sincerely wish you a fruitful accomplishment of the mission to which King Carl Gustaf has called you. May the fulfilment of your functions live up to the expectations of your Government and of the Holy See, and may it bring you the personal satisfaction which you desire! May you come to experience the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the See of the Apostle Peter as a great family! May you be able to perceive here that through the diversity of its Ambassadors, and of the continents and cultures to which they belong, there truly exists a climate of respect, mutual esteem, dialogue, and support aimed at contributing to that civilization which my predecessor, Pope Paul VI, called «the civilization of love» – it is the only civilization that has a future, because it is rooted in a message which comes from above and which bears the name «the Good News», the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Saviour»!

It is with these sentiments that I invoke on your person and on your diplomatic activities the protection and the support of God.

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