



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II
AL SIGNOR ANDRÉS CÁRDENAS MONJE, NUOVO AMBASCIATORE
DELLA REPUBBLICA DELL'ECUADOR PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE****

Giovedì, 5 gennaio 1989

Mr. Ambassador,

It is with great satisfaction that I receive the Letters of Credence accrediting you as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Ecuador to the Holy See. In extending to you my most cordial welcome in this act of presentation, I am pleased to express to you my profound affection for all the people of the noble Ecuadorian nation.

I respond with sincere thanks to the warm greetings that the Constitutional President, Doctor Rodrigo Bonin Cevallos, sent me through you, and I ask you to convey to him my best wishes and the assurance of my prayers to the Most High for the prosperity and the spiritual welfare of all Ecuadorians.

Your words, Mr. Ambassador, are particularly pleasing to me, and they have brought to mind the various moments of my pastoral visit to your country. I recall the moving celebrations of faith and hope that took place in Quito, Latacunga, Cuenca and Guayaquil, where I had the opportunity to appreciate the most genuine values of the Ecuadorian spirit.

In the four years that have passed since then, unforeseen and grave difficulties have tried the character of the Ecuadorian people, through natural disasters or various other circumstances that have impeded the realization of not a few legitimate aspirations. Still, in spite of all this, the rejection of the option of violence has been maintained and several political institutions which seek to respond to a deep-rooted democratic call have been strengthened. The way to a more just order in Ecuador lies in the consolidation of public freedoms, in harmony with a greater safeguarding of the rights which originate in the dignity of persons, considered both individually

and collectively. With the help of God and the responsible and generous effort of the citizens, we must trust in the fruitfulness of such a plan, which responds to the basic needs, both human and Christian, of the individual and society.

The Government that you have the honour of representing has publicly expressed its intention to take an active role in perfecting the state of law, in a participatory democracy on the political and economic levels, in order to establish a more just social order. Furthermore, it has sought to emphasize that such ideals demand the harmonization of political activity and ethical values: indeed, according to the constant tradition of principles based on Christian ethics, the attainment, maintenance and exercise of public power cannot be set up as the result of opposing egotistical forces, but they must be imbued, in both their goals and methods, with a sincere and effective concern for the common good. From this springs the necessary recovery of the fundamental values of social life. such as respect for truth, a determined commitment to justice, the strengthening of the bonds of solidarity, the adequate distribution of public funds – all within an honest harmonization of public and private initiative that can open up new paths of economic and social development in Ecuador.

Many and profound are the ties that, from its very origins, have linked Ecuador with this Apostolic See. With the respect due to institutions and authorities, the Church will continue untiringly in her mission to promote and encourage those initiatives that serve the cause of the human person citizen and child of God. Truly, the values of the person, most of all respect for human dignity, must inform the relations between individuals and groups, so that the legitimate rights of each may be protected and society may enjoy stability and harmony.

The Church in Ecuador, ever faithful to the demands of the Gospel and her long tradition of service, will spare no effort in her constant work of promotion on behalf of the individual, the family, and society. Bishops, priests and religious communities, moved by the desire to bear witness to the Gospel, detached from transitory interests, will continue to make their noble contribution in such vital areas as education, health care and service to the indigenous peoples and the most needy.

In this regard, it is encouraging to note the legitimate freedom that the constitutional order recognizes in the Church's activities. This is the fruit of accords that establish the present juridical framework as an instrument of proven efficacy, which delineates the respective obligations and rights in a faithful collaboration of the Church and the State, in mutual respect and freedom.

Mr. Ambassador, before concluding this meeting, I wish to assure you of my esteem and support, together with my best wishes that the important mission that you begin today may bear fruit for the good of Ecuador. I ask you again to communicate my sentiments and hopes to your Government and the other bodies of your country, while I invoke the blessing of God and the gifts of the Spirit for you, your family, your collaborators, and all the beloved people of the noble Ecuadorian nation.

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