



## The Holy See

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*Discurso al Embajador de BOLIVIA,  
Excmo. Sr. Don Daniel CABEZAS GÓMEZ\**

*23 de febrero de 1990*

Mister Ambassador,

I am very happy to receive the letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bolivia to the Holy See. You come to take your place within a succession of Representatives of your country in the noble mission of maintaining and broadening the relations between the Apostolic See and the Bolivian nation, so near to my concern and my affection as Shepherd.

I thank you warmly for the kind words which you expressed to me, in particular for the deferential greeting of the Constitutional President of Bolivia to whom I ask you to convey my best wishes for peace and prosperity.

I am pleased to know that the strong intention of your country's leaders is to construct a firm foundation which will permit the establishment of a more just social order. During my pastoral visit to Bolivia, to which you alluded very kindly, I was able to appreciate the great values which adorn the Bolivian people: their deeply human character, their spirit of hospitality, their tenacity and their capacity to resist in face of adversity, their pure Christian roots. Yet, at the same time, I was able to observe the serious problems which inhibit the legitimate aspirations of many Bolivians for development of the type the Church proclaims in her social teaching.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to promote an attitude of solidarity, at the level of the international community as well, which would make possible the overcoming of the present difficulties in order to thus reach new goals of progress and prosperity. In this respect, the problem of the external debt represents a worrisome challenge to the economy and to the standard of living of broad sectors of your country's population. The social and human cost which that debt crisis

carries with it is such that a situation like this one cannot be discussed in economic or - monetary terms alone. For this reason, it is necessary to promote new forms of international solidarity as well, which in a climate of mutual responsibility and trust, allows for the elaboration of long - and short - term measures which can preclude the frustration of the legitimate aspirations of so many Bolivians regarding the development which is due them. «Concerning the foundations of justice and solidarity» - as I said in my meeting with the Diplomatic Corps in La Paz – «it is possible to establish a stable base for building an international community without permanent and serious catastrophes, without dramatic insecurity, without conflicts with irreparable consequences» (Discourse to the Diplomatic Corps, 10 May 1988, n. 3).

This is a task which demands the cooperation of all, especially of those who hold positions of responsibility; a cooperation in which the person is the measure and centre of all development projects, since the human person – made in the likeness of God – is the greatest treasure which a nation can have.

Therefore, may integral human advancement be the primary objective to be reached, since the human mind with its creative capacity is the motor driving all progress.

On the other hand, one cannot forget that not a few of the political and socio-economic problems in the life of a people have their roots in and great repercussions on the moral order. The Church on this earth, faithful to the mandate received from her divine Founder, tries to shed light from the Gospel on temporal realities, prompted always by her zeal in serving the common good and great human causes.

In this regard, Pastors, priests, and religious communities in Bolivia will continue unstintingly in the carrying out of their mission of evangelization, charity and social work. They are those who continue in the line of men and women who, called to a vocation of selfless service, have dedicated their lives to lessen pain and to instruct and educate, by giving a witness of self-effacing commitment to the most needy. Thus did Your Excellency wish to accent this aspect in rendering homage to these servants of the Gospel, who bring help and consolation to the most distant places in the country, inspiring love and hope.

The Bolivian Authorities will be able to keep counting on the determined will of the Church – within her proper mission – to promote all those initiatives begun to advance the common good and integral development of individuals, families and society.

I make fervent wishes that, beyond passing and factional interests, Bolivians may do whatever lies within their power to build a more just and participatory social order where the defects and deficiencies mentioned by Your Excellency will have no place. The Christian principles which have formed the life of the Bolivian nation have to be a reason for well-founded hope and for encouragement in overcoming the difficulties of the present hour and have to inspire, with God's

help, a new dynamism which opens new paths in Bolivia for economic and social development.

Mister Ambassador, before ending this meeting, I wish to assure you of my heartfelt esteem and support that the mission which you begin today may be productive with abundant fruits and successes.

I ask you to be a spokesman for my sentiments and hopes before your Government and other entities in your country, while I invoke upon you, your family, and collaborators and upon all the most beloved sons and daughters of the Bolivian Nation, the constant assistance of the Most High.

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