



The Holy See

***DISCURSO DEL SANTO PADRE JUAN PABLO II
AL SEÑOR ALEJANDRO EMILIO VALLADARES LANZA
NUEVO EMBAJADOR DE HONDURAS ANTE LA SANTA SEDE****

Lunes 25 de marzo de 1991

Mister Ambassador,

With great pleasure I receive the Letters of Credence accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Honduras to the Holy See. I want to bid you a cordial welcome, at the same time assuring you of my good will in the fulfilment of the noble mission which your Government has entrusted to you. Your presence here brings to my mind the very full day I spent with the beloved Honduran people during my pastoral visit to Central America. At the feet of Our Lady of Suyapa and the place of our meeting in San Pedro Solo I could appreciate the genuine human and Christian values, as well as the aspirations of justice and peace, which spring from the hearts of a people with whom I feel bound by strong ties of faith.

As you wanted to point out in your discourse, the large majority of the citizens of your country profess the Catholic faith. In effect, the seed of the Gospel planted by the selfless missionaries five centuries ago has grown deep roots in the noble soul of the Honduran people.

The Church - as the Third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops pointed out - «has been acquiring an increasingly clear and deep realization that evangelization is her fundamental mission; she cannot possibly carry out this mission without an ongoing effort to know the real situation and to adapt the Gospel message to today's human beings in a dynamic, convincing and attractive way» (Puebla, 85).

For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Gospel to all environments, renewing society from within and seeing that the criteria, the lines of thought and models of life take their inspiration

from Christian moral principles. As the document quoted above mentioned, «the deep-rooted social differences, the extreme poverty, and the violation of human rights found in many areas pose challenges to evangelization» (Puebla, 90). Therefore, I express my wish, despite opposing interests, that Hondurans may do their part to build a more just and participative social order, which will make possible the full realization of their legitimate aspirations.

As Your Excellency has pointed out in your discourse, in Honduras the challenges of the present moment are serious, with the economic situation occupying a dominant position. It is certain that the economic factor is a serious impediment to the good progress of the country and the achievement of some development goals to which the Hondurans legitimately aspire. The social and human price which the external debt entails makes it necessary to promote for everyone new forms of international solidarity which seek the solution of the problem in terms which are not exclusively economic or financial. Therefore, it is to be desired that developing nations, keeping in mind the strong negative influence which violence of all kinds has had on the Central American economy in recent years, may make a generous joint effort to bring about change and stimulate development. On the other hand, in putting into practice effective means of economic recovery, they must avoid the situation in which the least powerful classes become burdened with the weight of the crisis. The bishops of Honduras pointed this out, suggesting more equitable alternatives which mitigate as much as possible the consequences of the economic measures on the poorest sectors of the people.

The Church in Honduras, faithful to Christ's mandate, spares no effort in her evangelizing work, such as assistance, especially to those most in need. Since her vocation is to serve the noble cause of truth and justice, she is in solidarity with every person. Nevertheless, in her service to truth and justice, the Church has no wish to create division or conflict; rather, with the strength of the Gospel, she exhorts everyone to see each person as a brother or sister, and fosters dialogue among the groups and peoples that they may always safeguard the values of peace and harmony. If in the exercise of her mission she feels it her duty to denounce something, she always does so true to the demands of the Gospel and the human being, without subordinating herself to the interests of economic political or ideological systems which lead to conflict and confrontation. The Church, in the interests of social groups or classes, decisively rejects any incitement to violence, condemns every type of terrorism, as well as the violation of human rights.

In your words, Mister Ambassador, you referred to the programs of «national concertation» and the means which your government is putting into practice to give greater solidity to the foundations of a participative democracy on the political and economic levels.

Progress towards a more just social order for Honduras must consolidate public freedoms through the promotion and protection of the rights which spring from the dignity of people, considered as individuals and collectively. With the help of God and the generous and responsible effort of the citizens we must trust in the achievement of just measures which will respond to the basic human

and Christian demands of the person and society.

Mister Ambassador, before concluding this meeting, I want to express to you my best wishes that the mission you are beginning today may be fruitful and successful. Please express to your President, your Government, the authorities, and the Honduran people the Pope's most respectful and cordial greeting.

As I once again assure you of my esteem and support, I invoke upon you, Your Excellency, your family and all the beloved sons and daughters of Honduras God's abundant blessings.

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