



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de EL SALVADOR,
Excmo. Sr. Don Roberto José SIMAN JACIR**

27 de marzo de 1992

Mr. Ambassador,

It is with great pleasure that I receive from your hands the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of El Salvador to the Holy See. In extending to you a most cordial welcome in this solemn act, I am likewise pleased to express anew the sincere affection which I feel for all the children of that noble nation.

Above all, I appreciate the respectful greetings on the part of the President of the Republic, as well as the delicate relations which he has maintained with this Apostolic See, which also testify to the sincere sentiments of the Salvadoran people

The kind words which you addressed to me are particularly gratifying, since they remind me of the intense day I spent in your country in March of 1983, during my Pastoral Visit to Central America. My mind turns to the deeply moving Eucharistic celebration which took place in the plaza of the Metro Centre of the capital, in which thousands of Salvadorans expressed their longing for peace and justice. Confronted with the situations of conflict and violence in the region I wanted, even before I even arrived, to manifest my pastoral solicitude as Successor of Peter with these words: «There echoes in my mind with urgent emphasis the rending cry which arises from these lands and which invokes peace, an end to war and violent death, which implores reconciliation, with the end of divisions and hatred; which yearns for ample justice, until now futilely awaited, which wants to be called to a greater dignity, without renouncing its Christian religious essence» (Discourse of 2 March 1983).

After long and difficult negotiations, Providence has finally permitted the signing of the Peace

Accords on 16 January which went into effect on 1 February, leading the Salvadoran people, in witness to the spiritual values which have given them unity and hope, to gather together before the monument dedicated to the Divine Saviour of the world in the capital city and to intone a solemn «Te Deum» in an act of thanksgiving for the great gift of peace.

Before the new horizons of harmony and peaceful coexistence which will permit the building of a renewed and united society, I want to express my satisfaction and appreciation for the efforts expended by so many persons of good will which made possible the signing of the Peace Accords: in particular, the President of the Republic, the authorities of the United Nations and friendly nations, the delegates of the Government, and the delegates of the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation.

In this regard, we cannot fail also to mention the constant and self-sacrificing contribution of the Catholic Church during the entire peace process. With the strength which comes from faith in Jesus Christ, her Pastors have not failed to issue repeated, urgent calls for reconciliation and forgiveness. The new climate of understanding and dialogue to consolidate the accords in place and to lay the foundations for a more just and open society is the best tribute which the people of El Salvador can render to those servants of the Gospel who, with their lives and even to the point of shedding their blood, gave witness to their love for those most in need and to their fidelity to the Church.

Your Excellency has alluded to the arduous task of reconstruction to which all Salvadorans are called. In this matter, I want to assure you of the certain resolve of the Church in El Salvador to collaborate – insofar as appropriate to her religious and moral mission – with the authorities and the different institutions to promote all the initiatives which will result in the greater good of the person, the family and society. In as much as they are motivated by a desire, which is completely foreign to temporal interests, to give greater evangelical witness, the Bishops, priests, and religious communities will continue to make valiant contributions in the important fields of education, health and service to those most in need.

However, in order to build a more just, fraternal and united society, it is necessary that the Christian vision of life and the moral teachings of the Church continue to be the essential elements which inspire persons and groups working for the good of the nation. In this way, they will be able to attend more adequately to the needs of men while, at the same time, following the designs of God. Within this context, it is necessary to promote the fundamental values of social coexistence including respect for the truth, strong insistence on justice, the strengthening of the bonds of solidarity, honesty and openness to dialogue and participation on all levels. As I expressed in the Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, «the fundamental duty of power is solicitude for the common good of society.... In the name of these premises of the objective ethical order, the rights of power can only be understood on the basis of respect for the objective and inviolable rights of man (n. 17). All, then, must lend their support to the task of laying the foundations for a more just society. It

must be a society which protects all the fundamental rights of the individual - which encourages a spirit of participation that transcends the interests of party or class - which makes the ethical imperative the inescapable point of reference for all Salvadorans; which will achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth. It must be a society in which the sacrifices will be shared by all and not only weigh upon those least protected, a society in which all compete in the noble service of the nation, realizing in this way their human and Christian vocation. Recalling the memorable encounter at the Metro Centre which I referred to earlier, I repeat my call for a greater effort to apply the Church's social doctrine. The peace and harmony of all Salvadorans is strengthened by building its foundations on the dignity of man and his inalienable rights. True peace cannot exist without a serious and resolute commitment to the pursuit of social justice; peace and justice cannot be separated from one another.

Mr. Ambassador, before concluding this meeting, I want to express my esteem and support, as well as my best wishes that the mission which you begin today will benefit El Salvador. I ask that you convey my sentiments and hopes to your Government and to the rest of your country. Meanwhile, through the intercession of the Virgin of Peace, I awoke the blessing of God on you, on your family and coworkers, and on all the beloved children of the noble Salvadoran nation.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.15 p.10.*

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