



## The Holy See

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***DISCOURS DU PAPE JEAN-PAUL II  
À S.E. M. EUGÈNE MILINGOUT MANGAKA, NOUVEL AMBASSADEUR  
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU GABON PRÈS LE SAINT-SIÈGE  
À L'OCCASION DE LA PRÉSENTATION  
DES LETTRES DE CRÉANCE\* Jeudi 13 janvier 1994***

Mr. Ambassador,

I welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican with great joy, as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Gabonese Republic to the Holy See. I sincerely thank you for conveying to me the greetings of Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Republic, and in turn, I beg you to express to him together with my good wishes for his person, my best wishes for the accomplishment of his noble task for the well-being of the entire Gabonese people. I also greet the members of the Government and I gladly invoke God's assistance on the authorities who serve the nation.

Your presence here as the head of a diplomatic mission, Mr. Ambassador, testifies to your country's concern to implement in international relations the dynamism peculiar to spiritual values. This gives me real satisfaction.

In your address, you wished to recall to my efforts and those of my assistants, in the context of my mission as Pastor of the universal Catholic Church, to promote a greater understanding between men and the establishment of a lasting peace between nations. Thanking you for your courteous words, I like to think that the different initiatives taken by the Holy See to advance justice and brotherhood among our contemporaries, with respect for their cultures, may find a favourable echo among your compatriots, who also share these same aspirations of living in freedom and dignity.

The Catholic Church defends a concept of man to which the African spirit is particularly sensitive through its openness to transcendence. The sole ambition of the Church's members, beyond the sphere of political parties, is to spread the message of the Lord's salvation, in the hope that the Gospel of which she is the herald may work as leaven in society. Spurred by their faith and eager to encourage the unity of their people, Gabonese Catholics are anxious to join the rest of the

citizens on the path towards progress and development, guided by their Pastors, under the leadership of Bishop Basile Mvé Engone of Oyem, President of the Episcopal Conference of Gabon. I take advantage of the happy occasion of this meeting to offer them my cordial greetings and my encouragement to be authentic disciples of Christ for the good of their country.

Mr. Ambassador, as you begin your mission, I wish to offer you my best wishes that your task may have a successful outcome. Be assured that you will find here an attentive welcome and cordial understanding.

With all my heart I invoke the abundant blessings of the Most High on Your Excellency, on the President of the Republic, on the Government and on the people of Gabon.

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