



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr EVERT GUILLAUME AZIMULLAH, FIRST AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SURINAME TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday, 16 November 1995

Mr Ambassador,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and receive the Letters accrediting you as the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Suriname to the Holy See. I am also happy to receive the good wishes which you have conveyed on behalf of the President. Please extend to him my cordial greetings, and assure the Government and people of Suriname of my prayerful closeness to your nation.

The diplomatic relations recently established between your country and the Holy See are a sign of our shared desire to work for the advancement of the human person and of society. It is an expression of "a common effort to build the civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty" (John Paul II, [*Address at the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization*](#), 18 [5 Oct. 1995]). Such a task entails fostering an ever greater awareness of and respect for the dignity which belongs to men and women by the simple fact of their being human. That dignity is not some abstract reality or something granted by the community, the State or the law. It is an inalienable, inherent possession which belongs to each individual everywhere and in every circumstance. It thus precedes laws and agreements, and determines their justness and appropriateness. Everything that upholds, promotes and enhances human dignity is good for society. Whatever threatens or harms it is a defect in the life of society, one which can have terrible consequences for individuals and peoples.

It is in this perspective that the Holy See seeks to raise its voice in the international community in order to defend and promote moral and spiritual values. Such values are essential for integral human development and correspond to the deepest longings of the human heart. The well-being

not only of individuals, and of the family as the primary cell of society, but also of nations themselves and, indeed, of the entire human race, is intimately connected with a sense of truthfulness, responsibility, solidarity and respect for the legitimate rights and freedoms of others. These are some of the necessary ethical building blocks of a just and harmonious society.

Economic and political structures, separated from their ethical and moral content, will not suffice to bring the hoped – for development and well-being. Quite often the tensions which threaten peace and hinder development are the result of individual and collective selfishness, especially in the forms of an allconsuming desire for profit and a thirst for power (cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 37). Thus, many serious obstacles to development have their origin in the human heart, in the attitudes people take towards society and towards their own duties in society. A great educational effort is called for, in order that each generation may live up to its responsibilities. Such an education involves transmitting a keen sense of commitment to the common good, respect for the rule of law, and compassion and concern in the face of human suffering. The question of moral goodness is not alien to a people's development.

I note the references you have made, Mr Ambassador, to your country's resolve to pursue the goals of peace, freedom and justice, at both the national and international levels. The Holy See is certainly a most willing partner in this endeavour. The Catholic Church in Suriname, while carrying out her principal role of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and forming consciences in moral truth and virtue, expends no small effort in seeking to provide education, health care and other social services. In this regard I thank you, Mr Ambassador, for your kind words about the contribution which the Church is making to the improvement of the lives of the people of your country.

Mr Ambassador, as you assume your responsibilities within the diplomatic community accredited to the Holy See, I offer you my prayerful good wishes for the success of your high mission, and I assure you that the various offices of the Holy See will always be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. I cordially invoke upon you and upon the beloved people of Suriname the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

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