



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 14 December 2000

Mr Ambassador,

I am happy to extend to you a cordial welcome and to receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cyprus to the Holy See. With gratitude for the greetings which you have brought from your Government, I ask you kindly to convey to His Excellency President Glafcos Clerides the assurance of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the nation.

Despite recent attempts to pursue negotiations, Cyprus is still in search of a solution to the problem of division which has long troubled the Island. The roots of the problem are deep and complex, and it is clear that there is no quick and simple solution. But neither is there cause for despair. For the roots of a solution lie still deeper in the soil of Cypriot culture, which has been imbued with the richness of the Gospel from the very dawn of Christianity. In the light of the Gospel, dialogue is seen to be the way to move beyond confrontation and to achieve the "dignity, justice and security" of which Your Excellency has spoken. This is why the Holy See insists upon the need to build a culture of dialogue at the international level, and especially in Europe at this time of growing integration. European unity requires that differences be negotiated and settled in a way that serves the common good. And if this is to happen, the only path forward is that of open and sincere dialogue.

What is needed in the first place is a genuine desire for peace, and this is surely true of the vast majority of Cypriots, who are weary of division and long for a more tranquil life. The desire for peace is linked to a recognition that confrontation is futile. It can only create greater problems,

when it does not degenerate into open hostility.

Dialogue also entails an awareness of what it is that separates, together with a willingness to trust in the good faith of the other party. Without this there can be no true meeting of minds and hearts but merely two ultimately pointless monologues. Dialogue involves a readiness to seek what is true, good and just in every person and group. It brings human beings into contact with one another as members of one human family, with all the wealth of their various cultures and histories. It rests upon recognition of the inalienable dignity of every human being and upon respect for the objective and inviolable demands of a universal moral law. Through dialogue, people discover not only one another but also the legitimate hopes and peaceful aspirations hidden in their hearts.

There are some who question whether the call for such dialogue is realistic or indeed whether the process itself is possible. The Holy See will not cease to support Cyprus in the attempt to pursue the slow and difficult path of negotiations, and the Catholic community in your land will not fail to commit itself ever more deeply to the task of building the bridges which make dialogue possible. Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue is an important part of that dialogue of peace of which not only Cyprus but the whole of Europe and indeed the entire world has urgent need.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that as you undertake your mission the bonds of friendship and cooperation which exist between the Republic of Cyprus and the Holy See will be further strengthened and enriched. I offer you my good wishes and assure you that the offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you. Upon Your Excellency and your fellow-citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XXIII, 2 p. 1122-1124.

L'Osservatore Romano 15.12. 2000 p.7.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n. 51/52 p.8.

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