



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR GEORGIOS F. POULIDES
NEW AMBASSADOR OF CYPRUS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 5 July 2003

Mr Ambassador,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican for the presentation of the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cyprus to the Holy See. I am grateful for the greetings which you bring from President Tassos Papadopoulos, and I ask you kindly to convey to him and the Government my own good wishes together with the assurance of my prayers for the progress, peace and prosperity of the nation. I am also pleased to note that you are the first Ambassador of your country to the Holy See who will be resident in the City of Rome: this is a further positive sign of the friendship and cooperation which continue to grow between us. You have mentioned the recent signing of the Accession Treaty of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union. This is certainly a significant step for the nation as it starts to make the necessary preparations for taking its place officially in the European economic and political community. And with your nation's deep-seated and long-standing Christian heritage, dating back to the very beginnings of Christianity itself, Cyprus will be in an advantageous position to make Europe ever more aware of its own Christian roots. For, as I had occasion to remark earlier this year to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See: "Europe is the bearer of values which have borne fruit for two thousand years in an 'art' of thinking and living from which the whole world has benefited. Among these values Christianity holds a privileged position, inasmuch as it gave birth to a humanism which has permeated Europe's history and institutions . . . A Europe which disavowed its past, which denied the fact of religion, and which had no spiritual dimension would be extremely impoverished in the face of the ambitious project which calls upon all its energies: constructing a Europe for all" ([Speech to the Diplomatic Corps](#), 13 January 2003, 5). The continuing expansion of the European Union is an encouraging sign of the results that can be achieved when good will, mutual trust, fidelity to commitments and cooperation among responsible partners become the prevailing *modus operandi* in the international arena. Such values are all the more necessary in our modern era, in which it is no longer possible to grasp the full meaning of the independence of States apart from the concept of interdependence. Now as perhaps never before in human history sovereign Nations are closely interconnected, affecting one another, oftentimes very significantly, both for good and for

bad. There is a manifest need in our contemporary world for the legitimate aspirations, traditions and beliefs of people of different backgrounds to be accorded full respect. Only mutual acceptance and sincere dialogue among peoples and groups can sustain the work of maintaining harmonious relations. Genuine peace requires the effective recognition and safeguarding of the dignity and rights of all the members of the human family as the fundamental criterion of policy and action, with special openness to and support of the neediest: the poor, the sick, the young, the old, the labourer, the immigrant. Your Excellency has also referred to a situation that represents one of the most pressing problems facing Cyprus today: the ongoing division of the island. The Holy See, together with the rest of the international community, was greatly saddened that the plan for peace and reunification presented last year by the Secretary-General of the United Nations - the result of months of negotiations - did not gain the necessary consensus with the parties involved and was thus not accepted. It is to be hoped that the current climate of a growing European integration and an increasing European unity will provide renewed impetus and resolve to efforts aimed at finally overcoming this crisis. In this regard, I am pleased to hear you speak of your government's willingness to sit down once more at the table of dialogue and negotiation, under the auspices of the United Nations, and its readiness to abide by all relevant directives adopted by the Security Council. Indeed, confrontation and violence will never provide lasting solutions to controversies between peoples and nations. Sincere negotiation is required for settling differences in a manner that serves the authentic good of all, and the path of frank and straight-forward dialogue is the only way for effectively undertaking such negotiation. In all of this, of course, the members of the Catholic community will always be eager to make their contribution along with their fellow Cypriots. Mr Ambassador, I am certain that your term of service will do much to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Republic of Cyprus and the Holy See. I offer you my best wishes for the success of your mission and I assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia will always be willing to assist you as you carry out your duties. I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon you and your

country.

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