



The Holy See

***ADDRESS TO POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr PABLO MORAN VAL
NEW AMBASSADOR FROM THE
REPUBLIC OF PERU TO THE HOLY SEE****

Tuesday, 7 December 2004

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to receive you for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Peru to the Holy See. I offer you a cordial welcome and thank you for your kind words. Please convey to H.E. Mr Alejandro Toledo Manrique, President of the Republic, my gratitude for his greeting, in which the beloved Peruvian People join him. I deeply appreciate it and reciprocate by invoking upon them every kind of good. Collaboration of Church and State.

Your presence clearly shows the traditional relations that as early as 1877 Peru established with the Holy See. Since they are motivated by a spirit of loyal cooperation in solidarity, it is to be hoped that they may always continue in an atmosphere of friendship and respect, since the Constitution of this Nation begins by invoking Almighty God and recognizes the State's close ties of collaboration with the Church.

Religious life in Peru is organized by the Bishops and the priests, their assistants, and has taken shape in the various communities and movements and in the centres for worship, social assistance, education and human and social advancement. This is a clear sign of how the vitality of faith can continue to support the valiant efforts of a noble people who do their utmost to forge ahead without by-passing the authentic roots of their Christian identity.

The Catholic faith, professed by the vast majority of your Country's population, gives rise to broad-minded behaviour in individuals and in society. Where there is no separation between faith and

life, it fosters a consistent existence free from incongruity which is able to resist the temptation to have recourse to violence, selfishness and corruption, since the Church, faithful to her mission, offers her guidance for facing today's ethical challenges.

The conditions in which your Nation and a large part of the Latin American Continent live give rise to serious challenges that must be faced with generosity and upright judgment. Several months ago, the Bishops of Peru repeated their urgent appeal for "peace, concord and understanding... a call to hope, to build Peru, to seek social order, to defend the rights of the constitutional state". If, indeed, it is important to defend civic values, it should not be forgotten that they will be better respected when they are based on the ethical and moral values of honesty and effective solidarity, thus making it possible to correct unjust social inequalities and personal and social individualism that hinder the full achievement of the common good.

The efforts of the Authorities to improve the standard of living in the least privileged categories of society, by seeking to offer dignified work opportunities and attention to health care and a decent life, are well known. Unfortunately, however, poverty is continuing to mar thousands of citizens' lives. Meeting the basic needs of the most deprived and alienated persons must be considered a fundamental priority, since the rapid pace of international economic changes has put many of them in an almost desperate plight.

In this regard, the Church, mother and teacher, faithful to her mission, closely accompanies many families and people who today are living the dehumanizing consequences of this situation. This is one of the areas in which collaboration between the different public institutions and the Ecclesial Community finds fertile ground for serving and helping the poor.

Peru has also undertaken to strengthen its national institutions as well as its projects for regional integration. It is to be hoped in this regard that the defence of human life and the institution of the family, today threatened from all sides by an erroneous concept of modernity or freedom, is not beyond the reach of Government measures, since the family, in accordance with the natural order established by the Creator, is the irreplaceable foundation of a nation's harmonious development.

I would also like to say a word of closeness and encouragement to the large Peruvian community that has emigrated to other countries and whose presence in Europe is substantial. The remoteness of the Homeland is due in most cases to the desire to find a better standard of life. Of course, they must feel committed to contributing solutions to the Country that saw their birth and today still considers them her children, despite the distance.

The Church does not limit herself to recalling the fundamental ethical principle that "immigrants must always be treated with the respect due to the dignity of every human person" (*Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2001, n. 13), but mobilizes all her resources to attend to them as well as possible. Indeed, with a certain frequency, churches and other Catholic institutions are

becoming their main reference point; here they can meet, hold their celebrations, keep alive the identity of their homeland and find effective support, if not the only support, to defend their rights or find a solution to awkward situations.

Mr Ambassador, at this point, I would like to offer you my best wishes for the success of your mission to this Apostolic See. Please assure the Peruvian People of my prayer for their integral progress by recalling the words I said on my arrival at Lima Airport on my first Apostolic Visit: "The 500 years of the evangelization of this Land is a pledge to form a Latin American and Peruvian whose faith is very strong, who is very upright, very solidary, very respectful of the rights of others and ready to stand up for his or her own; someone who is very Christian and human" (cf. *Arrival Address*, 1 February 1985, n. 2). I ask God to help you in your mission that is beginning today, and I invoke every heavenly Blessing upon you, your distinguished family, your collaborators and the Government Leaders and citizens of Peru.

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