



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday, 27 May 2004

Your Excellencies,

1. I welcome you with joy on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your Countries: Suriname, Sri Lanka, Mali, Yemen, Zambia, Nigeria and Tunisia. I thank you for conveying to me the courteous words of your respective Heads of State, and I ask you to reciprocate them by expressing my respectful good wishes for them and for their lofty mission at the service of their country. Through you, I also greet the leaders of civil society, the religious Authorities of your nations and all your compatriots. I avail myself of your presence at the Vatican to offer my fervent good wishes to the Catholic community of your respective countries, and my cordial greetings to all your fellow citizens.

2. Disturbing news concerning the status of human rights is constantly arriving from all the continents. It makes clear that in contempt of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (cf. art. 5), people - men, women and children - are tortured and their dignity is offended. Thus, the whole of humanity is injured and derided. Since every human being is our brother or sister in humanity, we cannot keep silent before such intolerable abuses. It is the duty of all people of good will, whether they have responsibilities or are ordinary citizens, to do their utmost to enforce respect for every human being.

3. I appeal today to the consciences of our contemporaries. Indeed, the human conscience must be educated so that the unacceptable forms of violence which weigh heavily on our brethren in humanity may cease once and for all, and all people may join forces to promote respect for the most fundamental rights of every man and woman. We cannot live in peace and our hearts will always be uneasy so long as human beings are not treated with dignity. It is our duty to show

solidarity to every one of them. Peace cannot be established unless we all join forces, especially you who are diplomats, to ensure that every person on this earth is respected. Peace alone entitles us to hope in the future. Your mission, therefore, is to be at the service of fraternal relations between persons and peoples.

4. Consequently, I express my desire for peace for your governments and for all the inhabitants of your countries. At the time when you are beginning your noble mission to the Holy See, I offer you my very best wishes and invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, your families, your colleagues and the nations that you represent.

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