



The Holy See

*Address of His Holiness Paul VI
to the new Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany**

Monday, 29 November 1971

Mr. Ambassador,

We bid you a hearty welcome on your first official visit to the Vatican and thank you for the friendly words you addressed to us. With the solemn presentation of your credentials as the new Ambassador Extraordinary of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See you are continuing the noble historical line of good understanding that links the Holy See with the German Federal Republic, also and above all through the concordat and the other juridical agreements.

You come from Germany! Pleasant memories and pictures rise in our mind's eye when we think back to the unforgettable journey we made as a young priest through the beautiful German landscape. We visited Munich and then, in the course of a sail on the Rhine, we admired the splendid cathedrals of Speyer, Worms, Mainz, Bonn and, the spiritual climax of our journey in Germany, Cologne cathedral. The cathedral in Aachen also made a deep impression on us. The two prevailing styles – Carolingian and Gothic – of the awe-inspiring building point to the two great cultures of the Middle Ages and at the same time to the immortal values of the Christian tradition which they embody.

These German cathedrals, which were erected hundreds of years ago to a large extent also with the bequests of kings and princes, are a living testimony that State and Church can and must collaborate peacefully, to the benefit of mankind. State and Church are, it is true, two institutions which are independent in their own sphere of life and law. The Church, however, through its social doctrine based on the Christian point of view, renders the State and citizens an essential, irreplaceable service in helping to construct a strong community life. For she offers the principles and the moral forces for the spiritual and moral formation of the people. In view of today's international problems in questions of international law, which are becoming more and more

complicated as to seem almost insuperable, there is in the last resort only one solution that holds out hope of success: a return to the order established by God.

It is one of the great concerns of the Holy See – and here it relies particularly on the collaboration of those lands that have diplomatic relations with it – to lead the individual peoples with all the moral strength at its disposal to a peaceful co-existence. Your activity as observer at the United Nations in New York, Mr Ambassador, has made you aware that worldwide efforts are necessary to reach this purpose.

You come from a country whose inhabitants mainly belong to one of the two great Christian denominations. Lived Christianity is the best foundation for lasting peace and the true prosperity of a people as well as fruitful collaboration with other peoples. In fact, inspired by the Christian doctrine regarding the dignity of every single human person and his right to participate in cultural goods, the German people has been making a worthy contribution to peace in the world for years.

We thank you warmly for the reverent wishes you conveyed to us from His Excellency the President of the Republic and we kindly request you to reciprocate them.

We willingly bestow on you, Mr. Ambassador, as upon your predecessors, our full confidence and receive you in the ranks of the diplomats accredited to the Holy See, while we invoke upon you God's abiding protection and support for your responsible mission.

*ORa n.49 p.7.