



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO HAILE GIORGIS TASEW
AMBASSADOR OF ETHIOPIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 14 December 1979

Mr Ambassador,

I am grateful for the kind good wishes that you have conveyed to me from His Excellency Lt. Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Socialist Ethiopia.

As I receive the Letters accrediting Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia, I think with admiration and esteem of your country's long history. With equal admiration and esteem I think of your people's attachment to values deeply rooted in their Christian culture and for whose sake they have tenaciously sought to preserve their own identity.

Such values must be taken into account for an understanding of man and man's advancement.

Man's full human dimension involves both material and spiritual values. Of these, the spiritual values are preeminent. Sharing them does not diminish them, but rather enhances them. It is these that give full meaning to material goods and indicate the proper way to use them. As I said when addressing the United Nations General Assembly, the pre-eminence of spiritual over material values is "a contributing factor to ensuring that material development, technical development and the development of civilization are at the service of what constitutes man. This means enabling man to have full access to truth, to moral development and to the complete possibility of enjoying the goods of culture which he has inherited, and of increasing them by his own creativity"[1].

The Church considers it her duty to defend and promote these spiritual values. She believes that

the message she exists to serve develops, strengthens and helps to fulfil the deepest aspirations of peoples to dignity, brotherly union and truth. She rejoices when the values of the spirit are given recognition and willingly cooperates with those who work to ensure that these values are enjoyed more fully and more widely.

I am happy that the Catholic Church is endeavouring to perform her educational, charitable and social task in your country also. As I have said, I have warm esteem for the people of Ethiopia, and I am pleased to think that the Church is offering them her service. I assure them of my prayers that they may enjoy peace, prosperity and every blessing.

Your Excellency has an important and responsible mission in maintaining and developing further the good relations between Ethiopia and the Holy See and in advancing international understanding and harmony. May God guide and assist you in this mission.

[1] Address, 14.

*AAS 71 (1979), p.1535-1536.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. II, 2 pp. 1408-1409.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1979 pp. 907-908.

L'Osservatore Romano 15.12.1979 pp.1, 2.

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