



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA TO THE HOLY SEE****

Monday, 12 July 1982

Mr Ambassador,

It is a pleasure for me to accept the Letters accrediting Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of The Gambia to the Holy See. I welcome you and cordially thank you for the kind words which you have addressed on behalf of your President, Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. In turn I would ask you to reciprocate this greeting with a message of my own good wishes.

Your Excellency is the second Ambassador to be assigned to this mission since its establishment four years ago. These diplomatic relations, as you have just indicated, are a sign of mutual willingness to work harmoniously for the betterment of the Gambian people. The Catholic population in your nation is not numerous, and yet the Catholic Church seeks to do all that she can to assist the advancement of each human person. This commitment derives from the Church's belief that man is the way for the Church to exercise her divine mission in the world. For this reason I pointed out in my first Encyclical that the Church's "solicitude is about the whole man and is focused on him in an altogether special manner. The object of her care is man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God himself" (IOANNIS PAULI PP. II *Redemptor Hominis*, 13).

In this regard I am grateful for the reference to your country's resolve to promote peace and understanding among the family of man. It is my conviction that the people of the African continent possess a genuine sensitivity to the noble ideal of creating a just and peaceful world. In fact, during my departure address at the end of my second pastoral journey to Africa, I said: "The African man has above all else a sense of mystery sense of the sacred, the absolute . . . He

aspires, then, to be in harmony with the Master of Nature, free from alienating fears. He is ready to enter into communion with the God of peace” (February 19, 1982).

I have noted with satisfaction your words of appreciation for the Church’s contribution to the spiritual, as well as the socio-economic development of your nation. Whether in the field of education, health service or agriculture, the Church hopes that material advancement will be joined by moral progress and spiritual growth. With this purpose in mind the Church willingly cooperates with the civil community in every effort that truly fosters the common good.

During your stay here, which I trust will be a fruitful one, you may be assured of the deep interest and cooperation of the Holy See in the accomplishment of your task.

*AAS 74 (1982), pp. 1134-1135.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol.V, 3 pp. 63-64.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1982 pp. 557-558.

L'Osservatore Romano 13.7.1982 pp.1, 2.

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