



The Holy See

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

Saturday, 29 January 1983

Mr Ambassador,

I am happy to receive from Your Excellency the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your country. I warmly welcome you and I express my gratitude for the kind greetings you have conveyed from His Excellency the Head of State, and I would ask you to reciprocate his good wishes.

Prompted by the words of your address, I am pleased to acknowledge that the diplomatic relations which exist between the Holy See and the Republic of Liberia are a sign of our mutual desire to work for the advancement of the human person and of society.

The Catholic Church is dedicated to fostering the dignity of man, not as an abstract reality, but man as he is in the concrete. Citing this fact in my first Encyclical, I added that according to his spiritual and corporeal nature man writes his personal history "through numerous bonds, contacts, situations and social structures linking him with other men" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II Redemptor Hominis, 14). The Church and governments become involved in man's personal history for the purpose of promoting his welfare. But the degree to which the Church or governments successfully contribute to the advancement of man's progress will be determined by the degree to which the whole man has been considered in the multiplicity of his relationships. For this reason it is important that both the Church and governments seek to share a common vision of man so that they may assist him in achieving his full potential.

Within this context, I very much appreciate your reference to the Church's insistent call for peace in a world threatened by the increasing build-up of those weapons of war that are capable of

bringing about enormous human destruction. The Church fervently seeks to contribute to the mission of peace by affirming the possibility of a dialogue for peace wherein nations will be persuaded not to resort to warfare in settling disputes. I am deeply encouraged therefore by the sentiments which Your Excellency has expressed concerning world peace and I pray that your country will always exercise the role that belongs to it in working for peace within the international community.

At the same time, I thank you for mentioning the contribution that the Church makes to the development of your country. I assure you that these efforts reflect a hopeful conviction about human progress. While the Church strives, to the extent of our resources, to help provide for the material needs of people, this is never her only concern. Above all the Church endeavours to strengthen the human spirit so that man's daily living will be influenced by the exercise of those moral principles according to which good is clearly distinguished from evil. Engendering this moral consciousness the Church nurtures within man a sensitivity to that dignity which he has been given by Almighty God.

Mr Ambassador, I trust that your stay here will be a fruitful one. In the accomplishment of your mission you have my assurance of the interest and co-operation of the Holy See. May God bless you and all the citizens of the Republic of Liberia.

*AAS 75 (1983), p. 453-454.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. VI, 1 pp. 264-265.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1983 pp. 70-71.

L'Osservatore Romano 30.1.1983 pp. 1-2.

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