



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr PEREZI KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE**

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA TO THE HOLY SEE Friday, 5 June 1987 Mr

Ambassador, It is my pleasure to welcome Your Excellency as you present your Letters of Credence as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda to the Holy See. I am grateful for the greetings which you have conveyed to me from your President, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, and I would ask you to assure him of my prayers for the peace and well-being of all the people of Uganda. I too recall with satisfaction my meeting with His Excellency here at the Vatican, and I take this opportunity to say once more how pleased I am to accept his gracious invitation to visit Uganda at some future date. Your kind words in my regard are deeply appreciated. You specifically mention those initiatives which have been undertaken to confront some of the major problems of mankind: namely, the urgent needs of those who live in poverty, the discrimination experienced by those governed by racist and totalitarian regimes, the plight of those in refugee camps and the immense suffering of innocent people caught in areas of armed conflict. We cannot help but be distressed by these matters, each of which poses a threat at present and for the future. None the less we are hopeful that solidarity and collaboration will finally triumph over these evils. With reference to the problem of discrimination, based on racial prejudice, I said in my Message for this year's World Day of Peace that "exploitation, threats, forced subjection, denial of opportunities by one section of society to another are unacceptable and contradict the very notion of human solidarity". Discriminatory tactics are sometimes used as a means of curtailing public displays of protest and of maintaining a semblance of social order. But they are unjust and they necessarily lead to ever more violent methods of repression. Inherent in all forms of institutionalized injustice is the potential for tragic conflict. The sure path towards solving the problem of oppression and racism will be found in a generous effort to work together in order to promote and defend the legitimate freedom and dignity of every person. It is only through a heightened sense of human solidarity that justice will finally overcome all forms of selfishness and discrimination. I am happy to note Your Excellency's reference to the material and spiritual contribution being made by the Church in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of your country. The Church in Uganda is indeed convinced of the urgent need to build up social structures which are more just and more respectful of human dignity and rights. The task of human promotion is a duty incumbent upon all, and the Church views it as part of her fundamental mission. She believes that she has an important contribution to make in improving the quality of life of the human family. As

the Second Vatican Council expressed it, the Church fulfils this authentic mission of human promotion "by her healing and elevating impact on the dignity of the person, by the way in which she strengthens the seams of human society and imbues the everyday activity of men and women with a deeper meaning and importance". (Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 40) Mindful of the uniqueness and dignity of every individual, the Church prays that she will be enabled to accomplish her mission of revealing God's love to each one of them. In particular she strives to heal and reconcile divisions between individuals and groups, for as the same Council teaches, "the promotion of unity belongs to the innermost nature of the Church". (*Ibid.* 42) For this reason the Church cannot but approve of the efforts being made both by the Government authorities as also by social groups and individual citizens, aimed at overcoming division and conflict by means of dialogue. Such efforts can effectively lead to the consolidation of peace and social harmony throughout the country. I am confident, Mr Ambassador, that the Church's vision of a more humane world is also shared by every person of good will in Uganda and indeed in every land. This common vision is the basis of the good relations which exist between your country and the Holy See. At the beginning of your mission, I wish to assure you of the Holy See's full cooperation in furthering those relations and in assisting you to carry out your responsibilities. May you be favoured by abundant divine blessings in exercising the high and noble mission that has been entrusted to you.

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