



## The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. Ms LEBOHANG NTS'INYI,  
NEW AMBASSADOR OF LESOTHO TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Saturday, 25 March 1995*

*Your Excellency,*

It is a pleasure for me to accept the Letters of Credence by which His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II appoints you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Lesotho to the Holy See. I take this opportunity to reaffirm my sentiments of esteem and friendship for the people of your nation. Indeed, I still remember their warm hospitality when I visited Lesotho some years ago, coming as a servant of unity and peace to promote dialogue and understanding among peoples (cf. John Paul II, *Homily in the Pro-Cathedral of Roma [Lesotho]*, 1 and 4 [14 Sept. 1988]). It is in this same spirit that I ask you to convey to His Majesty, the Government and the people of Lesotho my prayerful good wishes.

Your Excellency has stated that the principles of justice and peace are the foundation upon which your people are seeking to build a truly democratic society. I appreciate these remarks, for they carry the important reminder that genuine human development is never merely a question of material progress but must always take into account the spiritual dimension of people's lives. The transcendent dignity of the human person, who is the visible image of the invisible God, must never be neglected or disregarded. It is precisely this human dignity which makes man the subject of rights which may never be violated by any individual, group, or political power. No social or political majority may take it upon itself to violate these rights or deny them to others who belong to a different ethnic, cultural or religious group, by isolating, oppressing, or exploiting them (John Paul II, *Centessimus Annus*, 44).

Accordingly, when tensions rise and political division threatens, societies can either travel the road of dialogue and harmony in a framework of justice for all or they can decide to take the path of

force and violence. In our day, we have witnessed too much of this second response, both in Africa and in many other parts of the world. Contempt for human dignity and the trampling of human rights can never lead to progress; rather, channels of communication must be kept open, enabling the different parties, in a secure atmosphere of mutual respect, to present their disputes and to seek truly just and lasting solutions to the problems which beset them. This is in fact the only viable course if human beings, complete in their dignity and with all their rights intact, are to be respected and supported. This, as Your Excellency has alluded, is the course which Lesotho has chosen in confronting the difficulties which it is facing.

I therefore offer my encouragement to your Government and people in their efforts in this regard. Only through dialogue and understanding can a truly democratic society prosper and grow, securing lasting benefits for all its members and ensuring the active participation of all citizens in making the political choices which affect their lives. In pursuing the path of peace and respect for human rights, Lesotho will be an example to other nations, a beacon of hope shining from the midst of Southern Africa.

An integral vision of the dignity of the human person is precisely what is at the heart of the Holy See's relations with States in the international forum. The Holy See seeks to foster all that unites individuals and societies and all that works for their greater good. Its mission is to help create an "atmosphere in which the human mind thinks thoughts of peace and rejects the option of violence, where the heart is drawn to beauty and goodness and to the urgent needs of others, where people join hands as brothers and sisters to labour in solidarity for the rights and dignity of all" (John Paul II, *Address at the Farewell Ceremony at the Moshoeshoe I Airport of Maseru [Lesotho]*, 3 [16 Sept. 1988]).

It is along these same lines that the Catholic Church in Lesotho has been able to make a specific contribution to development. Catholic schools and educational services have helped Lesotho to achieve one of the highest literacy rates in the whole of Africa, and the Church is also active in the country's healthcare system. Moreover, she has developed programmes to provide practical help for the migrant workers in their many problems, and her attention to their spiritual and material needs also serves to increase awareness of the difficulties faced by this sector of the population.

Your Excellency, as you assume your responsibilities as the Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho, I assure you of the full co-operation of the Roman Curia for the success of your mission. It is my hope that your service will further strengthen the already cordial relations between your Government and the Holy See. Upon yourself, and upon His Majesty, the leaders and people of the Kingdom of Lesotho, I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

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\**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XVIII, 1 p.850-852.

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