



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 18 May 2001

Mr Ambassador,

As you come to the Vatican to present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to the Holy See I am pleased to offer you a cordial welcome. The greetings which you bring from your President, Dr Frederick J. Chiluba, are much appreciated, and I would ask you kindly to convey to him the assurance of my prayers for the well-being and prosperity of the nation.

In response to your remark that no efforts should be spared in the quest for peace, I wish to express my satisfaction at your country's willing involvement in the pursuit of peace, an activity which you undertake not for yourselves alone but also for your neighbours and the international community at large. Zambia's endeavours in this regard are indeed worthy of praise, and a particular word of commendation should be addressed to President Chiluba for his personal role in the continuing negotiations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the Lusaka Protocol has laid the foundation for a much hoped-for breakthrough in the peace process. In all of this, your nation's commitment to the cause of peace is an eloquent example of concern and action which are a distinguishing mark of a truly civilized and human society.

It is true, as you have observed, that the active involvement and support of the international community is a necessary component of any peace initiative, if it is to meet with success. In fact, lasting peace — whether at national, regional or global levels — will never be achieved unless world leaders recognize that the interdependence by which all nations are linked demands the renunciation of all forms of economic, military or political coercion and the transformation of

suspicion and enmity into cooperation and trust. In other words, what we are talking about here is an authentic solidarity between individuals, peoples and nations.

This concept of solidarity means that no one — especially nations and international organizations — can remain indifferent or inactive in the face of violence and war, torture and terrorism, the arms race and all that compromises peace. Rather it calls upon all who truly seek peace, and in a particular way those who serve in specific institutions, to work together to promote an extensive programme of education aimed at overcoming attitudes of egoism and hostility, bringing about in its stead a true culture of peace and solidarity.

In speaking of your country's commitment to work for the cause of peace, you have also recognized the Holy See's efforts in this same area. Indeed, it is precisely the task of fostering understanding and advancing development and peace among peoples and nations which inspires the Holy See's diplomatic activity. The Church, to be sure, has been entrusted by her Divine Founder with a religious and humanitarian mission, different in nature from that of the political community, but open nonetheless to many forms of cooperation and mutual support. In accordance with this mission, the presence of the Holy See in the international community is directed solely to seeking the good of the human family: working for the cause of peace, for the defence of human dignity and human rights, for the integral development of peoples; in a word, working always and everywhere to promote that solidarity which joins peoples in the bond of brotherhood. This is a task which derives necessarily and perennially from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and is a responsibility shared by all Christians.

The Catholic Church will always be a willing partner in the continuing task of making this solidarity a reality in the worldwide family of man. She will likewise continue to make a specific contribution to the building up of Zambian society, and I am grateful for Your Excellency's appreciative words about the role played by the Catholic Church in this regard. She considers her apostolate in the education of youth and adults, in the staffing of hospitals and clinics and the provision of health care for the poor, in the offering of programmes of social development and human promotion as essential elements of her religious mission. Of course, she wishes to carry out this work in harmony with others who are active in these same fields. Cooperation between Church and State and among all citizens regardless of religious confession is of great importance in advancing people's intellectual and moral education. Thus they will be enabled to build a truly just and humane society, one that will eventually extend beyond national boundaries to embrace all peoples.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your mission will serve to strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation already existing between Zambia and the Holy See. As you take up your new responsibilities I offer you my prayerful good wishes in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon yourself and the beloved people of Zambia I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XXIV, 1 p.998-1000.

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