



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM
OF JORDAN TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 17 May 2002

Madam Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to welcome you on this solemn occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Holy See.

I am deeply grateful, Madam Ambassador, for the cordial message and greetings you have addressed to me on behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah II. I am particularly pleased with his delicate attention to the Apostolic See and would be grateful if you would kindly pass on to him in turn my respectful good wishes for his person and for the Jordanian people, whom I had the joy to meet during my Jubilee pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I pray the Most High to watch over the efforts of all your fellow-citizens to build an increasingly fraternal and solidary society.

2. As you recalled, the Holy See does not cease to encourage political leaders to turn to dialogue and negotiation, in order to permit all people to live in peace on a land. The Catholic Church considers this duty to all as an integral part of her spiritual mission, in response to the commandment of brotherly love left to her by her Master and Lord (cf. Jn 15,12.17). With a deep awareness of this duty I summoned the leaders of the great religions to meet in Assisi last 24 January, to proclaim to the world, injured once again by the violence of terrorism, that man hungers and thirsts for justice and peace. On that day, the leaders present clearly expressed that their religions wished to serve the good of man and that in no way can anyone legitimate violence in the name of God. As I wrote in my [Message for the World Day of Peace 2002](#), "In bearing common witness to the truth that the deliberate murder of the innocent is a grave evil always, everywhere, and without exception, the world's religious leaders will help to form the morally

sound public opinion that is essential for building an international civil society capable of pursuing the tranquillity of order in justice and freedom" (n. 13).

3. How is it possible today to speak of the human aspiration to justice and peace without recalling the tragedy of the conflict in the Middle East? I have appealed several times to the international community to engage with determination urgently in discussions with the parties involved to convince them to abandon the recourse to the violence of force and to return to the negotiating table. I acknowledge your Government's efforts on this occasion to remain a dialogue partner open to all and anxious to work for a just and lasting peace in this region of the world that is so tried by tensions. I am happy to know that the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem has at last been restored to God and to believers, while I deplore the violence manifested for so many days towards this holy place. I appeal once again to the international community to take without delay the necessary measures to enforce respect for the special status of the Holy Places and to guarantee them effective protection.

4. May I once again recall, with deep gratitude to God, the pilgrimage he granted me to make to the Holy Land during the Jubilee Year. I am glad that my visit to Jordan on that occasion, as you mentioned, contributed to the interreligious dialogue taking place in your country in order to increase effective reciprocal confidence among the different communities, thanks to a better knowledge of each one, its traditions and spiritual riches. During this visit to the places that are important and meaningful to the Jewish people, to Christians and to Muslims, I meditated on the pages of human history that belong to the spiritual heritage of all humanity. Should not the Holy Land, where God manifested himself and spoke to man, become the place of all places where peace and justice flourish? How can we fail to hear its pressing call to strive with courage and determination in favour of dialogue and peace? At the dawn of the third millennium, it is still urgent to invite human beings to gather, not to destroy one another, to build a world open to human exchange, respectful of different cultures, attentive to justice and more equitable sharing among the nations, who must feel truly responsible for the common destiny of our humanity. The Holy See intends to measure up to this exalted mission and invites men and women of good will to join it.

5. Madam Ambassador, through you I want to greet the Catholic community of Jordan, its pastors and its faithful of different rites. Catholics in your country are few, but they live on good terms with everyone, first of all with their brethren of the Orthodox Church, and also with the faithful of Islam.

They form lively communities, doing their part in the country's life and development, concerned for the common good and attentive to solidarity with those who suffer injustice or poverty. I invite them to be unflinching witnesses to everyone of the charity of the Good Shepherd, and I assure them of my fatherly prayer.

6. Madam Ambassador, today you are beginning the noble mission of representing your country to

the Holy See. Please accept my most cordial good wishes for its success, and be assured that you will always find the necessary support and understanding among those who assist me.

7. Your Excellency, I cordially invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, your family, all your staff and all your compatriots.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.23 p.5.*

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