



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

Thursday, 16 January 1969

Mr. Minister.

The visit that Your Excellency has decided to make to Us today is for Us an honour and a pleasure.

For many years We have known and admired the human and Christian vitality of your beautiful country. And Providence permitted Us some years ago to appreciate through actual experience the cordiality and delicacy of your Canadian hospitality. Experience too brief, unfortunately, but one which has left with Us unforgettable memories.

Since then we have followed with increasing interests the events taking place in your country, those in the political and social domain as well as those in the religious domain, and We are happy to have today the occasion to express before a person as well qualified as Your Excellency, Our confidence in the future of Canada.

It is not that We are unappreciative of the gravity and difficulty of the problems which face a Canadian Prime Minister at the start of a new legislature and in the current world situation. The coexistence in your country of two distinct linguistic and cultural communities without doubt adds still more to the difficulty. But the positive and realistic spirit of your countrymen knows how to find the means to assure national progress, conciliating harmoniously interests which are at times diverse. And if they have lifted you to the most high position of responsibility that you occupy today, it is precisely, it seems to Us, because they have confidence that you will know how to promote the general interests of the country for the prosperity of all its inhabitants. It is plainly evident, in fact, that what unites them is more strong and more important than what divides them.

The Church, in virtue of its mission, is favourable, as you know, to all that brings men together in fruitful collaboration. Thus it cannot but desire to see develop, at the heart of each nation, a sincere and unanimous will for the service of the common good. And it makes a place in its liturgical prayer to implore the blessing of heaven upon those responsible for this common good. It is then with deep feeling that there are offered the prayers, of which We are happy to make Ourselves the interpreter, for the pacific and fruitful unfolding of your high mission at the service of your country.

The universal vocation of the Church makes it, besides, a duty to extend to the whole world this concern for the prosperity and the collaboration of men, and this is why it commits itself so profoundly in the great cause of world peace. Your country, Mr. Prime Minister, is a country fundamentally pacific, and We like to think that it will continue under your guidance to make with authority its precious contribution to a cause so vital to the future of humanity.

We have confidence that it will also continue – and it is with this that We wish to close – to give to the Church those splendid Christian families which have brought it so much honour and from whom the Lord has so often been pleased to choose men and women to call to a higher vocation. We wish to let you know that it was with profound emotion that, on the Feast of the Epiphany, We imposed hands on several new bishops, among whom was a son of your dear and noble Canadian nation.

We thank Your Excellency for this pleasant visit that you have made to Us and with all Our heart We invoke upon you, upon your family and upon all of Canada the abundance of divine blessings.

*ORa n.5 p.1.