



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF ZAIRE*

Thursday, 16 December 1976

Appreciating the kind words you have just uttered, we wish in our turn to bid you welcome, on this day when you inaugurate your mission as Ambassador of the Republic of Zaire to the Holy See.

You rightly pointed out the specific nature of this function that the Head of the State of Zaire has entrusted to you. The Holy See, in fact, cannot and must not be compared to a political power. Our office comes to us from Christ. It is exercised for the Church and in the service of men of all countries. It leads therefore, above all, to seeking dialogue with those in charge, and promoting relations which lead to mutual understanding and friendship, in a word, to fostering unity and concord among all the inhabitants of the world.

We are happy on receiving you today, to hear the desire of the authorities of Zaire, and in the first place of His Excellency the President of the Republic, to pursue and intensify the contacts already established, in view of a closer and more fruitful collaboration. Such is our personal wish, too, so great is the affection we feel for your compatriots, and especially for our Sons in the Catholic Faith. We know that, as good citizens, they aspire to take a more and more active part in the advancement of the nation, and endeavour to cooperate in all loyalty for the good of the Zaire community, making a disinterested – but how generous and dynamic! – contribution in all fields, the social and cultural among others, Attentive to the specific spirit that characterizes her members, concerned with the development of the country, and at the same time with unfailing fidelity to the Gospel that we have all received from Christ, whose birth we are about to celebrate on the approaching feast of Christmas, the Church in Zaire thus sets an example which calls for admiration.

Mr. Ambassador, expressing to the President of the Republic our respectful greetings and our thanks for having nominated you, we ask you to convey to him likewise the testimony of our

esteem for the noble nation of Zaire. There is no doubt that it possesses itself all the capacities to become, within the African continent, a place where progress, the freedom of individuals and communities, and brotherhood are happily harmonized. May Almighty God continue to lavish his benevolence upon it, and may He help you in your task!

*ORa n.53 p.7.