ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. Mr. LOVE MTESA
*NEW AMBASSADOR OF ZAMBIA TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 28 October 1993

Mr Ambassador,

I'm pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to receive the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to the Holy See. Deeply grateful for the good wishes which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency President Frederick J. T. Chiluba, I ask you kindly to convey to him my own cordial greetings. I vividly recall the generous hospitality shown to me during my Pastoral Visit in 1989, and I take this opportunity to renew to the beloved Zambian people the assurance of my continuing prayers that they will work wisely for the development of their own country and for peace and justice in the region.

The Catholic Church in your nation is young and vigorous, and her members are sustained and strengthened in love and service of country by their religious commitment. From the first coming of the Gospel to the land that is now the Republic of Zambia, Catholics have been active in advancing the development of its people, especially through works of education and health–care, the effectiveness of which Your Excellency has so graciously acknowledged. Zambia upholds the principle of religious liberty, which enables the Church to obey freely the Lord's command to preach the Good News of salvation and to bear witness to it with deeds of love. Her members are happy to contribute to the common good alongside their fellow-citizens of other Churches and ecclesial communities, ae well as with those of other traditions.

The political changes to which you referred mark Zambia's transition to an important new phase in its history. As the nation moves into the second quarter century of independence it has a providential opportunity to reaffirm its noble ideals, especially those of justice, freedom and

respect for every individual's human dignity. This can be a time for all sectors of society to reconfirm their commitment to work wholeheartedly towards the full realization of those ideals. To attain such a goal, effective solidarity is essential. This virtue, based on a firm conviction about the interdependence of individuals and communities, is manifested in persevering service of neighbour (Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38). It is the foundation for authentic development in a society and, ultimately, for good government.

Your Excellency has mentioned some of the obstacles which the Zambian people face as they seek to establish a society in which they and their children can prosper. In this regard, the burden of Zambia's international debt is a matter of particular concern. The Church has consistently pointed out that the objective demands of justice never require that individuals be deprived of the means to satisfy fundamental human needs (Cf. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 35). Since part of the Holy See's specific mission in international affairs is to represent the ethical principles that must shape the response to such problems, it encourages the efforts of those possessing expertise and authority in these matters to formulate solutions which are truly just, and it appeals at every possible opportunity for the speedy adoption of such measures.

The Holy See shares your nation's desire to foster the cause of peace among its neighbours. While not losing sight of the encouraging signs in that part of Africa, I acknowledge how disturbing it is that in Angola there has been a return to armed conflict as a means of advancing political aims. Likewise, the unremitting violence in South Africa, despite the important progress being made, is a constant source of concern. It is my fervent prayer that the path of dialogue and reconciliation will replace hostility and destruction. An end to violence takes on an even greater urgency in the light of the fact that the peoples of the region are still struggling to recover from last year's serious drought. Now more than ever an unimpeded cooperative effort is needed to fend off the consequences of that natural disaster. I pray that those who can help, both in Africa and abroad, will act swiftly to avert further malnutrition and starvation on this continent which has already known so much misery.

Mr Ambassador, it is my hope that during the term of your service as your nation's representative the friendship and understanding which have marked relations between Zambia and the Holy See will continue to grow. I assure you of the full cooperation of the Roman Curia in the exercise of your lofty mission, and I invoke abundant divine blessing upon you and all the Zambian people.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XVI, 2 pp. 1140-1142.

L'Attività della Santa Sede 1993 pp. 903-904.

L'Osservatore Romano 29.10.1993 pp.5,10.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.44 p.5.

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