



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR JOSEPH CHARLES LEONARD YVON BEAULNE,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF CANADA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Saturday, 7 April 1979

Mr Ambassador,

The way in which Your Excellency has just presented the Letters of Credence has greatly touched me, and I wish in the first place to thank you for your remarks, which I deeply appreciated.

I hope that, in the framework of the high mission you are inaugurating at the Holy See, you will find great satisfactions: they will undoubtedly prolong those that you experienced when serving your country in international authorities such as UNESCO and the Commission for Human Rights; they will also come from the fact that you will be a witness and a protagonist of spiritual values which ensure these rights a solid foundation.

Besides you personally, I greet respectfully His Excellency the Governor-General and also the whole Canadian people. I keep, in fact, an excellent memory of the very hospitable peoples who welcomed me on the occasion of my visits to Polish emigrants, and I know in other connections the merits and the human and spiritual resources of your fellow-countrymen.

You stressed, Mr Ambassador, the deep concern of your Government to promote ideally and realize concretely, within the country as well as on the international scene, respect for persons, social justice, peace and disarmament, mutual aid for development. Such aims do your country honour, and the Holy See cannot but rejoice at them.

Canadian Catholics, moreover, widely share these concerns, as is testified by the numerous documents of the Episcopate concerning peace, education, sharing, the fate of children, the poor, the unemployed, refugees, foreigners, cooperation with underprivileged countries. Man is, in fact,

the primary and fundamental way for the Church.

What can we hope but that this concern with the dignity of every man may progress, grow stronger and spread to all environments, and all systems, to the ends of the earth, and be embodied in everyday life, in concrete and effective measures? Respect for man's inviolable rights calls for human and juridical guarantees, within each nation as in relations among nations, and also for continual revision of behaviour, so that respect may be realized in the letter and in the spirit. It requires even more staunch convictions, motivations of an ethical and spiritual nature, which sciences are unable to provide by themselves. That is, in fact, the drama of our age, so proud, and rightly so, of its technical achievements, so strong here and there in its material riches, so imbued, nearly always, with its humanistic aims, but often so weak to realize in a true and lasting way the spirit of human rights and to educate man to his duties as well as to his rights.

As a matter of fact, the Christian faith—which is so deep-rooted in your country, marking its civilization, guiding its morals and institutions—draws respect for the dignity of every man and the dynamisms of its service in the love that God the Creator and Christ the Redeemer have manifested, and continue constantly to manifest, to every man for his full salvation. The first task of the Church is, therefore, to consolidate, develop, and radiate such a faith with all the spiritual and educative means that are specifically hers. Doing so, she is certain to lay also the best foundation for the action of men for the good of each of their brothers and of human communities.

These perspectives characterize the wishes I willingly express today, in prayer, for the Canadian people and its rulers, with a special thought for the Church in Canada.

I know to what extent Your Excellency is personally familiar with such considerations. I wish you, therefore, success in the accomplishment of your mission, in favour of more and more cordial and fruitful relations between Canada and the Holy See

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n.17 p.2.*