



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

TO H.E. Mr KYUNG CHUL KIM

AMBASSADOR OF KOREA TO THE HOLY SEE*Monday, 27 April 1987

Mr Ambassador,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you today as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to the Holy See. I gladly accept your Letters of Credence and I thank you for conveying the courteous words of greeting expressed by His Excellency President Chun Doo Hwan. The fact that you are here as the diplomatic representative of your country reminds me of my unforgettable visit three years ago. I was deeply moved by the warmth of the hospitality of the Korean people, and I cherish that firsthand experience of the traditional qualities of goodwill, respect and industriousness which characterize them. I also understood more vividly the painful division which continues to cause so much suffering and which calls for the best efforts and enduring perseverance of all who serve the cause of justice and peace. In the contemporary world we cannot ignore the fact that the economic, social and political questions affecting individual countries have a global and interdependent dimension. And furthermore such questions necessarily involve an ethical and moral dimension which has its roots in the unique value of every human life and the inviolability of human dignity. Wisdom requires that in seeking appropriate solutions to the grave problems which each country experiences in its own particular way, the common good and the ethical principles governing it be given priority over all forms of partisan interest. The Holy See holds that just relationships between countries can only be built upon a shared sense of solidarity and responsibility for the well-being and authentic progress of the human family as a whole. Justice in human affairs demands respect for the dignity of every human being. It rejects selfishness, both personal and collective, which favours inequalities and domination by the strongest. In this light the moral qualities and the religious vitality of a nation have an essential contribution to make to the building of a society based on mutual trust, co-responsibility, the defence of human rights and attention to the needs of the poor and the weak. As the Church fulfils her mission in the midst of the world, her religious, educational and charitable activities cannot but contribute to the building up of a more humane and just society. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, "whoever... seeks first the kingdom of God will as a consequence

receive a stronger and purer love for helping all his brothers and for perfecting the work of justice under the inspiration of charity" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 72). This has also been the experience of the Church in Korea, the bicentennial of whose presence I was privileged to celebrate on your soil. I mention these general principles as an example of the attention to the moral and humanitarian aspects of public life which characterizes the approach of the Church and of the Holy See. It is with such matters that your mission here will be principally concerned. I would assure you of the fullest cooperation of the Holy See in strengthening and developing still further the ties already existing between us, and I invoke abundant divine blessings upon you in the fulfilment of your duties, and upon your fellow citizens in the pursuit of harmony, justice and peace.

*AAS 79 (1987), p. 1315-1317. *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. X, 1 p.1443-1445. *L'Attività della Santa Sede* 1987 p.332-333. *L'Osservatore Romano* 28.4.1987 p.5. *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.18 p.24.

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