



## The Holy See

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*Discurso al Embajador de la República Federal de ALEMANIA,  
Excmo. Sr. Don Paul VERBEEK\**

*29 de octubre de 1987*

Your Excellency,

I sincerely thank you for the friendly words with which you have accompanied and explained the presentation of your credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See. I welcome you as you begin your duties at the Vatican and offer best wishes for this honourable and important office.

Our first meeting today, as you yourself have mentioned, occurs against the background of the impressive experience of my pastoral visit this year to the Federal Republic of Germany. We are also deeply touched by a keen sense of loss over the recent death of the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Joseph Hoffner, for many years the Chairman of the German Episcopal Conference. Both of these events bind me in a special way to the Church and people of your esteemed country. They move me to a deep thankfulness to Divine Providence, which provided a special blessing to this pastoral journey through various German dioceses in the Cardinal's company and which has preserved this worthy pastor of the Church for us in such extraordinary creative activity for so long a time. Under his prudent guidance and his manifold pastoral activity, the bond between the local Churches in Germany and the Holy See has become ever closer and stronger. We are all eternally indebted to him for this.

In your address, you rightly emphasized as well the "close and fruitful relationship of trust which has long existed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Holy See. Your entrance into office today continues a tested tradition of mutual and joint cooperation and strengthens the common readiness to develop further and increase these relations in the future as well.

2. The cooperation between State and Church as partners is carried on both within your country

as well as in the common commitment on behalf of the pressing demands of the international community of peoples. In this regard, you yourself have mentioned, among other things, the assurance of world peace, the alleviation of need, especially in the countries of the Third World, and the defence of human rights as well as the protection or re-establishment of an environment for people which is both physically and morally sound. Be assured that your government will always find in the Holy See a trustworthy companion and helpful partner in the pursuit of these important demands of mankind today. Within the realm of its possibilities, the Holy See encourages and supports all serious efforts for a better and more just world, for suitable social and economic development of all peoples and for coexistence of peoples in peace and freedom. Through her message and mission, the Church is firmly convinced that the construction of a humanitarian society can be possible and successful only on the basis of and through preservation of the elementary moral values .

3. As I emphasized during my last pastoral visit, the recent history of your nation shows that only people of great moral power and resolve are capable of offering effective resistance to moral and political despotism, inhumanity and destruction. Blessed Rupert Mayer as well as the "Resistance Bishop" Cardinal von Galen represent all who, in any place whatsoever, courageously stand forth in the name of God or humanity against moral licentiousness, injustice and oppression. They are for us, as I said, "symbols of hope and commitment to the witness we must all bear today to law and justice in our society, and to the defence of every individual's divine human rights, right which are continually threatened, and which are the true measure and the aim of all human affairs" (Address at Koln/Bonn Airport, 30 April 1987). The coming beatification on the Solemnity of All Saints of the two religious, Ulrika Nisch and Blandina Merten, adds two further models from the German people to that multitude of witnesses for the true dignity and greatness of man, which have their deepest roots in the combining of morality and religion and thus in God.

4. May the conscientious cooperation which exists in your country today between Church and State contribute effectively to the moral renewal of humanity so urgently needed in our time, without which a successful resolution of the problems pressing upon mankind will not be possible. The friendly diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Holy See are a valuable prerequisite and aid towards this.

With sincere gratitude I return the good wishes which you have extended to me on behalf of the President of the Federal Republic. At the same time, I implore God's light and assistance for you and your associates at the Embassy for your important task, and I impart with all my heart my special Apostolic Blessing to you and your families.

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