



The Holy See

***DISCOURS DU PAPE JEAN-PAUL II
À S.E. MADAME MADINA LY-TALL, NOUVEL AMBASSADEUR
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU MALI PRÈS LE SAINT-SIÈGE
À L'OCCASION DE LA PRÉSENTATION
DES LETTRES DE CRÉANCE**** Jeudi 13 janvier 1994

Your Excellency,

It is a great joy to me to welcome you on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Mali to the Holy See.

I thank you sincerely, Your Excellency, for the friendly words you have just addressed to me, which touched me deeply. My thoughts turn in the first place to Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, President of the Republic of Mali: I would be most obliged if you would convey to him my respectful greetings and the assurance of my prayers to God for the successful outcome of his mission in service to the Malian people, whose warm welcome to me in Bamako in early 1990 is still vivid in my memory. I also greet those who work with him in the delicate task of building an increasingly fraternal society in Mali, one that responds to the just aspirations of your compatriots. I willingly ask the Lord to bless everyone's efforts to build a solid and prosperous Mali, in the framework of a strengthened and stable peace.

Your presence here witnesses to your nation's respect for spiritual and religious values: I have no doubt that your mission, officially beginning today, will contribute to reinforcing the existing bonds between Mali and the Holy See.

In your speech, Your Excellency, you alluded to the Apostolic See's work on behalf of the deprived and to its commitment to establishing a lasting harmony among men in the world: I am grateful to you. In the first place may a fruitful common activity by Christians and their compatriots expand for the benefit of our brothers and sisters, particularly the weak and the needy, for whom we must feel compassion, as the disciples of a God we like to call «Merciful»!

It was also a pleasure to perceive in your remarks the esteem in which the human person is held

in your culture: «Mali's greatest treasure is the men and women of which it is composed», you say. Indeed, as heirs of talents which enrich their identity and which they must exploit, Malians are called to be the artisans of their own development and to prepare a more secure future for their children with a constant will to communicate the best of themselves to communicate the best of themselves to others.

You have wished also to recall the Catholic Church's contribution to the formation of consciences, especially through schools. Be assured that stimulated by the dynamism of their Christian faith, Pastors and faithful will always be prepared to work for the country's progress by associating fraternally with their fellow-citizens.

Your Excellency, may I convey through you my affectionate greetings to all the members of the small Catholic community in Mali, with whom I had the joy of celebrating the holy mysteries in their own land during my Pastoral Visit, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech. I ask them to be ardent witnesses of the Gospel, to show respect for the beliefs of others and to forge the bonds of friendship with one and all, striving to promote good understanding in everyday life for the benefit of their country. I hope that such an increasingly constructive dialogue may develop between them and their Muslim compatriots, as well as with those who belong to other denominations or who practise the traditional African religions.

As you begin your mission, I offer you my very best wishes, and I assure you that you will always find attentive and cordial assistance here from those who, by my side, are dedicated to the service of the International Community.

I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of blessings from the Most High on Your Excellency, on the President of the Republic of Mali, on those who with him preside over the nation's destiny, as well as on all the Malian people.

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