



The Holy See

**DISCURSO DEL SANTO PADRE JUAN PABLO II
AL SEÑOR JAVIER LUIS EGAÑA BARAONA,
NUEVO EMBAJADOR DE CHILE ANTE LA SANTA SEDE***

Viernes 3 de febrero de 1995

Mr. Ambassador,

1. I am very pleased to receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chile to the Holy See. As I welcome you on this solemn occasion, I would like again to express to you the deep affection I feel for all the children of that noble nation.

I return the deferential greeting which your President, Dr Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, has conveyed to me through you, and I ask you kindly to express my best wishes to him, and to assure him of my prayers to the Almighty for the prosperity and spiritual good of all Chileans.

Your friendly words, Mr. Ambassador, are particularly pleasing to me and remind me of the Pastoral Visit I made in 1987 to your country, during which I was able to appreciate the most genuine values of the Chilean soul. These values are likewise shown in the shining fruits of holiness in the Church in Chile, so I am also glad to recall the joyful celebrations of the canonization of St Teresa de los Andes and the beatifications of young Laura Vicuna and, more recently, of Fr Alberto Hurtado, S.J., the glory not only of those ecclesial communities but also of all Latin America. Their life and teachings have enlightened the activity of so many.

2. The Republic of Chile, by virtue of the Christian roots and moral values which have historically formed it as a nation rightly belongs to the group of countries that have joined in the noble task of reinforcing among peoples the foundations of peaceful coexistence in the framework of justice and mutual respect.

In this regard I am pleased to recall the recent celebration of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between your country and the Argentine Republic. It was achieved through the mediation of this Apostolic See; thus not only has your country's appreciation for the Holy See's work in the international forum been confirmed, but emphasis has been put on its firm will to continue on the path of dialogue, using the means offered by international law to the community of nations for the peaceful solution of conflicts which could flare up between the two countries linked by the Andes mountain range. I am pleased by this situation which encourages a climate of peace and co-operation since, as I explained in my recent address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, «I am convinced that though war and violence are alas contagious, peace is equally so» (ORa, 11 January 1995, n. 8).

3. Through its spiritual and religious mission, the Apostolic See continues to promote and defend respect for human rights and to testify by its teaching that the survival of humanity, with its complexity, depends on the place attributed to man as the true goal of all political activity (cf. *ibid.*, n. 9). In this sense, its presence in the community of nations seeks to be the voice which the human conscience is waiting for, without thereby minimizing the contribution of other religious traditions (cf. *ibid.*, n. 10).

4. In your address you also referred to the peaceful transition towards an increasingly democratic regime, for which the Government you represent has undertaken important initiatives, relying as in the past on the Church's moral support. I hope that in the course of democratic life the Church will effectively take her place, since her vocation is one of service at all levels, especially through her activities on behalf of the neediest, which besides contributing to the development of Chileans, safeguard and promote the highest values. Indeed, to build an ever more just and fraternal society, it is necessary that the Christian concept of life and the moral teaching of the Church should continue to be values which are taken into account by those people who serve the nation. In this way it will be possible to respond appropriately to the needs and aspirations of men, co-operating at the same time with God's plans.

5. In this spirit of collaboration the Bishops of Chile have given their Pastoral Guidelines the meaningful title: «New Evangelization for Chile, the Country We Love and Serve with the Gospel of the Lord». Today as always, the Church with due respect for the autonomy of civil institutions and procedures, will continue to promote and encourage all those initiatives which serve the cause of man, his dignity and overall progress, always fostering the spiritual and religious dimension of the person at the individual, family and social levels.

6. Mr. Ambassador, as we draw close to the end of the 20th century, we meet in a context characterized by new situations and new challenges, which make it more than ever necessary to defend the principle of the supremacy of the values of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, and the primacy of the common good in our organization of society. The Church teaches that, in order to face the new challenges, it is necessary to continue to promote

those conditions of life which enable individuals and families to fulfil themselves and to achieve their legitimate aspirations, always maintaining as a reference point an upright conception of man and his transcendent destiny. In this regard, the Second Vatican Council declared: «Faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human» (Gaudium et spes, n. 11).

Mr. Ambassador, before ending this meeting, I am pleased to assure you of my good wishes and support so that the high mission with which you have been entrusted may be satisfactorily accomplished. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, patroness of Chile, I pray that the Lord may always confer his gifts on you and your family, your co-workers, the leaders of this noble country and the beloved Chilean people, who are always close to the Pope's heart.

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