



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. MR HUSEIN-FUAD MUSTAFA KABAZI  
HEAD OF MISSION OF THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S LIBYAN  
ARAB GREAT JAMAHIRIYA TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Monday, 16 February 1998*

*Your Excellency*, 1. I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican on the solemn occasion of the presentation of the Letters of Credence as Head of Mission of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Great Jamahiriya to the Holy See. I would first like to thank H.E. Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi for his greetings and the expressions of appreciation he has conveyed to me through you, and I ask you to express my cordial wishes to him for his person and for the wellbeing of all the Libyan people. 2. Your Excellency, in the address you have just given you stressed the Libyan people's desire to contribute to world peace on the basis of mutual understanding between nations, especially at the end of this millennium, with a view to improving the future that awaits the human race. The Church constantly works so that this good for which all are longing may be ever more firmly rooted in every nation and thereby guarantee true and lasting peace for all humanity. Today, more than in the past, she is certain that peaceful coexistence among the many human, spiritual and cultural realities which make up our world is only possible if all human action is based on dialogue, respect and collaboration. In the Message this year for the World Day of Peace, in a world seeking new order and a more stable balance, I recalled the close relationship between the justice of each and peace for all, stressing how these values, as our common heritage, are innate in every person's heart. 3. Every nation is called to be fully involved in this sincere effort to build a better world, where the objective of each person's collaboration is not merely the improvement of external conditions but the growth of the human person viewed in its totality, in order to restore those values which unfortunately risk being lost or, at least, being no longer considered as concretely achievable ideals. The Catholic Church always seeks collaboration among peoples, convinced that human beings, as God's creatures, must respect one another and avoid discrimination, in order to live together and serve all humanity. As human beings and believers, Christians and Muslims have many things in common. The dialogue between them stems from fidelity to God and implies the ability to recognize him with humble submission and to bear witness to him in word and deed, in a world ever more tempted by secularization and often even by atheism. Obedience to God involves us in respect for the human person and his rights, seen as an expression of the divine will and a requirement of human nature, especially regarding basic freedoms, particularly, freedom of religion and conscience. In a world that wants unity and peace but is unfortunately still experiencing tension and conflict, faith must encourage understanding between peoples and promote dialogue, so that differences and conflicts are not resolved by

destructive means but by mutual co-operation.<sup>4</sup> Your Excellency, with the plurality of its members, your country is certainly a place where meeting and dialogue can increasingly become a means of understanding and peace. My hope is that understanding and dialogue, while taking place within Libyan society, will also be extended to the other countries of the Mediterranean region, and will increasingly mark relations within the entire international community. Everyone knows that dialogue between countries and between peoples is primarily based on recognition of the dignity of others, on mutual trust and on the readiness to co-operate for the common good of humanity. The Catholic Church has always collaborated through her involvement in the cultural, economic, and social development of the nation. She intends to continue in this direction by offering, in addition to specific professional skills, friendship and brotherhood in accordance with the Christian view of life, in full harmony with what is required for the authentic progress of the civil community.<sup>5</sup> I am certain that the collaboration generously offered by the Church will meet with the consent and approval of your country's authorities and people, and I express my wish that the Catholic community, through its members, organizations and structures, will continue not only to give spiritual help to her faithful, but also to develop her work of human and social advancement. At the beginning of your official mission to the Holy See, Your Excellency, I would like to add to my best wishes for its success the assurance that you will always find an attentive welcome and cordial understanding from those who work with me. On Your Excellency, on your family, on all the Libyan people and their leaders, I cordially invoke an abundance of blessings from the Most

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High.

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