



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO NEW AMBASSADOR TO THE HOLY SEE
FROM CHAD***

Thursday, 28 May 1998

Mr Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chad to the Holy See.

I appreciate your courteous words, as well the greetings you have conveyed to me from your President, Mr Idriss Deby. In return, I would like you to express my best wishes for the nation's happiness and prosperity to your President and to all the people of Chad, as I ask God to grant that all may live in a united and fraternal society where each individual sees his place recognized and can fully develop.

2. I am pleased to know that after a difficult period in its life, your country is resolutely involved in a democratic process which should allow all the people of Chad to live in harmony and with respect for the fundamental rights of individuals and communities. Indeed it is essential to develop a "culture of peace" by courageously facing the historical, social, political or economic phenomena which cause or encourage violence, in order to maintain stability and mutual understanding, and to develop the solidarity of the nation as a whole.

To do this, as I have already had the opportunity to stress, it is for governments "to contribute to the building of peace through the establishment of solid structures capable of withstanding the uncertainties of politics, thus guaranteeing to everyone freedom and security in every circumstance" (*Message for World Day of Peace 1997*, n. 4; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 18/25 December 1996, p. 3). Nevertheless, to establish lasting cordial relations between all the constituents of the nation, it is necessary that each individual be willing to face the future by accepting others and offering sincere forgiveness.

People must constantly learn how to live in diversity. It is necessary to overcome the fear of differences and to seek basic similarities that enable them to coexist in mutual understanding. Trusting dialogue among all the communities which form a country is an essential element in building peace and harmony, which for all citizens are the indispensable conditions of a worthy and peaceful life.

3. You referred, Mr Ambassador, to the role played by the Apostolic See in promoting justice and peace. For her part, the Church in Chad is sincerely involved in the work of reconciliation and understanding among all the constituents of the nation. Indeed, the Catholic community is aware that for the common good it is essential to fight, together with all people of goodwill, against all forms of exclusion and intolerance, which can have devastating effects on the unity and the future of society.

In this regard, in order to promote the values of justice, solidarity and freedom, I firmly hope that the relations of trust and friendship between Christians and Muslims, which already exist in many places, may grow through good neighbourly relations and fruitful cooperation, with mutual respect and sincerity. By drawing from the authentic heritage of their religious traditions, may they together make their contribution to the renewal of the nation!

4. I take this happy occasion, Mr Ambassador, to ask you to convey my warm greetings to the Bishops and Catholics of your country. I know of their commitment to building a united and harmonious nation. As we prepare to celebrate the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, I strongly encourage them in their steadfast witness to the Gospel of Christ among their brothers and sisters, and I invite them to continue sharing the hope that is in their hearts. With sincere cooperation may they work fervently with their compatriots in the joint development of their country!

5. As you begin your mission to the Holy See, I am pleased to offer you my cordial wishes for its success. Be assured that those who work with me will always listen to you with the attention and understanding you may require.

Upon Your Excellency, upon the people of Chad and their leaders, I fervently invoke an abundance of blessings from the Almighty.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.23 p.8.*

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