



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF COLOMBIA**

Friday, 21 March 1969

Mr. Ambassador,

We have listened with deep attention and pleasure to what Your Excellency has just had to say to Us relative to your presentation of the Letters of Credence which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Colombia to the Holy See

We are aware of many feelings on this occasion: most agreeable memories of your illustrious and deserving predecessor, Don José Antonio Montalvo; cordial welcome for Your Excellency, who come to Us with valuable experience gained in important public offices in your own country and during the years in which you fulfilled the same mission that you are now resuming; and finally, We feel unflinching affection for the beloved Colombian Nation.

Your presence and your considerate words, Mr. Ambassador, have brought Us refreshed memories of the days that We providentially spent at Bogotá. Permit Us to say that Our journey about your country, crowded as Our way was with believing, enthusiastic and honest citizens, and what We saw and heard there, have left an indelible imprint of pastoral joy and hope in Us. How can We fail to recall – among so many other experiences – those of the Eucharistic Field, of San Jose de Mosquera, of Santa Cecilia, and the cathedral and its Plaza de Simon Bolivar, in all of which We saw a Church throbbing with life.

At that time, and in the light of the Mystery of Love in the Sacrament, the fount of and the call to charity among men and balanced and fruitful social life, We spoke of complete human development, which needs to be made available to all. We also took the opportunity to call one and all, within order, legitimate liberty and respect for rights, to develop their civic, social and Christian vocations fully and responsibly. On that occasion We also offered encouragement to

those who are making efforts to promote and consolidate efficacious and stable structures which may guarantee national social tranquillity and peace in the world.

Your Excellency has alluded to all those ideals, which accord with the religious and civic values which are characteristic of Colombia, and We once more express Our approval of them, motivated by the same concern which We felt when We spoke of them before. In Our ministry and in the Church, which is faithful to her spiritual nature, these exhortations have no other purpose than to serve mankind, as a great family which is travelling across a strange and pilgrim land towards the Father.

Mr. Ambassador, We express Our fervent prayers for a happy accomplishment of your exalted mission, that it may contribute to maintaining the relations happily existing between the Holy See and Colombia, and to drawing them closer. At the same time We desire to assure you of Our good will, and call down plentiful blessings, upon your person, upon His Excellency the President of Colombia, his Government and the Nation, and upon the whole beloved Colombian People.

*ORa n.14 p.2.