



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ISRAEL*

Thursday, 12 January 1978

Mr Minister,

The visit that Your Excellency and the distinguished personalities accompanying you have paid us is given special prominence by the circumstances of the moment: a particularly intense phase of initiatives and discussions is in progress-in which you yourself are taking an active part-for bringing to a definitive settlement the long and painful conflict in the Middle East.

This meeting is therefore a propitious occasion for us to renew our fervent good wishes and to manifest once again our earnest hope that the impulse given to negotiation may prove decisive for a just peace, thanks to the courage and farsightedness of the leaders involved in the discussions and through participation by all the interested parties.

We think that in this way we are voicing the profound aspirations of all the peoples of the region and of all who look to the Middle East, not only as an area of great importance in and for the world, but also as a fountainhead of immense spiritual riches. We are also convinced that, in spite of the difficulties accumulated in the course of these highly critical years, it is possible to reach solutions that combine the basic demands of both security and justice for all the peoples of the area, and that lay the foundation for a peaceful future for those peoples.

As Your Excellency well knows, in the complex problem of the Middle East we have particularly at heart the question of Jerusalem and the Holy Places; and we fervently hope for a solution that will not only satisfy the legitimate aspirations of those concerned, but also take into account the preeminently religious character of the Holy City. We therefore trust that the proposal several times put forward by the Holy See, in view of the spiritual greatness of Jerusalem, will be seen as a positive contribution to such a solution.

Finally, Mr Minister, we would ask you to convey to the Israeli people and their leaders our warm good wishes for peace. We accompany these wishes with our prayers to the Most High for their well-being and their civil and spiritual progress.

*AAS 70 (1978), p.166-167;

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XVI, p.22-23;

L'Osservatore Romano, 13.1.1978.