



BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0746

Giovedì 14.12.2000

DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE A 7 AMBASCIATORI IN OCCASIONE DELLA PRESENTAZIONE COLLETTIVA DELLE LETTERE CREDENZIALI

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Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che Giovanni Paolo II ha rivolto questa mattina agli Ecc.mi nuovi Ambasciatori presso la Santa Sede nella Sala Clementina, al termine dello scambio delle Lettere Credenziali di ciascun Ambasciatore al Santo Padre:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Your Excellencies,

1. It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican to receive the Letters of Credence by which you are accredited as the Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries: Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, Cyprus, India, Eritrea and Chad. I am grateful for the greetings which you bring from your countries' Heads of State and Governments, and I ask you to convey my own good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the peace and prosperity of your peoples.

We are approaching the end of the Year of the Great Jubilee, during which it has been my wish to awaken the consciences of Christians and all people of good will to the importance of beginning the new millennium with a fresh commitment to the construction of a transformed world, a world more solidly founded on fundamental human and moral values. We must hope that those responsible for the destiny of peoples will work untiringly for better relations between individuals, regions and countries, with special attention to the needs of the weakest families, societies and cultures. This is the only way to establish a society characterized by solidarity and the will to live together in harmony.

2. In this regard, I wish to invite the Heads of Government, civil and religious authorities, and all who are engaged in the field of education to be builders of a genuine culture of peace. As could be seen among the young people who attended the World Youth Day here in Rome in August of this year, the young especially desire to see the day when peace will reign on earth. We must not disappoint them. It is our responsibility not to leave them a world in which basic human rights are too often disregarded and tensions often turn into open

conflict. An essential step in this direction is to ensure that all children and young people can receive the schooling they need in order to mature into responsible citizens. Such an education will help them to acknowledge and respect laws whose basis is found in the principles of the natural law, and to grow in an attitude of openness to others, including those who are very different in their beliefs and ways.

As the new year approaches, peace is a matter of urgent international concern. In this regard, it is appropriate to reflect on the efforts of international and supra-national institutions to find new ways of organizing economic and social realities, of promoting dialogue and agreement, of resolving conflicts, especially those conflicts which have already been going on for a long time, bringing famine, poverty, disease and the displacement of peoples. We can all rejoice in the most recent accord between the Eritrean and Ethiopian Governments, trusting that it will open the door to a new period of calm and relief in that troubled part of Africa.

3. Your experience teaches you the significance of diplomacy as a means of overcoming the crises affecting many countries across the world, and the importance of a diplomacy of proximity in support of local negotiations. Diplomacy contributes to the democratic processes which enable citizens to play a real part in the development of their own countries. It assists parties in finding the steps which lead to progress in negotiations, and gives new hope to people as they seek better standards of living for themselves and their children. Through the wise use of diplomatic skills and engagement, the aspirations of individuals are realized, and it becomes possible for them to lead full personal and family lives, and to take on their responsibilities in society. In this sense you each have a magnificent opportunity to be authentic builders of justice, peace and harmony in the world.

As you begin your duties as the diplomatic representatives of your countries to the Holy See I offer you my cordial good wishes. I ask the Almighty to bless you and the members of your families, as well as your colleagues and the peoples of the countries you represent. May the commitments you are undertaking bear fruit for the benefit of all.

[02827-02.01] [Original text: English]
