

**Salutation de Son Excellence M. Georgios F. Poulides,
Ambassadeur de Chypre,
Doyen du Corps Diplomatique
accrédité près le Saint-Siège
*9 janvier 2020***



**Greeting of His Excellency Georgios F. Poulides,
Ambassador of Cyprus,
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
accredited to the Holy See
*9 January 2020***



**Saluto di S.E. il Sig. Georgios F. Poulides,
Ambasciatore di Cipro,
Decano del Corpo Diplomatico
accreditato presso la Santa Sede
*9 gennaio 2020***

Your Holiness,

As Dean of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, I am deeply honoured and moved to present our best wishes to you for your good health and the continued fruitfulness of your apostolic mission.

I wish to recall that one year ago on this occasion you invited us to believe in the values of multilateral diplomacy. Today, in the global world, marked by conflicts, the unilateral assertion of one's own interests and the lack of harmony between global policies and local necessities, nationalisms and particularisms are becoming more assertive. As you have pointed out on many occasions, we may speak of a third world war that is being fought piecemeal. In 2019, we celebrated the centenary of the foundation of the League of Nations, the seventieth anniversary of the Council of Europe and the thirtieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall: these are events which express the will of peoples to be reborn after periods of war, both hot and cold, which arose from the lack of a diplomacy of dialogue. Today, we still have time to avoid the errors of the past. Your Holiness, your actions light the way and indicate the path which our diplomacies can follow, by constructing bridges of dialogue, not walls.

Your Holiness, you have undertaken journeys to promote dialogue in the United Arab Emirates and Morocco, which are Muslim-majority countries. In Abu Dhabi, together with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, you signed the Document on Human Fraternity. In the course of your visit to Morocco, you stressed the importance of this text, emphasising that "if we wish, then, to share in the building of a society that is open, fraternal and respectful of differences, it is vital

to foster the culture of dialogue and adhere to it unfailingly, to adopt mutual cooperation as our code of conduct and reciprocal understanding as our method and standard” (*Meeting with the Moroccan people, the Authorities, with Civil Society and with the Diplomatic Corps*, 30 March 2019).

Holy Father, on the journey of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue that you have undertaken, your visits to Romania and, on the paths trodden by Saints Cyril and Methodius, to Bulgaria and North Macedonia cannot go unremarked. You invited Christians to recognise one another as brothers in diversity while seeking to recover unity, observing that “as Christians, our vocation and mission is to be a sign and instrument of unity, and we can be so ... by putting what unites us before what has divided us or still divides us” (*General Audience*, 8 May 2019).

During your visit to Asia, you emphasised the need for a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation. You drew attention to the importance of a way of acting that promotes listening and solidarity in opposition to a “throwaway culture” and that safeguards our common home against the threat of total annihilation. In Thailand, Holy Father, you relaunched your appeal to welcome refugees, when you asked the international community to act with responsibility and farsightedness, echoing your insistence that “it is not just about migrants, it is about our humanity” (*Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2019*).

In Japan, you warned us about the immorality of nuclear weapons and ruled out the idea that peace can be built on the fear of mutual destruction. The only instrument that is worthy and capable of guaranteeing lasting peace is the culture of dialogue.

Following the footsteps of Your Holiness on the African continent, we observed how peace and reconciliation are real processes and how hope is a sentiment that is more than justified. We well remember how your journey to Mozambique aimed at strengthening the peace process initiated many years ago with the Rome Accords. In Madagascar, you drew attention once again to the theme of the promotion of an integral ecology and a shared development combining respect for the environment and social justice. In Mauritius, you encouraged that country to continue making progress in integrating the various ethnic groups and cultures. Mutual trust grows wherever the harmonisation of differences becomes the basis for a common project.

Your Holiness, you recognise the central role which mutual listening between generations plays in the building of a cohesive and peaceful society. I recall your words during World Youth Day in Panama: "You, dear young people, are not the future. ... No, you are the present" (*Homily at the Mass for World Youth Day, 27 January 2019*). As you emphasised on various occasions during the past year, education, work, community and family are the benchmarks that must be guaranteed for future generations.

Your Holiness, in recognising your constant desire to provide places for debate and dialogue, I consider it important to recall the world event which will take place on 14 May 2020 with the aim of creating a broad educational alliance involving all elements of civil and political society for and with the younger generations. This will provide a concrete opportunity to begin building the "educational village" marked by human fraternity through respect for diversity.

Holy Father, I ask you to accept our warmest wishes for a happy New Year and for your continued good health. I wish to thank you on behalf of the family of diplomats accredited to the Holy See, whom I represent as Dean, for the energy that you have transmitted in the course of the past year. You urge the Church and all of us to turn our gaze to twenty-first century humanity with love and hope: this humanity, as you said to the Roman Curia, “calls and challenges us; in a word, it summons us to go forth and not fear change” (*Address to the Roman Curia*, 21 December 2019).

Thank you, Holy Father, for your untiring work, which gives hope to so many people, men and women.