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LE UDIENZE

Il Santo Padre ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza:

S.E. il Signor Yosef Neville Lamdan, Ambasciatore di Israele presso la Santa Sede, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali;

Membri della Commissione Mista Internazionale di Dialogo tra Cattolici e la "World Alliance of Reformed Churches";

Partecipanti al Pellegrinaggio giubilare dell'Arcidiocesi di Colonia;

Em.mo Card. Joachim Meisner, Arcivescovo di Colonia (Repubblica Federale di Germania).

[01876-01.01]

LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DELL'AMBASCIATORE DI ISRAELE PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE

Alle ore 11.00 di questa mattina, Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, S.E. il Signor Yosef Neville Lamdan, Ambasciatore di Israele presso la Santa Sede.

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso rivolto dal Papa all'Ambasciatore di Israele nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di S.E. il Signor Yosef Neville Lamdan:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Mr Ambassador,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to the Holy See. My thoughts at this moment are of a deep and abiding gratitude: gratitude to God who in this year of the Great Jubilee led my pilgrim steps to the Holy Land and its peoples; gratitude to the civil and religious authorities for the welcome and attention they gave me during the intense days of my visit in March.

The Holy Land will always occupy a central place in the minds and hearts of Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Year 2000, with its commemoration of the birth of Jesus, could not but draw the loving attention of millions of Christian people in every corner of the earth to the places where Jesus lived, died and rose again. The vivid experience of my pilgrimage to the Holy Places lives on in my spirit as an extraordinary grace of God and a kind of testimony that I would like to leave, especially to the younger generation, as an invitation to build a new era of relations between Christians and Jews.

I hope above all that the religious nature of that visit will not be forgotten. My overriding purpose was to go from one Holy Place to another in a spirit of prayer, knowing that this "helps us not only to live our life as a journey, but also gives us a vivid sense of a God who has gone before us and leads us on, who himself set out on man's path, a God who does not look down on us from on high, but who became our travelling companion" (*Letter concerning Pilgrimage to the Places linked to the History of Salvation*, 29 June 1999, No. 10).

The Church is fully aware that "she draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree on to which have been grafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles" (*Nostra Aetate*, 4). The spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is so great and so vital to the religious and moral health of the human family that every effort must be made to advance and expand our dialogue, especially on biblical, theological and ethical matters. And a fresh mutual and sincere attempt must be made at every level to help Christians and Jews to know, respect and esteem more fully each other's beliefs and traditions. This is the surest way to overcome the prejudices of the past and to raise a barrier against the forms of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia which are re-appearing in some places today. Today as always, it is not genuine religious faith and practice which give rise to the tragedy of discrimination and persecution, but loss of faith and the rise of a selfish and materialistic outlook bereft of true values, a culture of emptiness. Therefore your words, Mr Ambassador, about the need for moral leadership in responding to some of the more daunting challenges facing mankind in the new millennium find a ready echo in the convictions of the Holy See.

A continuing source of sadness is the elusive character of a definitive peace in the Middle East. We all rejoice every time a step forward is announced in the complex negotiations which have become an essential feature of relations between Israel and its neighbours, especially the Palestinian Authority. The continuation of dialogue and negotiation is itself a significant development. And it is important to acknowledge just how substantial is the progress made so far, lest those involved be discouraged at the size of the task still ahead. Sometimes the

obstacles to peace appear so great and so many that to face them seems humanly impossible. But what seemed unthinkable even a few short years ago is now a reality or at least a matter of open discussion, and this must convince all concerned that a solution is possible. It must encourage everyone to press forward with hope and perseverance.

Concerning the delicate question of Jerusalem, what is important is that the way forward be the path of dialogue and agreement, not force and imposition. And what is of special concern to the Holy See is that the unique religious character of the Holy City be preserved by a special, internationally guaranteed statute. The history and present reality of interreligious relations in the Holy Land is such that no just and lasting peace is foreseeable without some form of support from the international community. The purpose of this international support would be the conservation of the cultural and religious patrimony of the Holy City, a patrimony which belongs to Jews, Christians and Muslims all over the world and to the entire international community. In fact, the Holy Places are not mere memorials of the past, but are and must continue to be the nerve-centre of vibrant, living and developing communities of believers, free in the exercise of their rights and duties, and living in harmony with one another. What is at stake is not just the preservation of and free access to the holy places of the three religions, but also the free exercise of the religious and civil rights pertaining to the members, places and activities of the various communities. The end result must be – as I said during my visit – a Jerusalem and a Holy Land in which the various religious communities succeed in living and working together in friendship and harmony, a Jerusalem that will truly be a City of Peace for all peoples. Then we shall all repeat the words of the Prophet: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . . that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" (Is 2:3).

Mr Ambassador, my prayers are with you as you begin your mission as Israel's diplomatic representative to the Holy See, and I am certain that you will do everything in your power to increase understanding and friendship between us, in the spirit of the Fundamental Agreement and the other documents which are intended to guarantee its application. Likewise, the various offices of the Roman Curia will willingly cooperate with you as you discharge your high duties. May goodness and kindness follow you all the days of your life (cf. Ps 22:6).

S.E. il Signor Yosef Neville Lamdan, Ambasciatore di Israele presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 29 aprile 1938 a Glasgow (Scozia).

È sposato ed ha tre figli.

Ha conseguito il Dottorato in Storia ad Oxford.

Diplomatico di carriera, è stato membro del Servizio Diplomatico Britannico come Segretario di Ambasciata presso il "Foreign Office" (1965-1967) e a Tel Aviv (1967-1971).

Ricercatore Universitario a Gerusalemme (1971-1973) è entrato nel Servizio Diplomatico Israeliano, ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Primo Segretario, Ministero degli Esteri (1973-1976); Consigliere della Missione presso l'ONU a New York (1976-1981); Vice-Direttore e quindi Direttore dell'Ufficio Affari Egiziani, Ministero degli Esteri (1981-1984); Ministro dell'Ambasciata a Washington (1985-1989); Direttore del Dipartimento per il Nord America, Ministero degli Esteri (1989-1994); Ambasciatore presso l'ONU e le Organizzazioni Internazionali in Ginevra (1994-1998); Ambasciatore "en disponibilité", Ministero degli Esteri (1998-2000).

[01877-02.01] [Texte original: Anglais]

SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE AI MEMBRI DELLA COMMISSIONE MISTA INTERNAZIONALE DI DIALOGO TRA CATTOLICI E LA "WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES"

Alle 11.20, nella Sala dei Papi del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto in Udienza i Membri della Commissione Mista Internazionale di Dialogo tra Cattolici e la "World Alliance of Reformed Churches" ed ha loro rivolto le parole di saluto che pubblichiamo di seguito:

• SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to greet you during these days of your meeting here in Rome. You are now in the third phase of the International Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Catholic Church, a dialogue which began shortly after the Second Vatican Council and which has already led to significant results.

Within the ecumenical movement, theological dialogue is the proper setting for us to face together the issues over which Christians have been divided and to build together the unity to which Christ calls his disciples (cf. *Jn* 17:21). In this dialogue we clarify our respective positions and explore the reasons for our differences. Our dialogue then becomes an examination of conscience, a call to conversion, in which both sides examine before God their responsibility to do all that they can to put behind them the conflicts of the past. At that point, the Spirit fills us with a yearning to confess together that "there is one body and one Spirit, . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (*Eph* 4:4-6). And we feel this as a duty, as something that must be done so that "the world may believe" (*Jn* 17:21). For this reason the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenical dialogue is irrevocable.

In this third phase, your dialogue has as its theme "Church and the Kingdom of God". In recent history we have seen the agony caused by ideologies which have sought to displace God and his reign. How important it is, at the beginning of the new millennium, for all Christians, long separated from one another, to feel deeply challenged by the Lord's exhortation: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent, and believe in the gospel" (*Mk* 1:15). May your dialogue embody the spirit of fraternal love and esteem needed to embrace these words of our Savior.

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*1 Cor* 1:3).

[01878-02.01] [Original text: English]

DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE AI PARTECIPANTI AL PELLEGRINAGGIO GIUBILARE DELL'ARCIDIOCESI DI COLONIA

Alle 11.45, nell'Aula Paolo VI, il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza i partecipanti al Pellegrinaggio giubilare dell'Arcidiocesi di Colonia (Repubblica Federale di Germania) ed ha loro rivolto il discorso che riportiamo qui di seguito:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Herr Kardinal!

Verehrte Brüder im Bischofsamt!

Liebe Priester und Diakone!

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder!

1. Nachdem ihr gemeinsam mit eurem Herrn Kardinal-Erzbischof im Petersdom beim Grab des Apostels, dem Felsen, auf dem das Haus der Kirche gebaut ist, die Eucharistie gefeiert habt, wollt ihr es euch nicht nehmen lassen, dem Nachfolger Petri selbst zu begegnen. Seid also herzlich willkommen! Ich grüße besonders den Erzbischof von Köln, Joachim Kardinal Meisner, der euch zusammen mit einer großen Gruppe von Seelsorgern auf eurem Pilgerweg nach Rom begleitet.

2. Vor der heiligen Messe habt ihr heute auf besondere Weise und ganz bewußt den Petersdom betreten. Ihr seid durch die Heilige Pforte gezogen, die während des Großen Jubiläums 2000 weit offen steht. Die Heilige Pforte ist ein Bild für Christus, der von sich gesagt hat: "Ich bin die Tür". Eure feierliche Prozession sollte nicht nur ein äußerer Ritus sein, sondern ein Zeichen für eine innere Wahl. Denn Christus ist anspruchsvoll. Er ruft die Menschen in die Entscheidung. Nicht umsonst hat er den Seinen verheißen: "Wer durch mich eintritt, wird gerettet werden. Er wird ein- und ausgehen und Weide finden" (*Joh 10,9*).

Heute stehen den Menschen so viele Türen offen. Gerade die Jugend hat es schwer, unter den vielen offenen Türen die eine Pforte zu wählen, die dem Leben Wahrhaftigkeit und Sinn gibt. Es ist nicht leicht, manch äußeres Vergnügen auszuschlagen und sich einzuüben in die tiefe und stille innere Freude. So ist die Tür zum Leben ohne Zweifel anspruchsvoll. Wer sie durchschreiten will, muß selbst abnehmen, damit Christus wachsen kann. Er muß Überflüssiges und Nebensächliches hinter sich lassen, damit Christus Platz gewinnt.

3. Ich freue mich, daß ihr mit dem Gang durch die Heilige Pforte zeigen wollt: Wir sind fest entschlossen, mit Jesus Christus über die Schwelle ins dritte Jahrtausend zu treten. Zugleich lade ich euch ein, gerade für die jungen Menschen zu beten, die in diesen für sie wichtigen Jahren große Lebensentscheidungen zu treffen haben. Der Heilige Geist schenke ihnen Phantasie, Kraft und Mut, trotz mancher Widerstände den Weg durch die enge Tür zu wählen (vgl. *Mt 7,13f*). Euch persönlich stärke die Erfahrung dieser Wallfahrt nach Rom, damit ihr Euren Lieben von dem Horizont künden könnt, den Jesus Christus vor zweitausend Jahren uns Menschen eröffnet

hat: "Ich bin gekommen, damit sie das Leben haben und es in Fülle haben" (*Joh 10,10*).

Von Herzen erteile ich euch und der ganzen Diözesanfamilie von Köln den Apostolischen Segen.

[01879-05.01] [Originalsprache: Deutsch]
