



The Holy See

***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mrs. CRISTINA FERNANDEZ DE KIRCHNER
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA
ON THE 30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PONTIFICAL MEDIATION
IN THE BEAGLE CONFLICT****

Mrs President,

It gave me great pleasure to learn of the initiative which, jointly with Her Excellency, the President of Chile, will be taking place on the coming 5 December to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the personal intervention of my unforgettable Predecessor, the Servant of God John Paul II, in resolving the ancient controversy between the two countries concerning the determination of their borders in the southern part of the continent.

The solemn decision to lay the foundation stone of a monument commemorating this event on Mount Aymond, the frontier between the two countries, gives me the opportunity to recall those days at the beginning of December 1978, when the leaders of the two beloved nations concluded that all the possibilities of reaching an agreement that would put an end to their age-old dispute had been exhausted. It seemed to them even more difficult to them to accept the suggestion the Pontiff had made to them in his Message of 11 December, to insist on a calm and responsible examination of the problem so that the requirements of justice, equity and prudence might prevail, as the secure and stable foundation of a fraternal coexistence between the two Nations, Argentine and Chilean.

Aware of the profound desire for peace of both nations which for some time had been presented to the Supreme Pontiff by the respective Pastors of these two countries with a deeply-rooted Catholic tradition, John Paul II, impelled by his particular sensitivity in carrying out the mission received from the Prince of Peace, felt the need to make a new and special intervention of a more personal nature.

It is well known that his decision, announced on 22 December 1978, to send Cardinal Antonio Samoré to the respective capitals, providentially halted the war and brought, concluding the mission faithfully and generously carried out by the unforgettable Cardinal, to signing the Act of Montevideo at Palacio Taranco, on 8 January 1979. These Agreements included a stake on peace decided by the two governments. This was expressed in their petition to the Successor of St Peter, in which they asked him to act as mediator, to guide them in the negotiations and help them in their quest for a lasting solution to their differences. The acceptance of this request, whose needs went far beyond the initial provisions of a possible commitment by the Pope and the normal praxis of the Holy See's international activity, was in fact the first step on the long and complex journey of mediation in which the Cardinal Samoré's action as personal Representative of the Supreme Pontiff, together with his collaborators and the delegations of both countries and under the direction of their authority, led to the felicitous solution of the controversy over the southern zone with the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship.

Thus I would now like to join with gratitude and joy in the special celebration of this historical date by the Presidents of both countries. They are grateful for the work of my Predecessor who so distinguished himself during his long Pontificate for promoting concord among all peoples. This success, causing a pleasant and unexpected surprise in the world, is an example of how, in the face of any controversy, it is always necessary to overcome discouragement and not to abandon the process of patient dialogue and negotiation, conducted with wisdom and prudence, in order to reach a just and worthy solution by peaceful means proper to civilized peoples, especially when their members know that they are also brothers and sisters, children of one God and Father.

Recent history, with the experience of various fatally failed attempts and drastic solutions which in controversies in various parts of the world have given rise to very grave consequences, helps us to discover the horrors which that Papal intervention spared the Chilean and Argentine peoples, as well as other nations in the region. And today's reality, with the abundant positive results of mutual collaboration between the two countries and which are an exemplary and undeniable proof of the fruits of peace, began to emerge precisely 30 years ago.

While I thank God for the many benefits received through his Son, the Prince of Peace, and through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, with her titles of Luján and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to the noble nations of Argentina and Chile.

From the Vatican, 29 November 2008

BENEDICTVS PP. XVI

© Copyright 2008 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana