



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR JEAN-FRANÇOIS KAMMER,
AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 16 June 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Confederation to the Holy See, and I thank you for your kind words. I would be most grateful if you would kindly convey to the President of the Swiss Confederation and to the Federal Council my gratitude for their courteous greetings, and reciprocate by expressing to them my cordial good wishes for all the inhabitants of Switzerland.

How could I fail to mention, at the beginning of our meeting, the [Visit of my Predecessor Pope John Paul II to your Country](#) and his memorable meeting with the young people, a sign of hope for all Swiss Catholics?

At the same time, I am delighted with the cordial diplomatic relations that exist between your Country and the Holy See. I am equally pleased with the open dialogue between the representatives of the Swiss Confederation and the Country's Bishops, in an attempt to find satisfactory solutions, for both the Confederation and the Cantons, to any difficulties in their mutual relations that might still exist.

After the example of most Western European countries, Swiss society has experienced a considerable evolution in its customs and, under the combined pressures of technological progress and the wishes of a part of public opinion, new laws have been proposed in various sectors that affect respect for life and for the family. This concerns the delicate questions of the transmission of life, of sickness and of the end of life, but also the place of the family and respect

for marriage.

On all these issues that are related to the fundamental values, the Catholic Church has clearly expressed herself through the voices of her Pastors and will continue to do so as long as necessary, to recall ceaselessly the inalienable greatness of human dignity that demands respect for human rights and, first and foremost, of the right to life.

I would like to encourage Swiss society to remain open to the surrounding world, to retain its place in the world and in Europe, and to put its talents at the service of the human community, especially in the poorest countries that will not be able to develop without this assistance.

Likewise, I hope that your Country will continue to be open to those who arrive in search of work or protection, convinced that its wealth also lies in the welcome it offers to others.

In a world where many conflicts are still in progress, it is important that the dialogue between cultures does not only involve the national leaders, but that it involve one and all, in families, in the places of education, in the world of work and in social relations, in order to build a true culture of peace.

Your Excellency, may I greet through you the Pastors and faithful of the Catholic Church who live in Switzerland. I know that they are concerned with preserving the vital link of communion with the Successor of Peter and harmoniously living with their Christian brethren of other traditions.

As you observed, Your Excellency, your young compatriots of the Pontifical Swiss Guard exemplify this connection between Switzerland and the Holy See, witnessing to a great sense of service.

At the time when you are inaugurating your mission, Mr Ambassador, please accept my very best wishes, and the assurance that you will always find welcome and understanding among my collaborators. Upon you, Your Excellency, upon your family, upon your collaborators and upon the entire Swiss People, I invoke an abundance of God's Blessings.

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