



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO DR. MAKASE NYAPHISI
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE HOLY SEE****

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 14 December 2006*

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you at the start of your mission and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the Holy See. I thank you for your kind words and for the greetings you bring from King Letsie III. Please convey to His Majesty my respectful good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the well-being of all the people of your nation.

As you have observed, you are beginning your mandate shortly after your country's celebration of forty years of independence. In offering renewed congratulations on this significant milestone in Lesotho's history, I would like to reaffirm the Holy See's support and encouragement for your Government as it seeks to strengthen the foundations of democracy and to promote peace and stability within the whole region. In this regard, the recent decision to adopt a new flag symbolizing a nation "at peace with itself and its neighbours", expresses a laudable commitment to these noble goals. Moreover, I am aware that the people of Lesotho themselves have had more than one occasion in the last forty years to demonstrate their resilience and their admirable determination to pursue the path of peace and democracy, whatever pressures to the contrary there may be.

Regrettably, the serious challenges of poverty and food shortage currently facing your people pose serious obstacles to the achievement of your country's objectives. Economic activity has a moral character, and to the degree that every person is responsible for everyone else, the wealthier nations have a duty in solidarity and justice to promote the development of all (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 333). In a world where communications and

trade have taken on a global dimension, this duty is all the more evident and the means to discharge it are more readily available. As you know, the Holy See is committed to support the efforts of the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and likewise all initiatives aimed at a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for economic growth. At the same time, she continues to urge governments that receive assistance to be assiduous in cultivating accountability, honesty, and commitment to the rule of law as necessary conditions for ensuring that the aid they receive is used to benefit those most in need (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, 113). In this regard, I am gratified to hear Your Excellency's words concerning the high priority that the Kingdom of Lesotho has assigned to the fight against corruption, and I offer you every encouragement in this worthy endeavour.

The scourge of AIDS, which afflicts so many millions in the African Continent, has brought untold suffering to the people of your country. Please be assured of the deep concern of the Catholic Church to do all it can to bring relief to those affected by this cruel disease, and also to their families. In the faces of the sick and the dying, Christians recognize the face of Christ, and it is he whom we serve when we offer help and consolation to the afflicted (cf. *Mt 25: 31-40*). At the same time, it is vitally important to communicate the message that fidelity within marriage and abstinence outside it are the best ways to avoid infection and to halt the spread of the virus. Indeed, the values that flow from an authentic understanding of marriage and family life constitute the only sure foundation for a stable society.

In this regard, I want to assure Your Excellency of the willingness of the Catholic community in Lesotho to continue to play its part in educating future generations of citizens in the values that sustain and promote a healthy social environment. As the Second Vatican Council reminds us, Catholic schools aim to conduct the human formation of their students in "an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 8). They set out to shape and direct the ideals of the young in a way that will enable them to assume their adult responsibilities with generosity and integrity, for the good of the whole of society. I know that the Government of Lesotho appreciates the work done by Catholic educators and will carry on providing them with the encouragement they need as they dedicate themselves to this noble task in the name of Christ Our Lord.

Your Excellency, I pray that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will further strengthen the already fruitful relations existing between the Holy See and your country. I assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are always ready to offer help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. With my sincere good wishes, I invoke upon you, your family, and all the people of Lesotho, God's abundant blessings.

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