



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mrs GENEVIÈVE D. TSEGAH
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 9 June 2011

Your Excellency,

In welcoming you to the Vatican and accepting the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Ghana to the Holy See, I wish first of all to express my gratitude to you for transmitting the courteous greeting of your President, His Excellency John Evans Atta Mills, and I would ask you kindly to reciprocate and to convey, in turn, my good wishes to him, as well as my appreciation of the cordial relations existing between the Holy See and your country.

It is widely acknowledged that Ghana has been able to overcome certain obstacles in order to make steady economic, social and political progress in recent times. Certainly, the conduct of regular and peaceful democratic elections does credit to both the people and the political leaders of your country. The establishment of ethnic harmony, too, not without the contribution of the local Christian communities including the Catholic Church, has been an important factor in creating conditions of peace, stability and greater social progress for all your citizens. I hope that this process will be crowned by the positive outcome of the ongoing constitutional consultation, in such a way that the nation's legislative and administrative framework will consolidate a culture of responsible and active participation in the development of the country in freedom, justice and solidarity.

I have also noted the climate of religious freedom enjoyed in Ghana. A democratic society that fosters freedom of religion and freedom of worship, and that appreciates the presence of religious institutions that strive to rise above political interests and are instead motivated by faith and moral

values, understands that there is much to gain through these freedoms for the positive growth of all the country's institutions. Indeed, countries that do so may derive many benefits from those institutions, by drawing on the wisdom found in religious traditions, especially when citizens are confronted by questions for which science and technology provide little or no answer. Indeed, here secular and religious interests find common ground and are able to grow together by combining the demands of macroeconomic progress and scientific knowledge with religion's perennial wisdom and understanding of man and society. All stand to benefit from such cooperation in a world that has grown uncertain about moral choices and is often drawn towards narrow interests and selfishness.

Your Excellency, your land has been blessed with natural resources which are now bringing prosperity to your people. It is much to be hoped that, through social solidarity, the proceeds from the correct exploitation of these resources will contribute to the sustainable economic development of your people. Let this be achieved, however, while giving due attention to those who are much poorer, or unable to provide for their families through no fault of their own. In this sense, may your country give an example in establishing effective instruments of solidarity (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 16), to the true enrichment of all members of society.

You also mention the work of the Catholic Church in Ghana in the fields of education, health care and other social services. Motivated by the love of Christ, and acting on the basis on the human dignity shared by all members of the human family, the Church wishes to contribute in many ways to the good of society, especially in the areas you have mentioned. She is a willing partner with civil authorities wherever she is able to fulfil her mission untrammelled, in the light of Gospel values.

Finally, Your Excellency, I wish you every success in your mission as Ambassador of the Republic of Ghana to the Holy See and I assure you of the willing cooperation of the departments of the Roman Curia. May Almighty God bestow upon the people of Ghana abundant and lasting blessings of harmony, prosperity and peace!