



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr NARCISO NTUGU ABESO OYANA
NEW AMBASSADOR OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 9 June 2011

Mr Ambassador,

I am grateful to receive from you, Your Excellency, the Letters that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Equatorial Guinea to the Holy See, while at the same time I express to you my most cordial welcome at this solemn ceremony.

I thank you for the kind greeting you have conveyed to me from the President of the Republic. As I reciprocate with pleasure this act of respect, I implore the Almighty to ensure that the diplomatic mission which you, Your Excellency, are beginning today, will further strengthen the healthy independence and mutual respect that has developed between the Church and the State in your beloved Nation. The Holy See maintains close relations with your Nation and follows it with caring attention; a meaningful sign of this is the recent appointment of the new Bishop of Ebebiyin.

Mr Ambassador, your courteous words — which make me feel even closer to your country — clearly show the affection which your citizens cultivate for the Successor of Peter. They are filled with a deep and faithful devotion, fruit of the energy and care with which the seeds of the Gospel were sown in your noble land, taking root and producing a splendid harvest, both spiritual and material.

In the perfecting of society and in the deployment of new structures which can give it a more flexible fabric, the sons and daughters of Equatorial Guinea will not lack the encouraging presence of the Church which instils the light of faith in Christ, shows human beings their authentic vocation and helps them work so they do not lack all that dignifies and ennobles them. This nourishes the well-founded hope that your citizens, strengthened by this same faith, will not falter in their

resolution to take an active and sensible part in building a serene and harmonious coexistence.

In this atmosphere, human beings will be able to fulfil themselves in conformity with their great dignity and their fundamental rights and will proliferate essential values such as the preservation of life, health care, the development of education and solidarity, as well as safeguarding the environment and the fair distribution of riches. All this is an indispensable condition for reviving true social progress that will reach everyone, especially the poorest and neediest. It is also a condition to which everyone can make their own adequate, free and responsible contribution.

In this regard I have no doubt that the authorities of your beloved country, whom you represent, Your Excellency, will be able to channel and interpret the genuine aspirations of your fellow citizens which mirror their historical, moral and cultural patrimony. With her constant and disinterested hard work, the Church has played an extremely important role in its successive consolidation in people's consciences.

In this regard one cannot fail to note with deep pleasure the efforts made to recover and rebuild many places of worship and the projects embarked on to improve the living conditions of the citizens, especially those who have great difficulty in living a dignified life. I therefore encourage everyone to continue on this path with enthusiasm, compensating for the existing social, economic and cultural shortcomings. For its part, the Christian community will persist in the context of its mission with a fresh and generous commitment, making available to the people its long and fruitful experience in the promotion of marriage and family, of health care, of the formation of the new generations and of the exercise of charity and beneficence. It could not be otherwise, since the Church is well aware that everything which favours concord and brotherhood — the eradication of poverty, the increase of justice and dialogue, as well as the reinforcement of mutual understanding — unfolds bright horizons for the future and ennoble the human being who, it should never be forgotten, is in the image of God.

Mr Ambassador, as I ask the Almighty that the lofty mission entrusted to you be one of success. I assure you that the Roman Curia and its various offices will always be ready to help you in carrying out this mission. Upon you, Your Excellency, upon your relatives and upon your collaborators, as well as upon every inhabitant of Equatorial Guinea, I fervently invoke bountiful blessings from Heaven.