



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de BURKINA FASO,
Excmo. Sr. Don Serge Théophile BALIMA*20 de diciembre de 1991*

Mr. Ambassador,

I am glad to welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Burkina Faso.

I am touched by the words you have addressed to me and I thank you in particular for having passed on the courteous message of His Excellency, President Blaise Compaoré. In return, please convey my deferential greetings to him, and tell him I have a vivid memory of the balm hospitality offered to me during my pastoral visit last year and of his friendly welcome at the Presidential Palace in Ouagadougou.

Your presence here as Ambassador is proof of the respect and openness of your nation to affairs of a religious and spiritual nature. I have no doubt that your mission, officially inaugurated today, will help to seal the bonds between us.

Mr Ambassador, you wished to refer to the active presence of the Holy See in international life with a view to promoting increasingly peaceful and just relations between human beings, in a persevering fight against poverty and the threats to human dignity. I am pleased to observe, through your declarations, that these initiatives to encourage the progress of fraternity and peace have been received favourably in your country through the commitment of your fellow-citizens.

You also referred to brotherly coexistence in Burkina Faso among members of the different religious creeds, which is a tradition of your public life. Thanking our Lord for this understanding, I hope that the faith of one and all may stimulate them to a general service of the common good, in sincere openness to the universal solidarity that must awaken in everyone's heart belief in a God who loves all people and shows them all his mercy.

Mr Ambassador, may I ask you to convey my affectionate greetings to the Catholic community of

Burkina Faso whose dynamism I was able to appreciate in person during my visits to Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso. Led by their Bishops, the faithful of Burkina Faso are keen to devote themselves to the development of the nation and are anxious to contribute their constructive cooperation to social progress, aware that it is worthy of a person and a Christian to be primary shapers in the building of his or her own country. Collaborating with their Protestant compatriots, with those who practise the traditional religions and with Muslims, they wish to exercise their skills to help the nation experience more widespread well-being and prosperity, in unity and dignity. In the footsteps of their ancestors, through the work of education and professional training, through health care and social organizations, may they take particular care to form the young generations in the great values of justice, love and peace, whose source is the Gospel!

Before concluding, I cannot refrain from renewing my fervent wish that the people of your country, as well as those of the countries of the Sahel and other afflicted African territories, may have enough to eat, may enjoy good health, may come to grips with their environment, may live from their labour, that they may receive an illuminating education and may enjoy the wealth of their ancestral heritage while benefiting from the positive contributions of science and technology. This is the wish I expressed in Ouagadougou on 29 January 1989 before a gathering of dignitaries in the Palace of the Economic Council of West Africa and which, in my pastoral solicitude, I present to God.

At this time, as you begin your mission, I offer you my best wishes and assure you that you will always find here an attentive welcome and cordial understanding from my collaborators, especially those whose task it is to ensure the Holy See's presence in the International community.

I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine blessings on Your Excellency, on the people of Burkina Faso and on their
leaders.

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