



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr CARLOS DOS SANTOS
AMBASSADOR OF MOZAMBIQUE TO THE HOLY SEE****

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 14 December 2006*

Your Excellency,

It is with particular pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican as the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Mozambique to the Holy See. On this auspicious occasion I would ask you kindly to convey my cordial greetings to His Excellency President Armando Guebuza, and to the Government and People of your Country. Assure them of my gratitude for their good wishes and of my prayers for the Nation's peace and well-being.

The Church's diplomatic activity forms part of her mission of service to the international community. It is specifically intended to promote the dignity of the human person and to encourage peace and harmony within nations and among the world's peoples.

These essential conditions for progress in attaining the authentic development of countries find their deepest meaning in the moral order established by God the Creator, who seeks to draw all men and women into the fullness of his life.

For this reason the Holy See speaks so insistently and fervently about respect for individuals, the vital importance of the family as the primary vital cell of society and the need for good governance to ensure the promotion of fundamental human rights and legitimate aspirations.

The People of Mozambique know well that "peace is an irrepressible yearning present in the heart of each person" (*Message for the 2006 World Day of Peace*, n. 6). During the years of civil war

which ravaged your Nation the wounds - both physical and psychological - of countless innocent men, women and children became a haunting reminder of conflict and aggression.

In more recent years the devastation of war has, thank God, given way to the commitment to peace. Building on the lasting reconciliation that comes from forgiveness and the readiness to look ahead, Mozambicans are today confident of a future of greater serenity.

Indeed, your Nation is already enjoying political stability, impressive economic growth and the beginnings of a reduction in poverty.

Peace is more than simply the absence of war. Peace has an intrinsic and invincible truth which stems from an order planned and willed by God (cf. *ibid.*, n. 3). Thus, in order to attain it the exercise of the highest responsibility is demanded at every level.

It is incumbent upon all citizens - especially civic, political and religious leaders - to contribute in every way possible to the respect of the human person and the promotion of justice and equality in order that individuals and communities may grow, free of the menace of oppression and corruption, and the indignity of poverty, debt or discrimination.

Mr Ambassador, your Government has introduced various initiatives with the intention of improving the standard of living of the Nation's citizens.

The priority given to promoting social and commercial projects capable of creating a more equitable society and offering sorely needed employment constitutes a stimulating though difficult challenge for all who regulate and work in the business sector. Authentic development requires a coordinated plan of national progress which honours the reasonable expectations of all segments of society.

In fact, human history teaches us repeatedly that if such programmes are to effect lasting change for the better, they must be grounded in the practice of accountable and transparent governance, and accompanied by an impartial judiciary system, political freedom and a robust independent press. Without these foundations common to all civilized societies, the hope for progress, to which every human being rightly aspires, remains elusive.

For generations African cultures have celebrated with great joy the place of marriage and the family at the heart of society. Through the introduction of family laws your Government has sought to protect this fundamental truth and value, which stands at the base of all civilizations.

Yet, even on the African Continent moves to empty marriage of its proper meaning are afoot. The institution of marriage established by the Creator with its own nature and purpose, and preserved in natural moral law, is not something that can be modified to meet the demands of particular

interest groups.

Marriage necessarily entails the complementarity of husbands and wives who participate in God's creative activity through the raising of children. Spouses thereby ensure the survival of society and culture and, as Mozambique has recognized, rightly deserve specific legal recognition by the State.

As Your Excellency has kindly observed, the Church in Mozambique serves the Nation through her extensive educational and social apostolate. Faithful to her spiritual and humanitarian mission, she actively seeks to contribute to the advancement of the people.

Among the many charitable services in which she is engaged are the care of orphans, whose number is growing owing to the tragedy of AIDS, health clinics, integral development projects, schools and a university.

I am confident that the Catholic community will continue to respond generously to the social and spiritual needs of Mozambicans as they arise.

Mr Ambassador, the mission which you begin today will do much to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation between us, and I am confident that the Agreement between the Holy See and Mozambique, under negotiation now for some years, will soon be brought to completion.

As you take up your new responsibilities I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties.

Upon you, your family and your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant Blessings of Almighty God.

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