



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. DOMINGOS DIAS PEREIRA MASCARENHAS
AMBASSADOR OF CAPE VERDE TO THE HOLY SEE****

*Clementine Hall
Thursday 18 May 2006*

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you, Your Excellency, on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Cape Verde to the Holy See. I thank you for the respectful words you have just addressed to me and for the greetings you bring me from H.E. Mr Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, President of the Republic. I would be grateful if you would kindly reciprocate by expressing to him my cordial good wishes for happiness and prosperity for him and the entire People of Cape Verde.

As you emphasized in your address, the Church's presence in the Cape Verde Islands dates back several centuries, making the Christian faith an essential component of the people's culture and spiritual heritage. It is also important that relations between Church and State develop harmoniously with respect for the autonomy of both parties, for in the search for the common good, they are both, if on a different scale, at the service of the personal and social vocation of the same people.

As you know, Mr Ambassador, the Catholic Church is eager to contribute to the integral development of peoples. In fact, the poverty in which so many men and women live cannot but call into question the human conscience. It poses for everyone the dramatic question of justice.

Underdevelopment is not inevitable. It must be faced with determination and perseverance for, as the Magisterium of the Church has frequently recalled, development is not only an aspiration but also a right: "Collaboration in the development of the whole person and of every human being is in

fact a duty of all towards all..." (Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 32).

It is therefore necessary that authentic solidarity encourage fairer international relations as well as the nations' own human and spiritual development. Indeed, solidarity must not only be practised within each society but also between peoples, for confident and courageous cooperation is indispensable to create a space of peace and stability that makes economic growth and political balance possible.

I eagerly hope, therefore, that international solidarity will have a new impetus, especially in favour of Africa, in order to enable this so-sorely tried Continent to set out with determination on the path of its integral development, reconciliation and peace.

Moreover, the many difficulties that the African Continent is experiencing contribute to accentuating the expansion of the migration phenomenon and the serious issues that stem from it. As you have emphasized, Mr Ambassador, the search for a better standard of living has impelled a large number of Cape Verdeans to emigrate.

It is of course the task of host countries to give immigrants a fraternal welcome and to draft legislation that paves the way to their dignified integration in society, while respecting their legitimate identity.

However, it is also necessary to be aware of social and economic imbalances, of the risk of uncontrolled globalization, or again, of situations of violence and the violation of personal rights, all of which are important factors in migration. International solidarity must enable each person, in his own country, to live in dignity and bring to fruition the gifts he has received from the Creator.

Through you, Mr Ambassador, I would also like to address my cordial greeting to your Country's Bishops as well as to the whole Catholic Community. The recent creation of the Diocese of Mindelo is a sign of its vitality.

I therefore hope that Catholics will courageously persevere in their commitment, beside all their fellow citizens, to build an increasingly just and brotherly society.

Your Excellency, at the time when you are beginning your mission at the Holy See I offer you my very best wishes for the noble task that awaits you. You will always meet with an attentive welcome from my collaborators and the cordial understanding that you may need.

I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of Blessings from the Most High upon you, Your Excellency, and upon your family, your collaborators, the Cape Verdean People and their Leaders.

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