



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. SUHAIL KHALIL SHUHAIBER
NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT TO THE HOLY SEE*

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 13 December 2007*

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters by which you are accredited Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Holy See. I thank you most heartily for the greetings which you have brought me from His Highness the Amir Shaikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and I ask you kindly to convey to him my warm personal greetings, together with the assurance of my prayers for the continued prosperity of the nation and its citizens.

The coming year marks the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and the Holy See. I willingly take this occasion to express my hope that these good relations will be further consolidated. Your country, which has overcome the devastating effects of violence and war, continues to play an important role in the delicate process of reconciliation which offers the only sure hope for a resolution of the many complex problems affecting the Middle East. Kuwait's democratic Constitution, which reflects the nation's heritage of cultural and religious values, is guided by the principles of justice, respect for the rule of law, and the protection of fundamental human rights. These principles, which are ultimately grounded in the inviolable dignity of the human person, must everywhere find juridical recognition and concrete application if genuine freedom, integral development and peace are to reign among the nations and peoples of the world.

In this regard, I greatly appreciate Your Excellency's reference to your country's acknowledgement

of the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue for the promotion of peace. Such dialogue – and I think here with satisfaction of the increasing contacts between Muslims and Christians – is essential for overcoming misunderstandings and forging solid relations marked by mutual respect and cooperation in the pursuit of the common good of the whole human family. Children, in particular, need to be educated in the authentic values underlying their own culture and in a spirit of openness to other cultures, respect for others and commitment to peace. In a world where intolerance, violence and oppression are all too often proposed as the solution to disagreements and conflict, there is urgent need of a “human ecology” (cf. *Message for the 2007 World Day of Peace*, 10) capable of extirpating these evils and sowing those virtues which will foster the growth of a truly humane culture of honesty, solidarity and concord.

Kuwait’s national life is characterized by the presence of significant minorities, including a high number of resident foreign workers. Their presence in your country is itself a source of enrichment and a constant incentive to establish the conditions necessary for peaceful coexistence and social progress. I cannot fail to mention in this regard the many Catholics living and working in Kuwait, who can freely worship in their own churches. Your nation’s Constitution rightly upholds their religious freedom. This fundamental right, grounded in the inviolable dignity of the person, is fittingly considered the cornerstone of the whole edifice of human rights. I express my appreciation of the cordial relations which the Church enjoys with the civil authorities, and my confidence that, as the Catholic community in Kuwait continues to grow, those authorities will readily assist them in meeting the urgent need for new and more adequate structures for worship and assembly.

Kuwait’s Catholics have sought to contribute to the development of the larger society, not least through their educational institutions. These, though few in number, are fully committed to forming the minds and hearts of their students in an environment emphasizing sound spiritual values and inculcating respect for the dignity and beliefs of others. It is my hope that, in freely carrying out their proper mission, including the formation of young Christian students in their faith, these schools will help to strengthen the fabric of society by preparing their students to cooperate in building a future of solidarity and hope for coming generations.

Your Excellency, as you now undertake the mission of representing the State of Kuwait to the Holy See, please accept my personal good wishes for the success of your important work. Be assured that you may always count on the offices of the Holy See to assist and support you in the fulfilment of your high responsibilities. Upon you and your family, and upon all the beloved people of Kuwait, I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of the Almighty.

**Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI*, vol. III, 2 2007 p.840-842.

© Copyright 2007 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana