



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr MUKHTAR B. TILEUBERDI
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN
TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 17 December 2009*

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Holy See. On this occasion I would ask you to convey my greetings to His Excellency President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who recently visited me here in the Vatican, and my good wishes to all the people of the Republic. Kindly assure the President of my prayers for his well-being and that of all the nation's citizens, and convey to him my gratitude for the good wishes which you have just expressed on his behalf.

As you will recall, my venerable predecessor, the late [Pope John Paul II](#), [visited Kazakhstan in September 2001](#). He gave witness, amid worldwide uncertainty and sadness at the time, that the Church, in fidelity to Christ's teachings, supports peace and understanding among peoples and strives to promote authentic human progress.

The Holy See encourages nations to respect the human person in his or her totality, acknowledging the spiritual as well as the material needs of all. Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life (cf. [Caritas in Veritate](#), 25). Thus, the Church works as leaven within every society to highlight the dignity of man, to give him the strength necessary to generate a clearer vision of himself and to muster new energy in the service of authentic human development.

Mr Ambassador, although the Christians of Kazakhstan are a small percentage of the total population, they can trace their roots there back through the centuries. They therefore represent an important part of the rich diversity of religions and traditions of which your nation is comprised. The circumstance of these various groups living side by side in your country, together with your being a geographical link between Europe and Asia and between countries with large Christian and Muslim populations respectively, provides a precious opportunity to promote exchange and fraternity. Cooperation for development also offers a wonderful opportunity for a meeting between cultures and peoples (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 59). For this encounter genuinely to occur, there needs to be a continuing commitment on the part of States to respect basic human rights, not the least of which is freedom of religion. Religions have much to offer to development, especially when God's place is recognized in the public realm, specifically with regard to its cultural, social, economic, and particularly its political dimensions (cf. *ibid.*, 56).

For its part, the Holy See, along with the Catholic community in Kazakhstan, supports those initiatives which foster peace and authentic friendship between peoples, founded on a mutual recognition of legitimate differences but above all on a commitment to the common good. The Agreement signed between the Holy See and Kazakhstan in 1998, the first of its kind in your region, is an accord based on mutual trust and respect. The juridical guarantee of rights and responsibilities in the Agreement provides a means for increased cooperation and goodwill. I can assure you that the Catholic community in your country wishes to contribute to the strengthening of good relations and mutual understanding between the Christian and Islamic worlds, to the benefit of all. May this cooperation and goodwill be abundantly blessed day by day!

Your Excellency, as Kazakhstan assumes the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on 1 January 2010, I am pleased to offer you my good wishes for your country's period in office. The international community recently recalled the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this light, your nation's chairmanship of the OSCE represents an eloquent testimony of how far the world has developed and matured. The celebration of this anniversary also provides impetus for the strengthening of those democratic gains with a view to the stable future of the region and indeed the whole world. The Holy See is committed to consolidating the political freedoms won twenty years ago in Europe, whose external expression can only flourish when the divine gift of inner freedom is respected and fostered.

Mr Ambassador, in offering you my best wishes for the success of your mission, I assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. It is the Church's desire to develop and deepen the harmonious relations that exist between the Holy See and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Upon Your Excellency, your family and all the people of the Republic, I cordially invoke abundant divine blessings.

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