



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS AT THE PRESENTATION
OF THE LETTERS ACCREDITING THEM TO THE HOLY SEE***

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 17 December 2009

Your Excellencies,

I am pleased to receive you this morning in the Apostolic Palace. You have come to present to me the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries: Denmark, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Finland and Latvia. Welcome, and please express my cordial good wishes to your Heads of State, thanking them for the courteous words you have had the kindness to convey to me on their behalf. I express my respectful good wishes for their lofty mission at the service of their countries. I would also like, through you, to greet the civil and religious Authorities of your nations, as well as all your compatriots. Please assure them of my prayers. My thoughts also turn quite naturally to the Catholic communities present in your countries. You know that they desire to join in fraternally building their nation, to which they contribute to the best of their ability.

In my most recent Encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, I recalled the necessary re-establishment of a proper relationship between the human being and Creation in which he lives and works. Creation is the precious gift which God, in his goodness, has made to human beings. They are its stewards and must therefore accept all the consequences of this responsibility. Men and women cannot decline or shirk it by off-loading it on to the generations to come. It is increasingly obvious that this responsibility for the environment cannot take priority over the urgent need to put an end to the scandals of poverty and hunger. On the contrary, it is no longer possible to separate the two realities because the continuous degradation of the environment is a direct threat to life and to the human being's development; and it even risks directly threatening peace between people and peoples.

As much on the individual as on the political level, it is henceforth necessary to make more decisive engagements with regard to Creation and which are more broadly shared. In this regard I warmly encourage the political authorities of your respective countries and the nations overall not only to reinforce their action for the protection of the environment but also since the problem cannot be faced solely at the specific level of each country to be a source of inspiration and encouragement in order to achieve restrictive international Agreements that are beneficial and fair to all.

The challenges that humanity faces today certainly call for a mobilization of human intelligence and creativity, an intensification of research applied with a view to a more efficient and healthier use of the energy and resources available. These efforts must seek to change or transform the current development model of our societies. The Church proposes that this profound modification which is yet to be discovered and lived, be oriented by the notion of the integral development of the human person. In fact, the good of the person is not to be found in the never-ending unbridled consumerism and accumulation of goods a consumerism and accumulation that are reserved to a small number and proposed as models to the masses. Concerning this it is not only the duty of the various religions to emphasize and defend the primacy of the human being and of the human spirit but also of the State. The State is duty-bound to do so mainly through an ambitious policy that provides for all citizens equal access to spiritual goods. In fact, these spiritual goods enhance the riches of the social bond and encourage the human being to pursue his spiritual quest.

Last Spring, during [my Apostolic Visit](#) to the different countries of the Middle East, I suggested on various occasions that religion in general be considered as a "new starting point" for peace. It is true that throughout history religions have often caused conflict. But it is also true that religions which lived according to their profound essence were and are an effective factor for reconciliation and peace. At this historical time religions too, through open and sincere dialogue, must seek the way to purification so as to correspond ever better to their own true vocation.

Our humanity desires peace, and, if possible, universal peace. It is necessary to strive for it without utopias and without manipulation. We all know that in order to establish peace political and economic, cultural and spiritual conditions are required. The peaceful coexistence of the different religious traditions in each nation is sometimes difficult. Rather than a political problem, this coexistence is also a problem that arises within these traditions themselves. Every believer is called to question God about his will for every human situation.

In recognizing God as the one Creator of the human being of every human being, regardless of his or her religious denomination, social condition or political opinion each person will respect the other in his oneness and in his difference. Before God there is no category or hierarchy of the human person, inferior or superior, dominating or protected. For him there is only the human being whom he created through love and whom he wants to see living in his family and in society, in brotherly harmony. The discovery of God's wise plan for the human being leads to recognition of

his love. For the believer or person of good will, the resolution of human conflicts, such as the delicate coexistence of the different religions can be transformed into human coexistence in an order full of goodness and wisdom whose origins and dynamism are in God. This coexistence with respect for the nature of things and their inherent wisdom that comes from God the *tranquillitas ordinis* is called peace. Interreligious dialogue makes its own specific contribution to this slow genesis that resists immediate human, political or economic interests. It is sometimes difficult for the political and economic world to give the human being priority; to consider and to admit the importance and need of the religious factor and to guarantee religion its true nature and place in the public dimension is an even more sensitive task. Peace, so longed for, will only be born from the joint action of the individual, who discovers his true nature in God, and of the leaders of civil and religious societies who with respect for the dignity and faith of each one will be able to recognize and give to religion its noble and authentic role of fulfilling and perfecting the human person. Here it is a matter of a global recomposition, both temporal and spiritual, that will permit a new start on the path towards the peace that God wishes to be universal.

Mr Ambassadors, your mission to the Holy See has just begun. You will find with my collaborators the support you need for its successful accomplishment. Once again, I extend to you my most cordial good wishes for the successful outcome of your most sensitive office. May the Almighty sustain and accompany you, your loved ones, your collaborators and all your compatriots! May God shower an abundance of his Blessings upon you.

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