



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO HIS EXCELLENCY Mr DANZANNOROV BOLDBAATAR
NEW AMBASSADOR OF MONGOLIA TO THE HOLY SEE****

Friday, 29 May 2009

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to extend a cordial welcome to you as you present the Credential Letters appointing you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Holy See. Grateful for the warm greeting which you have conveyed to me on behalf of your President, Mr. Nambaryn Enkhbayar, I reciprocate with my own best wishes for his health and well-being. I assure him and all the citizens of Mongolia of my prayers as they continue to promote peace and social harmony at home and abroad.

I am grateful, Mr. Ambassador, that the cooperative spirit which has marked the diplomatic ties between Mongolia and the Holy See has yielded much fruit. An explicit and mutual recognition of the benefits to be gained through diplomatic relations paved the way for the establishment of the Apostolic Prefecture of Ulaanbaatar, thus making it possible to coordinate more effectively the pastoral care of Catholics in Mongolia and to give a new impetus to their charitable activities for the good of all your fellow citizens. A particular sign of this fruitful collaboration was the dedication of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in July of 2002, which took place on the auspicious occasion of the 10th Anniversary of diplomatic ties between Mongolia and the Holy See. I wish to voice personally my deep gratitude for all that your Government and the local civil authorities did to make this historic event possible. Not only did it help to build a sense of unity between the Catholic faithful in your land and their fellow believers throughout the world, it also bore clear witness to Mongolia's long-standing respect for religious freedom. This fundamental human right, enshrined in Mongolia's Constitution and upheld by its citizens as conducive to the full development of the human person, allows them to search for the truth, engage in dialogue and fulfil their duty to worship God immune from any undue coercion.

The opportunity for adherents of different religions to speak and listen to one another has a vital role in strengthening the human family. You have referred to the bold initiative of Chinggis Khan in the 13th century to invite Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Daoists to live together on the steppes of Mongolia: a gesture that continues to find expression in the openness of the Mongolian people, who treasure the religious customs passed down from generation to generation, and who show a profound respect for traditions other than their own. This religious earnestness was especially evident as Mongolia emerged from years of oppression under a totalitarian regime. In this time of greater peace and stability, I heartily encourage forums that facilitate the amicable exchange of ideas about religion and how it contributes to the good of civil society. Peoples who practise religious tolerance have an obligation to share the wisdom of this tenet with the entire human family, so that all men and women might perceive the beauty of tranquil co-existence and have the courage to build a society that respects human dignity and acts upon the divine injunction to love one's neighbour (cf. *Mk 12:32*).

Your Excellency, this spirit of fraternal cooperation will serve Mongolia well as she strives to achieve goals for development in the years ahead. As you have noted, foremost among these is the reduction of poverty and unemployment. These objectives are placed within the framework of the overall economic growth and equitable distribution of goods your country wishes to sustain in the long-term future. The values of fairness and trust in the marketplace upheld by the Mongolian people provide a sure foundation to meet these goals. Criteria for designing programmes to this end must reflect social as well as commutative justice (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 303); they must take into account the objective value of work rendered, the dignity of the subjects who perform it, the varying needs of citizens, and the merit that justly corresponds to the quality of work done (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 35).

Mongolia is a country which acknowledges that human well-being cannot be measured solely in terms of wealth. Educational achievement – of which literary and artistic accomplishments are reliable indicators – is also an essential feature of a flourishing society. I am appreciative that your country has singled out the need to expand educational opportunities for the betterment of all its people. Systems of instruction must not, of course, neglect the technological formation that enables students to acquire and maintain gainful employment in this age of rapid globalization and technological progress. At the same time, an integral education attends to man as a whole rather than simply his ability to produce. In particular, the young deserve a comprehensive intellectual and spiritual formation that opens their eyes to the dignity of every human person and inspires them to hone the virtues necessary to place themselves at the service of all mankind. I therefore encourage the initiatives undertaken by your Government to increase access to education and to buttress it with a clear view of what is genuinely good for human beings.

For its part, the Catholic community, though still small in Mongolia, is eager to offer its assistance in fostering interreligious dialogue, promoting development, expanding educational opportunities, and furthering the noble goals that strengthen the solidarity of the human family and turn its gaze

to the action of the divine in the world. While recognizing the due autonomy of the political community, the Catholic Church is compelled to cooperate with civil society in ways suitable to the circumstances of the time and place in which the two find themselves living together.

I therefore thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for the kind assurance of Mongolia's desire to build upon the accomplishments that have sprung from the diplomatic relations forged between your nation and the Holy See. As you begin your mission, I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties, and I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon you, the members of your family and all the citizens of Mongolia.

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