



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr *JEAN-PIERRE HAMULI MUPENDA*,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 29 April 2010

Mr Ambassador,

It is a pleasure to receive you on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Holy See. I thank you for your kind words conveying to me the respectful tribute of the President of the Republic, H.E. Mr Joseph Kabila Kabange, and of the Congolese people. I had the pleasure of meeting your President in June 2008. I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to him my best wishes for himself and for the accomplishment of his task at the service of the nation. May God guide him in his effort to achieve peace, the guarantee of dignified life and integral development. I also cordially greet the various Authorities and all the inhabitants of your country.

Your presence, Mr Ambassador, at the head of your Embassy, after long years of vacancy, shows the desire of your Head of State and of the Government to strengthen relations with the Holy See and I thank them for it. I likewise point out that this decision has been made in the year of the 50th anniversary of your country's Independence. May this Jubilee enable the nation to make a new start.

In these same years your country has gone through some particularly difficult and tragic moments. A large section of it has been the victims of blind and merciless violence, that has sown ruin and death and crushed these people under its brutal and onerous yoke. I am thinking in particular of the women, young people and children, whose dignity has been outrageously trampled upon by the violation of their rights. I would like to express my concern to them and assure them of my prayers. Many of the members and structures of the Catholic Church herself have been injured

and she wishes to foster inner healing and brotherhood. The Bishops' Conference spoke at length on this subject in its Message last June. Thus it would now be right to use all political and human means to put an end to the suffering. It would likewise be right to make amends and to do them justice, accepting the invitation of the words "justice and peace" in the national coat of arms. The commitment made in Goma in 2008 and in particular the application of the *Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region* are of course necessary but it is even more urgent to work out the preliminary conditions for their implementation. It can only be implemented little by little by repairing the social fabric so seriously damaged by promoting the first natural society, which is the family, and by consolidating interpersonal relations between the Congolese that are based on an integral education, a source of peace and justice. The Catholic Church, Mr Ambassador, wishes to continue to make her contribution to this noble task through the complex of structures she has available, thanks to her tradition of providing spiritual, educational, and health care.

I ask the public Authorities to leave no stone unturned to put an end to the situation of war which, alas, still exists in some of the country's provinces, and to devote themselves to the human and social rebuilding of the nation with respect for the fundamental human rights. Peace is not only the absence of fighting, it is also a gift and an obligatory task for both the citizens and the State. The Church is convinced that she can only fulfil herself in "respect for the 'grammar' written on human hearts by the divine Creator", in other words in a human response in harmony with the divine plan. This "'grammar', that is to say, the body of rules for individual action and the reciprocal relations of persons in accordance with justice and solidarity, is inscribed on, human consciences, in which the wise plan of God is reflected" (cf. *Message for the World Day of Peace, 2007*; ORE 20 December 2006, p. 6). I appeal to the international community, involved in various degrees in the successive conflicts that your nation has known, to mobilize itself in order to contribute effectively to restoring peace and legality to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

After so many years of suffering, Your Excellency, your country needs to set out with determination on the path to national reconciliation. Your Bishops have declared this anniversary year for the nation a year of grace, renewal and joy, a year of reconciliation in order to build a Congo that is solidary, prosperous and united. One of the best ways for succeeding in this is to promote education for the young generations. The spirit of reconciliation and peace, born in the family, is strengthened and extended at school and at university. The Congolese desire a good education for their children but the direct responsibility of paying the fees is heavy and even onerous for many of them. I am sure that a just solution can be found. By helping parents financially and by assuring the regular payment of teachers, the State will make a beneficial investment to all. It is essential that children and young people be educated with patience and tenacity, especially those deprived of instruction and trained to kill. It is not only appropriate to inculcate in them a knowledge that will help them in their future adult and professional life. They must also be given a solid moral and spiritual foundation that will help them reject the temptation to be violent and resentful and to choose what is just and true. Through these educational

structures and in accordance with her possibilities, the Church can help and complete those of the State.

The important natural resources with which God has endowed your land and which have unfortunately become the source of covetousness and disproportionate profit for many, both within your country and outside it by means of an equitable sharing of profits can certainly help the population emerge from poverty and provide for its food and health-care security. Congolese families and the education of youth will be the first to benefit. This duty of justice promoted by the State will consolidate reconciliation and national peace and will enable the population to experience a serene life, an essential foundation of prosperity.

Through you, I also wish to address warm good wishes to the members of the Catholic community in your country, particularly the Bishops, asking them to be generous witnesses of God's love and to contribute to the edification of a united and brotherly nation where each one feels fully loved and respected.

At the time when your mission is beginning, Mr Ambassador, I offer you my best wishes for the noble task that awaits you, and I assure you that you will always find an attentive welcome and cordial understanding in my collaborators.

I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, Your Excellency, upon your family, upon all the Congolese people and upon its Leaders.

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