



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR FRANCISCO SALAZAR ALVARADO
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR
TO THE HOLY SEE****

Monday, 29 August 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to receive from your hands the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Ecuador to the Holy See. While I sincerely thank you for the kind words you have deigned to address to me, I offer you my most cordial welcome at this solemn ceremony which marks the beginning of the mission entrusted to you by your Government, and which you formerly exercised with significant success from 1984 to 1988.

I particularly appreciate the trust placed in you by H.E. Mr Alfredo Palacio González, President of the Republic. I kindly ask you to convey to him my best wishes for peace, well-being and prosperity for the integral development of this beloved Nation.

In receiving you, I cannot omit to recall the pleasant visit I paid to your Country in 1978, when I was Archbishop of Munich and Freising, as Extraordinary Envoy to preside at the Third National Marian Congress in Guayaquil. On that occasion, I was also able to visit the Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions of Cuenca, Ambato and, briefly, Quito. It was a very positive experience; and it enabled me to value the wealth of faith and attachment to the Catholic Church that are characteristic of the Ecuadoran People, who received me as the Pope's representative with great demonstrations of fervour and respect.

Ecuador, like many other countries, is troubled by financial, social and political problems. The search for the means with which to solve them is an arduous task that always requires the good will and collaboration of all citizens of the different social classes, and especially of the leaders of

the various political and socio-economic institutions.

Moreover, this union of intentions and wishes is urgently needed. It will enable the continuous action of Government leaders in the face of the challenges presented by a globalized world, which must be confronted with authentic solidarity.

This virtue, as my Predecessor John Paul II of venerable memory used to say, must inspire the action of individuals, governments and international organizations and institutions, as well as that of all members of civil society. It must involve them in working for a just growth of peoples and nations, whose objective is the good of one and all (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 40).

In your address, Mr Ambassador, you referred to your Government's desire to fight corruption in all its forms, to reduce the inequality between those who possess everything and those who lack such basic goods as education, health care and housing. With these, you mentioned projects for continuing to build a better Nation.

Actually, transparency and honesty in a government foster an atmosphere of credibility and the citizens' confidence in their authorities. They are also the basis of an appropriate and equitable development.

I also know of the initiatives being taken, starting with the teaching of the Church's social doctrine, that call on the administrative bodies to put the principle of subsidiarity into practice as an effective means of dealing with so many concrete needs.

In these tasks, those in charge of the official institutions will find in the Church in Ecuador, poor in her resources yet strong in her firm convictions, a satisfactory collaborator in the quest for just solutions. They will recognize her endeavours to increase the citizens' awareness and responsibility and will foster the participation of all.

The effort to meet the needs of the most destitute must be considered a fundamental priority. Among those who suffer great hardship are the indigenous peoples, the majority of whom are immersed in poverty and marginalization.

Mr Ambassador, you know well that the Catholic Church offers her assiduous collaboration without reserve in the deplorable problem of emigration. The recognition and respect that the Government offers in this area deserves gratitude.

Moreover, the distance of emigrants from their Homeland, due to their legitimate desire to find better living conditions, brings with it a whole series of uncertainties, difficulties and suffering for families, especially when they leave behind children of a tender age.

For this reason, in addition to helping improve the financial situation of emigrants, it is necessary to preserve and increase the rich cultural and religious values that form part of the baggage they will one day bring.

Among these values, devotion to the Mother of God is very deeply rooted in the hearts of Ecuadoran faithful. Precisely as you recalled, the centenary of the "miracle" of the image of the *Dolorosa del Colegio* in Quito will be celebrated next year. Throughout the years, various figures from the worlds of politics, culture and art have publicly expressed their devotion to the Virgin under this title.

I would also like to mention here the love of your fellow citizens for Mariana de Jesús, the first Ecuadoran saint. A marble statue of her is soon to be set up in St Peter's Basilica, in a place that has already been chosen, as an expression of Ecuador's steadfast loyalty to this Apostolic See.

Mr Ambassador, at the end of this ceremony, I would like to offer you my very best wishes for the success of your mission. Please convey my greeting to the President of the Republic and the assurance of my prayers to the Ecuadoran People for their calm and peaceful progress.

I ask the Most High to assist you always in your mission which is beginning today, as I invoke an abundance of Blessings upon you, upon your distinguished family and collaborators, and upon the leaders and citizens of Ecuador.

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