



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr ANTONI MORELL MORA
AMBASSADOR OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF ANDORRA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 1 December 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador to the Holy See. Welcome! Your pleasant visit offers me the opportunity to send a cordial greeting to the entire Andorran People who have always been a living part of the universal Church and in communion with the Successor of Peter.

A glance at the beautiful valleys of your Country testifies that the Christian faith found a permanent and even visible dwelling place among those who live there. How can one forget that for hundreds of years the parishes were the very structure of your self-government? One might say that down through history the ecclesial life of the citizens of Andorra preserved their identity and independence, encouraging the harmonious development of the Principality, which resulted in its first Constitution in 1993.

The Church, therefore, has always walked beside the Andorran People. She has instilled in them the value of defending their own authentic traits so that they might enter peacefully into relations with the neighbouring peoples, faithful to their constitutional motto "*virtus unita, fortior*", in a spirit of freedom, equality and justice, defending human rights and the dignity of the person, as you have emphasized. The close bonds between the Church and the people are a cause of pride and forge the identity of all who live in the Principality of Andorra.

Andorra's rich Christian tradition integrates it into the group of peoples which have found in the Gospel many sources for their specific culture, legislation and human and moral achievements.

Andorra, therefore, cannot do without these roots that draw nourishment and moral and civil strength from the Good News. I fervently hope that the Christian heritage will continue to be a cause of inspiration to the entire Andorran community, for the promotion of a social order based on the values of justice, truth, freedom and love.

It is right that the Church and the State also find a common language in their reciprocal independence and sovereignty. Through cordial and sincere relations, this will encourage the spiritual and material well-being of the people to whom both have obligations, with respect for the separate reciprocal milieus in accordance with the method proper to each one.

For her part, since she has no privileges to defend or advantages to seek, the Church wishes to work ceaselessly for the common good of the entire human family, seeking by a structured dialogue with the civil Authorities to contribute to the progress of every people and of all humanity, in justice and in peace (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 445).

The ultimate purpose of agreements between Church and State, stipulated in full freedom by the contracting parties, is to encourage a harmonious commitment to serving the common good, with no other intention than to benefit all the citizens.

Universal by nature, the Church is situated above particular or regional interests in order to address every people - small or great - so that the inviolable dignity of the person, every person, may be recognized. In her dialogue with the civil Authorities, the Church "wants simply to promote a human State. A State which recognizes the defence of the fundamental rights of the human person, especially of the weakest" (*Evangelium Vitae*, n. 101).

A democracy without values, in fact, turns into a tyranny of relativism with the loss of its own identity, and in the long run can degenerate into open or insidious totalitarianism, as history has frequently shown.

In this context, how can we forget that the Andorran People, faithful to their own human and spiritual traditions, highly esteem the value of the family and marriage, as the Creator willed, and the defence of life from its conception until its natural end? I express the hope that Andorra will continue to preserve this important legacy, the guarantee of authentic progress.

Mr Ambassador, your presence brings even closer to my heart a people for whom I raise my fervent and grateful prayers to the Lord. In offering you my most cordial good wishes for the lofty mission entrusted to you by your Country, I should like to assure you of the full and loyal collaboration of those who assist the Pope in carrying out his Apostolic ministry. You will be able to find in them, Mr Ambassador, an effective partner in all that concerns bilateral affairs, and, more generally, constant collaboration for the furtherance of the common good in the International Community.

As I entrust the Government Leaders and your fellow citizens of Andorra to the protection of Our Lady of Meritxell, the heavenly Patroness of the Co-Principality, I pray that she may assist you, the civil Authorities and all who are at the service of the People of Andorra, ever close to the Pope's heart, and I impart my Blessing to them all.

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