



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR MADAN KUMAR BHATTARAI
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 1 December 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I extend a warm welcome to you as I accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Nepal to the Holy See. Most grateful for the greetings and good wishes which you bring from His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, I gladly reciprocate his kind sentiments, and I ask you to convey to him and to the Government and people of Nepal the expression of my esteem and the assurance of my prayers for the well-being and prosperity of your nation.

Your country and the Holy See enjoy bonds of friendship and cooperation which are made ever stronger by a shared commitment to working for peace and security among peoples at every level of society. This joint task involves all men and women of good will, and is intended to foster and promote international solidarity. In fact, without such there can be no true peace. Both the poor and the rich have a right to share in the material goods of the earth and to exercise their God-given capacity to work. My illustrious predecessor, Pope John Paul II, taught that we have a solemn duty to create a world that is more just and prosperous for all, stating in his Encyclical Centesimus Annus that "the advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity" (No. 28).

While this appeal for greater solidarity is made to the international community as a whole, it has particular relevance for the countries of Asia. As you are well aware, the nations of your continent will need to continue to work closely together if they are to resolve the difficulties brought about by conflict and poverty. Undeniably, your region is blessed with many men and women who have the human and intellectual skills necessary to meet the challenges of our time. Every attempt to mobilize such talent in a constructive way helps to foster the cooperation needed to support

countries in difficulty. I urge you, therefore, to continue to work with your neighbours to ensure that problems on the continent are effectively addressed. Further international cooperation in the analysis and evaluation of political and social options and the promotion of peace and reconciliation will enhance your region's influence in the eyes of the rest of the world. It will also lead to increased assistance to poorer nations and greater respect for their sovereignty.

I wish to express my concern over the violent acts which have taken a devastating toll on your country. I pray that all parties will end the bloodshed which continues to cause so much suffering for the nation and instead embrace the path of dialogue and negotiation. This alone can enable all the people of Nepal to enjoy justice, tranquility and harmony. Indeed, it is only through dialogue that we can overcome the forms of conflict and tension which impede our efforts to build a firm groundwork for peace and fraternity (cf. *Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 12 May 2005). The use of violence as a tool for political change must always be avoided, while the building of mutual understanding and the constructive exchange of ideas is at all times to be upheld. Opposing factions must let the blessing of forgiveness bring about the hope of future peace thereby taking away the pain and wiping away the tears of the past. By insisting on the greatness and dignity of the human person and by spreading a clearer sense of the oneness of the human family, we can together eradicate the causes of violence and injustice.

For her part, the Catholic Church also draws inspiration from the lofty principle of solidarity in her own commitment to serving the integral good of the human person. Although few in number, the Catholics of Nepal have focused attention on the need to support the poor in the fight against poverty. The Church's endeavours are not just an expression of her concern for the less-fortunate but illustrate her keen desire to work with government authorities for the spiritual and material well-being of every citizen.

The Church is actively involved in advancing human development in Nepal through her presence in schools, orphanages, clinics and hospitals. I am confident that ongoing support for the legal guarantee of religious freedom will enable Christians to continue to fulfil their mission to preach the Good News of salvation and to bear witness to it through practical deeds of love and compassion. The Catholic community remains committed to the principles of inter-religious dialogue and promises her continued cooperation with civil authorities in their attempts to promote this essential exchange of ideas.

Mr Ambassador, I am sure that your mission will further strengthen the bonds of understanding and friendship between us. You can be assured that the Holy See will continue to be a committed partner with Nepal as it seeks to promote its own development and to be a force for stability and peace in Asia and within the wider community of nations. Upon yourself and the beloved people of Nepal I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of peace and harmony.

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