



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr FRANCISCO A. SOLER,
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 1 December 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you at this ceremony for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of El Salvador to the Holy See. I am grateful for your kind words and for the cordial greeting of H.E. Mr Elías Antonio Saca, President of the Republic, which you have conveyed to me. Please express to him my best wishes for his peace and well-being, as well as my good wishes for the prosperity and development of your beloved Nation.

Your Excellency, you mentioned the Peace Agreements signed in 1992 after a long fratricidal conflict. You also pointed out that in recent years progress has been made in the process of establishing peace and democracy. It is a comfort to see your Government's efforts to build a more just society that protects its weakest and most impoverished classes.

In this regard, the Church in El Salvador is aware that building and improving their Homeland is every citizen's duty and she continues to collaborate so as to ensure that all can live in an atmosphere of hope and peace.

The Church, with her experience of humanity and with no desire to interfere in the politics of States, "is interested in one thing only - to carry on the work of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for he came into the world to bear witness to the truth, to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 3).

El Salvador has a strong religious character which reveals the faith of its people more than five

centuries after their evangelization. In this regard, the Catholic Church devotes all her efforts to encouraging the integral development of the human being and the protection of human dignity, contributing to the consolidation of values and a fundamental basis so that society can enjoy stability and harmony.

Likewise, she continues to cooperate in such important areas as teaching, assistance to the most deprived, health-care services, and the advancement of individuals as citizens and children of God.

The Pastors of El Salvador, therefore, never cease to offer their words that spring from a profound knowledge of human reality interpreted in the light of the Good News. Moreover, their religious mission does not exempt them from encouraging a national dialogue among those in charge of social life.

On the other hand, and as you highlighted, Your Excellency, this dialogue must help build a more human future with the cooperation of all without impoverishing society.

It is appropriate in this regard to recall that social improvements are not achieved merely by applying the necessary technical means, but also by promoting reforms with a human and moral basis and which have an ethical view of the person, the family and society.

The constant proposal of fundamental moral values such as honesty, rectitude and responsibility for the common good, solidarity, a spirit of sacrifice and the culture of work, can facilitate greater development of the members of the national community, for violence and personal and collective selfishness have never been sources of progress or well-being.

On these foundations and with the rich qualities that distinguish them, Salvadorans must play the lead role and be the principal architects of the Country's progress, encouraging political stability which paves the way to the participation of all in public life. Each one is therefore called to cooperate, in accordance with his particular qualities and possibilities, for the good of the Homeland.

In this respect, I am pleased to know of the firm determination of the Authorities to work for a social order that is increasingly fairer and participatory. I express the hope that this proposal will be implemented and that they will surmount the serious problems that mainly affect the weakest sectors of society.

On the other hand, the painful and widespread problem of poverty, which drives many Salvadorans to take the perilous path of emigration with all its consequences in the family and social contexts, has serious effects in the fields of education, health and housing and is a pressing challenge to government leaders and those in charge of public institutions to ensure that all have access to primary goods and the indispensable means that make their promotion and integral

development possible.

The Church, with her social doctrine, endeavours to encourage and foster appropriate initiatives geared to overcoming the situations of marginalization that affect so many needy brothers and sisters, seeking to eliminate the causes of poverty and thereby carrying out her mission, because concern for the social field is part of her evangelizing action (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 41).

Mr Ambassador, before concluding this meeting, I would like to express my very best wishes that your mission which begins today will be abundantly fruitful. Once again, I ask you to convey my sentiments and hopes to His Excellency, the President of the Republic, and to the other Authorities of your Country, as I invoke God's Blessing upon your distinguished family and your collaborators, and above all upon the beloved sons and daughters of El Salvador.

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