



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr EL HADJ ABOUBACAR DIONE,
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday, 16 June 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you, Your Excellency, on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Guinea to the Holy See.

I am touched by your courteous words remembering my venerable Predecessor, Pope John Paul II, and I thank you for the cordial good wishes that you have conveyed to me from H.E. General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic, as well as from the Government and the Guinean People. I reciprocate by asking you to kindly assure the President of my good wishes for happiness and prosperity, for himself and for all the People of Guinea.

Mr Ambassador, you have informed me of your Country's attachment to the ideals of peace and brotherhood, particularly among the peoples of your region, so sorely tried in recent years. Indeed, it is only by trusting in dialogue that it is possible to defuse tensions and conflicts, for the benefit and well-being of all.

In order to respond effectively to the people's aspirations for true peace, a gift that comes to us from God, it is also our duty to commit ourselves to building it on the firm foundations of truth, justice and solidarity.

Among the consequences of the violence your region is suffering, we are unfortunately also witnessing the development of the tragedy of displaced populations, which creates humanitarian emergencies. Your Country has generously responded to this distress, in particular by offering

hospitality to a large number of refugees, often at the price of great sacrifices. This is first and foremost a tragedy of men and women whose sufferings must be alleviated and to whom new hope must be given.

It is the causes of these tragedies, however, that must be uprooted, for they are seriously affecting the human dignity of beings whom God has created. I hope that the national Governments will not forget the refugees in several African countries who are impatiently waiting for the Government to pay attention to their plight, and for the international community to commit itself with firm determination to furthering peace and justice.

In each country, the establishment of peace begins with the quest for friendly relations and cooperation between the different ethnic, cultural and religious communities. Authentic faith cannot give rise to violence; on the contrary, it encourages peace and love.

Despite the difficulties, the Catholic Church is committed to pursuing her efforts to encourage understanding and respect among the believers of the different religious traditions.

I rejoice, therefore, to know that in Guinea, Christians and Muslims are working together for the common good of society. In developing relations of trust, with respect for the legitimate rights of each community, believers, in union with all people of good will, contribute to building a society that is free from every kind of moral and social degradation, so that each one can live in dignity and solidarity.

Through you, Mr Ambassador, I would like to greet with affection the Catholic faithful of Guinea and their Bishops. I warmly encourage them to advance generously on the paths of peace and brotherhood with all their compatriots. Strengthened by the help of God's Spirit, may they be signs of hope for their people and ardent witnesses of the Lord's love!

Your Excellency, at the time when you are beginning your mission to the Apostolic See, I offer you my best wishes for the noble task that awaits you. With my collaborators, you will always find the attentive welcome and cordial understanding you may need.

I wholeheartedly invoke upon you, Your Excellency, upon your collaborators, upon your family, upon the Guinean people and its leaders, an abundance of divine Blessings.

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