



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO H.E. MR FRANCIS ROONEY  
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Saturday, 12 November 2005*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Holy See. I am grateful for the message of greetings which you have brought from President Bush; I would ask you kindly to assure him in a particular way of my prayerful solidarity with all those affected by the recent storms in the southern part of your country, as well as the support of my prayers for those engaged in the massive work of relief and rebuilding.

In his *Message for the 2005 World Day of Peace*, my predecessor, Pope John Paul II, called attention to the intrinsic ethical dimension of every political decision, and observed that the disturbing spread of social disorder, war, injustice and violence in our world can ultimately be countered only by renewed appreciation and respect for the universal moral law whose principles derive from the Creator himself (cf. Nos. 2-3). A recognition of the rich patrimony of values and principles embodied in that law is essential to the building of a world which acknowledges and promotes the dignity, life and freedom of each human person, while creating the conditions of justice and peace in which individuals and communities can truly flourish. It is precisely the promotion and defense of these values, which must govern relations between nations and peoples in the pursuit of the common good of the human family, that inspires the presence and activity of the Holy See within the international community. As the Second Vatican Council stated, the Church's universal religious mission does not allow her to be identified with any particular political, economic or social system, yet at the same time, this mission serves as a source of commitment, direction and strength which can contribute to establishing and consolidating the human

community in accordance with God's law (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 42).

For this reason, I appreciate your kind reference to the Holy See's efforts to contribute to finding effective solutions to some of the more significant problems facing the international community in recent years, such as the scandal of continued widespread hunger, grave illness and poverty in large areas of our world. An adequate approach to these issues cannot be limited to purely economic or technical considerations, but demands broad vision, practical solidarity and courageous long-term decisions with regard to complex ethical questions; among the latter I think especially of the effects of the crushing debt that feeds the spiral of poverty in many less developed nations. The American people have long been distinguished for their generous charitable outreach to the disadvantaged and the needy on every continent. In a world of increasing globalization, I am confident that your nation will continue to demonstrate a leadership based on unwavering commitment to the values of freedom, integrity and self-determination, while cooperating with the various international instances which work to build genuine consensus and to develop a unified course of action in confronting issues critical to the future of the whole human family.

Mr Ambassador, I take this opportunity to recall that just over two decades ago full diplomatic relations were established between the United States and the Holy See, thanks to the efforts of then-President Ronald Reagan and the late Pope John Paul II. I appreciate the dialogue and fruitful cooperation which these relations have made possible, and I express my hope that in years to come they will be deepened and consolidated. As you begin your mission, I offer you my prayerful good wishes for the work you will undertake in the service of your nation, and I assure you of the constant readiness of the offices of the Holy See to assist you in the fulfillment of your responsibilities. Upon you and your family, and upon all the beloved American people, I cordially invoke God's blessings of prosperity, joy and peace.

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