



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR VALERIU BOBUȚAC
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 18 May 2006*

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Moldova to the Holy See. I thank you for your words and for the greetings which you bring from your President, Mr Vladimir Voronin. Please convey to him my sincere good wishes and assure him of my continuing prayers for the well-being of your nation.

The Holy See greatly values its diplomatic links with your country, established soon after Moldova gained its independence in 1991, and looks forward to building further on the cordial relations that have developed since that time. Mindful of the challenges involved in achieving a smooth transition to democracy and in establishing a place within the international community for the newly independent state, the Holy See continues to offer encouragement and assistance in any way possible. Although Catholics constitute only a small proportion of the population, they are proud of the rich cultural heritage of their homeland and are eager to play their part in national life, contributing particularly in the area of social assistance. It should be stressed that such activity flows from the very nature and mission of the Church, which include a commitment to promote the dignity of the human person and to come to the aid of those who suffer hardship of any kind. The Church is committed to full respect for liberty of conscience, and as such she encourages governments to take steps to guarantee this precious freedom for all their citizens. The reassurance that you offer in connection with your own Government's position in this regard is most gratifying. Through you, Mr Ambassador, I would like to greet all the inhabitants of Moldova,

and in particular the Catholic community, under the leadership of the Bishop of Chişinău, the Most Reverend Anton Coşa.

In view of her concern for peace and justice, the Church naturally takes to heart the debate over the status of Transdnistria. While fully appreciating the complexity of the question, I urge your Government to persevere in the search for a peaceful solution, and to work in harmony with the organs of the European Union, the Council of Europe and other international organizations in order to resolve the dispute. I pray that your country may continue to make progress towards the noble goal of peace, which corresponds to the deepest yearnings and hopes of people everywhere.

The interest shown by your Government in advancing dialogue with all the States of Europe is welcomed by the Holy See as a sign of hope for the Continent. For too long, Moldova suffered from the imposition of a totalitarian utopia of “justice without freedom”. The West, by contrast, continues to be exposed to the danger of an alternative utopia of “freedom without truth”, issuing from a false understanding of “tolerance”. If the common good of Europe’s citizens is truly to be served, it is essential to avoid both of these harmful partial visions and to rediscover the authentic freedom that proceeds from our shared heritage of faith in Jesus Christ, alive in his Church, the source of hope for Europe (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, 98). The voice and the experience of your people need to be heard in European debate, so that lessons may be learned from recent experience. In this way a brighter future may be built that is based on a commitment to truth, and this, as I maintained in my *Address to the Diplomatic Corps* at the start of this year (9 January 2006), is the soul of justice, it is the means whereby the right to freedom is established and strengthened and it opens the way to forgiveness and reconciliation.

Your Excellency, I am confident that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will consolidate the good relations that exist between the Republic of Moldova and the Holy See. In offering you my best wishes for the years ahead, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are most glad to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you, your family and all the people of Moldova I cordially invoke God’s abundant blessings.

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