



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR PEDRO PABLO CABRERA GAETE
NEW AMBASSADOR OF CHILE TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Castel Gandolfo
Friday, 8 September 2006*

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to receive you at this Audience for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chile to the Holy See. I welcome you as you assume the lofty responsibility that your Government has entrusted to you, and I offer you my best wishes that your mission will continue to strengthen and make fruitful the good diplomatic relations that exist between your Country and this Apostolic See.

Thank you for the kind words you have just addressed to me and for the respectful greeting that H.E. President Michelle Bachelet has desired to convey to me through you, Your Excellency, as an expression of the Chilean People's spiritual closeness to the Successor of Peter. This closeness has been built up in the course of history in concomitance with the Church's ceaseless work through her members and institutions.

Chile is approaching its bicentenary as a Republic. Its aspirations are born from a particularly significant period in which remarkable development goals have been achieved and institutions strengthened that seem to be thriving in an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence.

The positive economic trend has also encouraged progress in areas such as education and health, as well as in social projects which aim to ensure that all citizens can live as fully befits their dignity.

These factors, as well as openness to horizons that extend beyond individual boundaries, are

undoubtedly a cause of pleasure. They also call for a new sense of responsibility to ensure that the highest ideals, which are vital for all true progress and make it possible in the long run, continue to thrive.

As you said, Your Excellency, in order to further the common good, the perennial development of the values that must inspire technological achievements is a dimension which both the national and international communities must develop.

In this regard, the Church carries out her mission proclaiming Christ's Gospel, casting his light on the realities of the world and of humankind, and proclaiming through them the exalted dignity of the human being. Indeed, *"faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human"* (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 11).

In this sense, the Church shares the desire for a justice that is not reduced by insufficient respect for human dignity or for the inalienable rights that derive from it.

These rights are inalienable precisely because man possesses them by his very nature, and consequently, they are not at the service of other interests. Among them should be mentioned first of all the right to life at every stage of its development and in all circumstances.

Mention should also be made of the right to form a family, based on bonds of love and faithfulness and established in marriage between a man and a woman, which must be given protection and assistance if it is to fulfil its incomparable task as a source of successful coexistence and as the basic cell of all society.

Moreover, the primary right to educate children in accordance with the ideals with which their parents have desired to enrich them by joyfully welcoming them into their lives is implicit in the family as a natural institution.

Your Excellency, you know well that your beloved Chilean Homeland counts on abundant historical and spiritual resources to face the future with well-founded hopes of attaining new goals of humanity, thereby also helping to encourage bonds of cooperation and peaceful coexistence in the concert of nations.

Proofs of this are Saints such as Teresa of Los Andes and Fr Alberto Hurtado, who have acquired such widespread fame.

The many natural gifts that the Creator has conferred upon the sons and daughters of Chile must continue to bear fruits that will pave the way to a more prosperous future for the generations to come; and may they be lovers of peace who keep to a transcendent path through life, in accordance with the Country's age-old Christian roots.

At the end of this Meeting, I renew my greeting and my welcome to you. I wish you a happy stay in Rome, which is not only rich in professional experiences but also personal ones. Rome is a city which in itself offers so many possibilities, and in a certain way is a privileged watchtower for understanding the ups and downs of the world.

With these sentiments, I invoke the motherly protection of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who under the title of Our Lady of Carmel is Patroness of Chileans. And I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, to your distinguished family and to the rest of your loved ones, as well as to your colleagues at the Embassy.

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