



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr ALAIN BULTER PAYETTE
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES
TO THE HOLY SEE****

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 13 December 2007*

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to accept the Letters by which you are accredited Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Seychelles to the Holy See. I recall with pleasure your visit last year in the company of President James Alix Michel and I am most grateful for the greetings which you have brought from him. For my part, I gladly reciprocate with the assurance of my heartfelt prayers for your beloved country and all its people.

Seychelles has been blessed by Providence not only with great natural beauty and a sound economic life, but also with the social harmony and cohesiveness born of shared values and a strong commitment to solidarity in the pursuit of the common good. Your nation can indeed be grateful for its high standard of living, the fruit of the vision and sacrifice of many generations of citizens. Within the broader context of the African continent, Seychelles is well known for the quality and extent of its educational system and the breadth of its network of health services, available to all citizens. This impressive infrastructure offers great promise for the future of the nation, since it provides a firm foundation for continued economic growth and also, even more importantly, for the realization of the deepest hopes and aspirations of the younger generation.

In this regard, I am grateful for Your Excellency's reference to the importance of acknowledging and fostering those spiritual values, born of your nation's Christian roots, which have been decisive in shaping the present of Seychelles and which offer a sure foundation for its future. The Church in Seychelles is rightly proud of its contribution to the life of the nation, particularly through

its historic commitment to the education of the young and to the training of the faithful in the virtues essential for integral human development and the building of a free, just and prosperous society. The Catholic community wishes to persevere in this commitment, and, in a spirit of sincerity and respectful cooperation, to work for the promotion of the common good through the preaching of the Gospel, the work of forming consciences in sound religious and moral principles, and the provision of charitable assistance to all, without regard to race or religion.

On this occasion I cannot fail to express my appreciation for the cordial relations existing between the Republic of Seychelles and the Holy See, marked as they are by reciprocal trust and ready collaboration. I likewise express my gratitude for the Government's efforts to support religious education at the primary level and to contribute to the building of new churches and educational structures. This commitment is a concrete sign of the relationship of trust and responsible cooperation which has long existed between the civil authorities and the Catholic community in the service of the young, who represent the hope of society. The nation has, in fact, made the needs of the young and their sound formation a notable priority, and this will surely bear rich fruit as the young men and women of today gradually take their place as the responsible citizens and leaders of tomorrow. I have great confidence in the youth of Seychelles, and through you I send all of them my affectionate greetings and my hearty encouragement to persevere in cultivating the virtues of honesty, fidelity and generous service to others which not only bring personal happiness and deep fulfilment, but also create a society of ever greater fraternity, freedom, justice and peace.

Among the greatest resources of Seychelles is its strong family life, grounded in the mutual love of husband and wife and strengthened by the gift of children. As the first cell of society, the family rightly looks to society for the encouragement it needs in its irreplaceable mission. I can only encourage the efforts being made by all people of good will, in every sphere of national life and policy, to "guarantee and foster the genuine identity of family life" (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 252), by promoting and defending this fundamental institution, acknowledging and meeting the challenges faced by young families, and supporting parents in their responsibilities as the first educators of their children. The future of the state depends in large part on families that are strong in their communion and stable in their commitment (cf. *ibid.*, 213).

Your Excellency, as you now begin your mission on behalf of the Republic of Seychelles, please accept my personal good wishes for your demanding work. Know that the various offices of the Holy See are ready to assist and support you in the fulfilment of your duties. With these sentiments I cordially invoke upon you, your family, and all the beloved people of Seychelles God's richest blessings of joy and peace.

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