



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr ALFONSO RIVERO MONSALVE
AMBASSADOR OF PERU TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 16 March 2007

Mr Ambassador,

In receiving the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Peru to the Holy See, I am pleased to offer you a most cordial welcome and to wish you success in your work to preserve the good relations that exist between your noble Country and this Apostolic See.

As I thank you for your sincere and friendly words, I ask you kindly to convey my respectful greeting to H.E. Mr Alan García Pérez, President of the Republic, to its Government and to the beloved Peruvian People.

This meeting reminds us of the deep bonds with the Church which your Nation established and preserves. The Catholic faith was welcomed from the outset. It was taken there by evangelizers such as St Turibius of Mogrovejo, the fourth centenary of whose death was commemorated last year, and little by little, succeeded in penetrating the cultural and social mysteries of this blessed people in which the first saints were soon to flourish on Latin American soil.

And as you yourself mentioned, in addition to the holy Bishop I would like to recall the following saints: Rose of Lima, Martin de Porres, Francisco Solano, Juan Macías and Blessed Ana de los Ángeles Monteagudo, who was beatified by Pope John Paul II on his first Visit to Peru in 1985.

I too have had the opportunity to visit your Homeland in 1986, when I was Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I treasure a most pleasant memory of those days, and especially of my meetings with the simple people of the poor districts in both Lima and Cuzco.

In this world of rapid social, political and economic transformation, your Country is no exception and is also experiencing profound changes. These processes directly affect people and their values.

In this regard, both Church and State have made considerable efforts in education and in the use of the new technologies in order to encourage a more extensive inclusion of the least favoured classes in the new cultural spaces of our time.

On the other hand, moral and religious problems exist which both the Church and the State must deal with, each one in its own province and specifically for the good of Peruvians.

It is known that Peru desires to deal with the phenomenon of globalization by taking advantage of the opportunities offered for economic growth, so that the wealth produced and other social goods may be equally accessible to all.

Peruvians, like all people, are also hoping that health-care services will duly be available for all social classes; that education will be everyone's patrimony and that its quality will be improved at all levels; that in the face of corruption, integrity, which will permit an effective action on the part of different public institutions, will prevail, thus helping to overcome many situations of hunger and poverty.

Moreover, a union of intentions is urgently needed to make the continuous action of Government Leaders possible in order to confront the challenges of a globalized world that must be faced with authentic solidarity.

This virtue, as my Predecessor John Paul II used to say, must inspire the action of individuals, governments, international bodies and institutions, and of all the members of civil society, committing them to work for a just development of peoples and nations, whose purpose is the good of one and all (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 40).

The Church, which recognizes the State's competence in social, political and economic affairs, assumes as a duty that stems from her evangelizing mission to safeguard and spread the truth about the human being, the meaning of his life and of his ultimate destiny, which is God. This truth is a source of inspiration, so that the dignity of the person and of life, from its conception to its natural end, may be recognized and protected as the Peruvian Constitution guarantees.

She will therefore continue to collaborate loyally and generously in education, health care and assistance to the poorest and neediest.

This Apostolic See will continue to support all the social efforts made thus far. Therefore, she will continue to cooperate so that there may always be equal opportunities and that each Peruvian

may feel his or her inalienable rights respected. For this reason, the Peruvian Episcopate will continue, in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the Church, to encourage the search for the truth in the family, work and socio-political contexts.

Peruvian Catholics, for their part, are also called to be the leaven of the Christian message in social institutions and in public life, so as to contribute to building a more fraternal society. The Church, conscious of her own mission, "will show herself to be supremely human by the very fact of being religious" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 11).

Also conscious of her duty to present the truth about all human beings, who as children of God are endowed with a dignity superior to all positive law, she will continue to work to achieve these objectives.

"Experienced in human affairs" (*Populorum Progressio*, n. 13), the Church teaches in addition that only with respect for the moral law that defends and protects the dignity of the human person, is it possible to build peace, encouraging permanent social progress.

It is therefore to be hoped that the mutual collaboration between the State and the Church that have thus far yielded good fruit may continue.

Mr Ambassador, at the end of this pleasant meeting I express to you once again my most cordial greeting and my best wishes for the success of the mission you are beginning at this time.

As I implore the Lord of Miracles to pour out abundant Blessings upon you, Your Excellency, upon your distinguished family, your collaborators and above all the Authorities of your Country, I also ask Our Lady of Mercy to protect the beloved Peruvian People so that they may continue to advance on the path of justice, solidarity and peace.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* n.13 p.4.

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