



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS
AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE LETTERS
ACCREDITING THEM TO THE HOLY SEE***

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 18 December 2008

Your Excellencies,

I receive you with joy this morning, for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries to the Holy See: Malawi, Sweden, Sierra Leone, Iceland, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of Madagascar, Belize, Tunisia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of the Fiji Islands. I thank you for the courteous words that you have kindly addressed to me on behalf of your Heads of State. I would be grateful if you would reciprocate by conveying to them my cordial greetings and my respectful good wishes for themselves and for their lofty mission at the service of their countries and their peoples. I would also like to greet through you all the civil and religious authorities of your nations, as well as your compatriots.

My prayers and thoughts also go especially to the Catholic communities established in your countries where they are anxious to live the Gospel and to bear witness to it in a fraternal spirit of collaboration.

The diversity of the places you come from enables me to thank God for his love as Creator and for the multiplicity of his gifts that never cease to give rise to wonder in men. It is a lesson. Diversity is sometimes frightening, which is why people actually prefer the monotony of uniformity. Political and economic systems that had a religious matrix or that have declared themselves such have affected humanity too long and have sought to standardize it with demagoguery and violence. They have reduced and, unfortunately, are still reducing the human being to an unworthy slavery at the service of a single ideology or an inhumane and pseudo-scientific economy. We all know that an ideal, singular political model to be realized absolutely does not exist and that political philosophy evolves in time and in its expression with the refinement of human intelligence and the lessons

drawn from political and economic experience. Each people has its own genius as well as "its own demons". Each people advances through its own childbirth, at times painful, toward a future it hopes will be luminous. Thus my hope is that every people may cultivate its genius, which it will do its best to enrich for the good of all, and that it may cleanse itself from its "demons" which it also does its best to control, to the point of eliminating them by transforming them into positive values, creating harmony, prosperity and peace, in order to defend the greatness of human dignity!

In reflecting on the ambassador's beautiful mission, one of the essential aspects of the ambassador's activity spontaneously springs to my mind: the search for and the promotion of peace, which I have just recalled. It is fitting to mention here the Beatitude spoken by Christ in his Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God" (Mt 5: 9).

The ambassador can and must be a peacemaker. The builder of peace, which is in question here, is not only the person with a calm and reconciliatory temperament who desires to live in good understanding with all and, to avoid, if possible, conflicts but also the person who devotes himself entirely to the service of peace and is actively engaged in building it, sometimes even to the point of giving his life. History abounds with examples. Peace does not only imply the political or military state of not being at war; it refers globally to the overall conditions which permit harmony among all, and the personal development of each. Peace is desired by God who proposes it to human beings and offers it to them as a gift. This divine intervention in humanity is called the "covenant of peace" (Is 54: 10). When Christ calls peacemakers "sons of God" he means that they participate and are consciously or unconsciously active in God's work and in his mission, and that they prepare the conditions necessary for welcoming peace from on high. Your mission, Your Excellencies, is lofty and noble. It demands all the energies that you will be able to call on to attain this exalted ideal that will honour yourselves, your governments and your respective countries.

You know, as I do, that authentic peace is only possible when justice reigns. Our world is thirsting for peace and justice. Moreover, the Holy See published on the eve of the Doha Conference that ended a few days ago a [Note on the current financial crisis and its repercussions on society and on individuals](#). It presents several ethical aspects that must support relations between finance and development, both to encourage governments and economic actors to seek lasting solutions in solidarity for the common good and, more specifically, for those who are most exposed to the dramatic consequences of the crisis. Justice, to return to the topic, does not only have a social or even ethical value. It does not only refer to what is equitable or in conformity with the law. The Hebrew etymology of the term "justice" refers to something that has been "adjusted". God's justice is thus expressed through his justness. It puts everything in its right place, everything in order, so that the world may be in conformity with God's plan and with his order (cf. Is 11: 3-5). The ambassador's noble task, therefore, consists in using his art so that all may be "adjusted" in order that the nation he serves may not only live in peace with other countries but also in accordance with the justice that is expressed by equity and solidarity in international relations, and so that

citizens, enjoying social peace, may live their beliefs freely and serenely and thus join in the "justice" of God.

Madam and Mister Ambassadors, you are beginning your mission to the Holy See. I once again offer you my most cordial good wishes for the success of the most delicate role that you are called to carry out. I implore the Almighty to support you and to guide you, your dear ones, your collaborators and all your compatriots, so that you may contribute to the coming of a world that is more peaceful and more just. May God fill you with an abundance of his Blessings!

© Copyright 2008 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana