



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. PAUL DÜHR
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE GRAND DUCHY
OF LUXEMBOURG TO THE HOLY SEE**

Clementine Hall
Thursday, 18 December 2008

Mr Ambassador,

I am happy to greet you, Your Excellency, on this solemn occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the Holy See. I thank you, Mr Ambassador, for your cordial words. I would be grateful if you would kindly express to His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri my cordial good wishes for himself and for the Grand Ducal family, as well as for the happiness and success of the people of Luxembourg. I pray God to accompany the efforts and initiatives of all those who are concerned for the common good.

The festivities in honour of the 1,350th anniversary of the birth of St Willibrord, the second patron of your nation, are coming to an end with the end of this year. It is thanks to him, a tireless missionary amid great political turmoil, that the seed of the Gospel was scattered in your land, thrived, bore fruit and made a deep imprint on your country's history. Still today, the Catholic community takes an active part in the social and political life of your nation, seeking to make a useful contribution to the well-being of the entire population and to participate effectively in the resolution of the problems that effect the lives of men and women.

It is, in particular, a pressing common duty of all to protect human dignity from the assaults it undergoes as a result of conditions of poverty which exist even in the heart of the most developed nations like your own. This attention must be shown at various levels: in local action but also on a national scale and without forgetting international cooperation. However, may the current financial

crisis that has given rise to so many worries not divert your country from the efforts it is making for solidarity and for development aid. I hope that your country may likewise be able to reassert to the other developed nations with which it has close relations that the rich countries cannot forget their responsibilities, in the first place, for the destiny of the poorest peoples. May the prosperity which your nation fortunately enjoys impose upon it the duty of exemplification.

Paradoxically, the financial context is an invitation to seek the true treasure of existence and to be attentive to the balances that make harmonious social life possible. Respect for Sunday is certainly one of the elements that contribute to this. Over and above this day's religious significance, its uniqueness reminds each citizen that he possesses a lofty dignity and that his work is not servile. Sunday is offered to all so that the human being is not reduced to being merely the member of a work force or a consumer but rather that he may rest and devote some time to the most important of human realities: family life, free encounters with others, spiritual activities and the worship of God. It is important not to lose, in a vain and dangerous race for profit, that which is not only a social acquisition but also and especially a mark of profound humanist wisdom.

Mr Ambassador,

I would also like to take the opportunity of our meeting to express to you my very deep concern about the text of the law on euthanasia and assisted suicide that is currently being discussed in Parliament. In practice, this text accompanied moreover and in a contradictory manner by another bill which contains felicitous legal measures for developing palliative care to make suffering more bearable in the final stages of illness and to encourage the appropriate humane care for the patient legitimizes the possibility of putting an end to life. Political leaders, who have the grave duty of serving the good of the human being, and likewise doctors and families, must remember that "the deliberate decision to deprive an innocent human being of his life is always morally evil and can never be licit" (Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, n. 57). In truth, love and true compassion take a different path. The request that rises from the human heart, especially when a person is tempted to cede to discouragement and has reached the point of wishing to disappear, is above all a request for company and an appeal for greater solidarity and support in trial. This appeal may seem demanding but it is the only one worthy of the human being and gives access to new and deeper forms of solidarity which, ultimately, enrich and strengthen family and social ties. On this path of humanization all people of good will are asked to cooperate and the Church, for her part, is determined to commit to it all her resources of attention and service. Faithful to their Christian and human roots and to the constant concern to further the common good, may every member of the population of Luxembourg always have at heart to reaffirm the greatness and inviolable character of human life!

To conclude, Mr Ambassador, I am pleased to greet, through you, Archbishop Fernand Franck of Luxembourg, the priests, deacons and all the faithful who form the Catholic community of the Grand Duchy.

As I have emphasized, I know that they are concerned with building, together with other citizens, a social life in which each one may find the ways to personal and collective fulfilment. May God strengthen these good intentions!

Your Excellency, at the time when you are officially inaugurating your duties at the Holy See, I express my best wishes to you for the successful accomplishment of your task. You may be sure, Mr Ambassador, that you will always find cordial attention and understanding with my collaborators. As I invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St Willibrord, I pray the Lord to bestow generous Blessings upon you, your family and your collaborators, as well as upon the authorities and the people of Luxembourg.

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