



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR CARLOS FEDERICO DE LA RIVA GUERRA
AMBASSADOR OF BOLIVIA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 14 March 2008

Mr Ambassador,

It gives me great joy to receive you at this Audience for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See. As I offer you a most cordial welcome, I would like to thank you for the attentive words addressed to me and to wish you success in the lofty mission that has been entrusted to you. Likewise, I ask you to convey my closeness and affection to all the sons and daughters of this beloved Country, as well as my respectful greeting to the President of the Republic.

Bolivia's deep Christian roots have sustained your people, have accompanied the ups and downs of their history and have fostered the sense of respect and reconciliation, so necessary in the difficult moments that this Nation has had to face. Particularly significant in this regard is the massive and warm welcome which all Bolivians, of the towns and the countryside, of the plateaus and of the Eastern region, gave my Venerable Predecessor John Paul II during the Visit he made to your Country 20 years ago and which highlighted their strong religious character and spirit of communion and brotherhood as a demonstration of the faith of an entire people. It is important to remember this event at a time when your Nation is living a profound process of change that is producing difficult and at times worrying situations. In fact, it is impossible to remain indifferent when social tensions are increasing and an atmosphere that is not conducive to understanding is spreading. I believe we all share the conviction that contrasting positions, sometimes encouraged and applauded, hinder constructive dialogue to identify fair financial and legal solutions that aim for the common good, especially for those who have difficulty in living a dignified life.

The Authorities who govern the People's destinies, as well as the leaders of political, social and civil organizations, need the prudence and wisdom that derive from love for humanity in order to

promote throughout the population the necessary conditions for dialogue and understanding. This praiseworthy objective will be supported if all Bolivians contribute the best of themselves with frankness and propitious concern, often not exempt from self-denial and sacrifice. In this way, the sincere and altruistic collaboration of individuals and institutions will help uproot the evils that afflict the noble Bolivian People, who are so frequently affected by natural disasters that require everyone to use effective means and have sentiments of brotherhood which help to resolve their serious consequences.

Civil and social, political and economic rebirth always requires disinterested hard work and generous dedication from a people asking for material, moral and spiritual assistance. The achievement of peace must be founded on justice, truth and freedom as well as on reciprocal cooperation, love and the reconciliation of all.

Well acquainted with the needs and hopes of the Bolivian People, the Church offers the proclamation of faith and her experience in humanity as a contribution to their spiritual growth and to help them obtain complete human fulfilment. Faithful to her mission, the Church is always prepared to collaborate in peacemaking and in the Country's human and spiritual development, proclaiming her doctrine and publicly expressing her opinion on matters that concern the social order. To this end, recognizing the State's specific competencies, she assumes as her own duty the guidance of her faithful, proposing to them and to all society that they banish once and for all racial hatred, reprisals and revenge, and that rather than adopting attitudes of division they take the path of solidarity and mutual trust, with respect for diversity.

In the Final Document of the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops' Conferences held in Aparecida, the Bishops considered that it was urgent to collaborate with political and social bodies to create new structures that reinforce a social, economic and political order, promote authentic human coexistence, prevent the arrogance of some and facilitate the fraternal, sincere and constructive dialogue required for social consensus (cf. n. 384).

For this reason, it is necessary that the defence and safeguard of human rights is firmly supported by ethical values such as justice and the desire for peace, honesty and transparency, as well as effective solidarity in order to correct unjust social inequalities.

The teaching of the moral good, of what is right or wrong without which no society can sustain itself, is consequently incumbent on education from the very earliest age. In this task, the family has a decisive role and must therefore be able to rely on the help it needs to carry out its task and be the "*primary 'agency' of peace*" for the benefit of all (*Message for the World Day of Peace 2008*, n. 5).

Mr Ambassador, before concluding this encounter I would like once again to express my best wishes for the success of your mission, so that the bonds of dialogue between your Country and

this Apostolic See may be strengthened.

We desire for your Nation an authentic spiritual, material and civil rebirth. We warmly hope that in each human person the image of his or her Creator and Lord may shine out and that the love of Jesus Christ may be a source of hope for every son and daughter of this beloved Land of Bolivia. I ask the Lord to obtain in Bolivia the triumph of truth that seeks respect for others, even those who do not share the same ideas; peace that fraternizes with justice and opens doors to harmonious and stable development, common sense that endeavours to find fair and reasonable solutions to problems, and harmony that unites wills in overcoming adversities and achieving the common good.

May the motherly protection of Our Lady of Copacabana accompany you, Your Excellency, your family, your collaborators and all the beloved sons and daughters of the noble Bolivian Nation.

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