



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Dr SANTE CANDUCCI
AMBASSADOR OF SAN MARINO TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 13 November 2008

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to offer you my cordial welcome at the moment when I am receiving from your hands the Letters of recommendation accrediting you to this Apostolic See as Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the ancient and illustrious Republic of San Marino. My first respectful thought goes to their Excellencies the Captains Regent, whose important Representative you have become, and to the entire population of San Marino, ever dear to the Successor of Peter. In fact, from its birth, the Titanus Republic has had serene and fruitful relations with the Apostolic See, officially established in 1926 with bonds of reciprocal and respectful interaction. I am therefore pleased to renew the expression of my spiritual closeness to the People which, as from today, you have been delegated to represent. It is a small people because of the size of the territory that it occupies but deserves every attention and respect for its history, rich in cultural and religious traditions.

In greeting you with warm pleasure, I would like to recall with sincere gratitude your praiseworthy predecessor, Prof. Giovanni Galassi, who, in addition to serving as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, has acted as Representative of the Republic of San Marino for many years. The sensitivity, human tact and competence that marked his activities attracted the esteem of his diplomatic colleagues and above all contributed to intensifying the already cordial relations between the Republic of San Marino and the Holy See. Following in the same tracks, I am certain that you will continue the work already begun so that the consolidation of fruitful mutual relations, as well as fostering dialogue and facilitating understanding between the authorities and the Catholic community of San Marino, will also be useful for a common action encouraging solidarity and peace in Europe and in the world.

Every nation and every institution, whether it is large or small, is called today to work actively to build an international community that is based on shared human and spiritual values. The Republic of San Marino will certainly not fail to make its contribution to this project of world importance, making available to all the experience of a past rich in history and culture, in which the protection of the family, the fundamental cell of every community, plays the lead. The land known as the "Sperone del Titano" [spur of Mount Titanus] is marked by a particular identity that is part of the cultural and spiritual riches of the Italian Peninsula. The key feature of this identity is the ancient patrimony of values that is nourished principally by the Christian faith in which the life and history of the people and institutions of San Marino are steeped. Thus in your words you rightly mentioned these ancient roots, referring also to the Visit made by my venerable Predecessor John Paul ii, on 28 April 1982, amid the enthusiasm of the People of San Marino. I express my heartfelt hope that, following in the wake of these centuries-old cultural and spiritual traditions and continuing the effort made until today by numerous people of good will, the present civil and religious community of San Marino may be able to write together a new page of progress and civilization, recognizing the indispensable role that every family, as the place where an education in peace is acquired, is called to play in training the new generations.

Making the most of the Greco-Roman heritage, enriched by the encounter with Christianity, thus constitutes an indisputable opportunity that is also offered to the Republic of San Marino to contribute to making Europe a land of dialogue and a "common home" for nations with their own specific cultural and religious features. The environmental and social conditions in which we live today have certainly changed but the ultimate goal of each one of our personal and community daily commitments is still the same: the quest for the individual's authentic well-being and the construction of a society that is open to acceptance and attentive to the real needs of all. The combined collection of values and laws, the common spiritual "alphabet" that enabled our people in the past centuries to write noble pages of civil and religious history, is a precious legacy that must not be lost, an inheritance to be increased with the contribution of the modern discoveries of science, technology and communications, placed at the service of the true good of man.

Mr Ambassador, the Holy See renews the attestation of its full readiness to collaborate in order to pursue these shared goals, aware as it is of the need for the cooperation of all in such a vast undertaking: at the local, national and international levels the contribution of each one in his own milieu and with his own specific skills is asked for, always with reciprocal respect and in constant dialogue. These are the conditions for that "healthy" secularism which is indispensable for building a society where different traditions, cultures and religions may peacefully coexist. Indeed, in totally separating public life from every value of traditions, would mean introducing oneself into a blind alley and a dead end. This is why it is essential to redefine the sense of a secularism that emphasizes the true difference and autonomy between the different components of society but that also preserves their specific competences in a context of common responsibility. Of course, this "healthy" secularism of the State entails the possibility for every temporal reality to be governed by its own rules, which, however, must not neglect the fundamental ethical base which is

inherent in the very nature of the human being, and for this very reason, refers ultimately to the Creator. When through her legitimate Pastors the Catholic Church appeals to the value of certain fundamental ethical principles, rooted in the Christian heritage of Europe, for private and especially for public life, she is motivated solely by the desire to guarantee and promote the inviolable dignity of the person and the authentic good of society.

Mr Ambassador, these are the sentiments that spring to my mind at this moment. As I thank you for your kind words and assure you of the total availability of my collaborators, I express the wish that you will carry out your lofty mission well. I renew my greeting, corroborated by prayer, to their Excellencies the Captains Regent and the People of the beloved Republic of San Marino, which you represent here, so that God may protect and bless each and every one always.

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