



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO H.E. Mr HANS KLINGENBERG  
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK  
TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Clementine Hall  
Thursday, 17 December 2009*

*Your Excellency,*

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Holy See. I thank you for the kind greetings which you bring from Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, and I would ask you to convey to Her Majesty, to the Government, and to the people of your country my gratitude for their good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the spiritual well-being of the nation.

The Church's diplomatic relations form a part of her mission of service to the international community. This engagement with civil society is shaped by her conviction that in an increasingly globalized world efforts to promote integral human development and a sustainable economic order must consider the fundamental relationship between God, creation and his creatures. Within this perspective, tendencies towards social fragmentation and piecemeal development initiatives can be overcome by the recognition of the unifying moral dimension constitutive of every human being, and the moral consequence pertaining to every economic decision (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 37). Indeed, contemporary scepticism in the face of political rhetoric, and a growing uneasiness with the lack of ethical points of reference governing technological advances and commercial markets all indicate the imperfections and limitations found within both individuals and society and the need for a rediscovery of fundamental values and a profound cultural renewal in harmony with God's design for the world (cf. *ibid.*, 21).

Your Excellency, the world's attention is currently drawn towards Denmark as it hosts the United Nations summit on climate change. The political and diplomatic deliberations at play in addressing the demands of such a complex matter test the resolve of stakeholders to forgo nationalistic or short-term alleged advantages in favour of longer-term benefits for the entire international human family. While some consensus can undoubtedly be reached through the elaboration of shared aspirations matched with policies and targets, fundamental change in any form of human behaviour – individual or collective – requires conversion of heart. Courage and sacrifice, fruits of an ethical awakening, enable us to envisage a better world and embolden us to pursue with hope all that is necessary to ensure that future generations are bequeathed the whole of creation in such a condition that they too can call it home. When the “moral tenor of society” (*ibid.*, 51) declines, however, the challenges facing today's leaders can only increase.

This urgent need to emphasize the moral duty to distinguish between good and evil in all human action in order to rediscover and nurture the bond of communion that unites the human person and creation was a central theme of my recent address to FAO. On that occasion the international community considered the pressing issue of food security. Again, I stated that, important as they may be, development plans, investments and legislation are not enough. Rather, individuals and communities must change their behaviour and their perception of need. For States themselves this includes a redefining of the concepts and principles that have hitherto governed international relations to include the principle of altruism and the resolve to seek out new parameters - ethical as well as juridical and economic - capable of building relationships of greater fairness and balance between developing and developed countries (cf. [\*Address to FAO\*](#), 16 November 2009).

Within this framework a holistic understanding of the health of society can emerge in which our duties towards the environment are never detached from our duties towards the human person and in which a moral critique of the cultural norms shaping human coexistence, with particular concern for the young, is considered central to the well-being of society. Too often efforts to promote an integral understanding of the environment have had to sit alongside a reductionist understanding of the person. Typically the latter is lacking in respect for the spiritual dimension of individuals and at times is hostile towards the family, pitting spouses against each other through a distorted portrayal of the complementarity of men and women, and pitting mother and unborn child against each other through a misconstrued portrayal of “reproductive health”. Responsibility in relationships, including the responsibility of careful parenting (cf. [\*Caritas in Veritate\*](#), 44; [\*Familiaris Consortio\*](#), 35), can never be truly nurtured without profound respect for the unity of family life according to the loving design of our Creator.

Denmark's assistance to humanitarian causes is widespread and multi-faceted. The Kingdom's commitment to supporting peace-keeping operations and development projects together with its growing commitment to the continent of Africa are readily recognized by the Holy See for their generosity and professionalism. Among the principles we share in regard to development is the conviction that any form of corruption is always an affront to the dignity of the human person and

will always be a severe impediment to the just and equitable progress of peoples. Denmark's domestic record in this regard is commendable and your foreign financial aid policies rightly insist upon accountability and transparency on the part of receiver nations.

Mr Ambassador, the members of the Catholic Church in your country will continue to pray and work for the spiritual, social and cultural development of all the Danish people. In ecumenical fellowship with other Christians they are attentive to the needs of the migrant communities present in your land as well as other groups that are vulnerable in various ways. Additionally the Church's schools, pupils from which I regularly welcome to my weekly General Audience, serve the nation as they seek to bear witness to the love and truth of Christ.

Your Excellency, during your term as Denmark's representative to the Holy See the various departments of the Roman Curia will do all they can to assist you in the discharge of your duties. I offer my best wishes for the success of your endeavours to strengthen the cordial relations already existing between us. Upon you, your family and all your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

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*\*Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, V, 2 p.728-731.*

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