



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr FRANCIS K. BUTAGIRA
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 17 December 2009*

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican as you present the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda to the Holy See. I am grateful for the courteous greetings and good wishes which you have expressed on behalf of His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. I willingly reciprocate and I ask you kindly to convey to His Excellency and to the people of Uganda the assurance of my prayers for their well-being.

Diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Uganda continue to offer many opportunities for mutual assistance and cooperation for the spiritual good and welfare of the people of your nation. Likewise the climate of freedom and respect in your nation towards the Catholic Church has allowed her to be faithful to her proper mission. The fruits of cooperation between the Church and the State, especially in areas related to development, education and healthcare, are widely recognized. Indeed, such a solid foundation should promote personal integrity, justice and fairness in local communities and hope for the whole nation, both among those who govern and among the general population, and should be an important factor in stability and growth.

Mr Ambassador, in your address you mentioned the steady economic growth of the nation. The progress made to counter the causes of underdevelopment is certainly encouraging. Initiatives to promote more productive forms of agriculture, the proper use of the country's resources and the

implementation of concrete policies of regional cooperation are also very welcome. These and other efforts in various spheres, such as the provision of clean drinking water for all, the protection of the environment, the promotion of a sound, universal education and the struggle against corruption in its various forms, are part of an ambitious programme which will require good governance.

The campaign of violence in the north of the country has devastated large areas. The tragedy for the local populations is clear for all to see. Some have had their childhood shattered and have been forced to commit deplorable crimes; there has been extensive destruction of property; widows and orphans are living in dire poverty; and many displaced persons are still unable or afraid to return to their villages and fields. It is understood that this situation has improved to some extent and I hope that the lack of security will finally be replaced by a stable peace and prosperity for the sorely tried people of the area. As the world looks for concrete results from the meeting held recently in Uganda on the plight of displaced persons, refugees and returnees, I pray that the Kampala Declaration may lead those in positions of responsibility in your nation and beyond to give due support and assistance to all who, through no fault of their own, have been forced to flee their homes.

In this context, I would like to recall that reconciliation and peace were the principal themes of the recent [Special Synod for Africa](#) held here in the Vatican just a few months ago. The experience of the Church on your continent has shown that the mere absence of conflict does not constitute peace. It is only through the establishment of justice, reconciliation and solidarity that true and lasting peace and stability can be achieved. I assure Your Excellency that Ugandan Catholics, in living the values of the Gospel, wish to serve their fellow men and women in the promotion of deep-rooted reconciliation and peace. The Church will also continue to work for justice for all, accompanied by the fervent prayer that such a precious gift may become a reality for all citizens, without regard for ethnicity, region or creed.

Your Excellency, I am sure that your time as Ambassador will help to strengthen the cordial relations which already exist between the Holy See and Uganda. The various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you and, as you begin your high mission, I am pleased to assure you of my prayers. I invoke Almighty God's abundant blessings upon you, your family, and upon all the people of Uganda.

**Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, V, 2 p.732-734.*

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