



The Holy See

PRESENTATION OF LETTERS OF CREDENCE BY THE AMBASSADORS OF
SINGAPORE, ZIMBABWE, BANGLADESH, ALGERIA, SRI LANKA, BARBADOS, SWEDEN,
FINLAND AND NEPAL,
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 21 May 2021*

[Multimedia]

*Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to welcome you as you present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries to the Holy See: Singapore, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Barbados, Sweden, Finland, and Nepal. As the effects of the coronavirus continue to be felt, travelling remains difficult, and so I thank each one of you for your presence here today. I would ask you to convey to the Heads of State whom you represent my sentiments of gratitude and esteem for themselves and for their noble mission at the service of their people.

As a result of the pandemic, the social and economic crisis worldwide has become all the more severe. On a personal level, many have lost loved ones and their means of livelihood. Families in particular are facing grave economic difficulties and often lack adequate social protection. The pandemic has made us more conscious of our interdependence as members of the one human family and our need to be attentive to the poor and the vulnerable in our midst. As we seek to emerge from the present crisis, our societies are challenged to take concrete, and indeed courageous, steps to develop a global “culture of care” (cf. [*Message for the 2021 World Day of Peace*](#)) that can inspire new relationships and structures of cooperation in the service of solidarity, respect for human dignity, mutual assistance and social justice.

Sadly, the pandemic has also made us acutely aware that the international community is experiencing “a growing difficulty, if not the inability, to seek common and shared solutions to the problems of our world” (*Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 8 February 2021). In this regard, I think of the need to confront such pressing global issues as migration and climate change, as well as the humanitarian crises that they often bring in their wake. I think too of the economic debt that burdens many countries struggling to survive and the “ecological debt” that we owe to nature itself, as well as to peoples and countries affected by human-induced ecological degradation and loss of biodiversity. These issues are not simply political or economic; they are questions of justice, a justice that can no longer be ignored or deferred. Indeed, they entail a moral obligation towards future generations, for the seriousness with which we respond to them will shape the world we leave to our children.

In the development of a global consensus capable of responding to these ethical challenges facing our human family, your work as diplomats is of paramount importance. For its part, the Holy See, through its diplomatic representations, and its activity within the international community, supports every effort to build a world in which the human person is at the centre, finance is at the service of an integral development, and the earth, our common home, is protected and cared for. Through her works of education, charity and healthcare worldwide, the Church seeks to advance the integral development of individuals and peoples, and in this way contribute to the cause of peace.

In this regard, my thoughts turn to the events taking place these days in the Holy Land. I thank God for the decision to halt the armed conflicts and acts of violence, and I pray for the pursuit of paths of dialogue and peace. Tomorrow evening, the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, together with their faithful, will gather to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost in Saint Stephen’s Church in Jerusalem and to implore the gift of peace. I take this occasion to ask all the pastors and faithful of the Catholic Church to unite themselves spiritually with this prayer. May every community pray to the Holy Spirit “that Israelis and Palestinians may find the path of dialogue and forgiveness, be patient builders of peace and justice, and be open, step by step, to a common hope, to coexistence among brothers and sisters” (*Regina Coeli*, 16 May 2021).

Dear Ambassadors, with these thoughts, I now offer you my prayerful good wishes for the responsibilities you now undertake, and I assure you of the support and assistance of the offices of Holy See in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and your families, your colleagues and co-workers, and all your fellow citizens, I cordially invoke God’s blessings of wisdom, strength and peace.