



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. MR GEOFFREY GACHUKU CHIPUNGU  
AMBASSADOR OF MALAWI TO THE HOLY SEE\***

*Thursday, 23 May 1996*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I extend a warm welcome to you as you present the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Malawi to the Holy See. I take this opportunity to reaffirm my sentiments of esteem and friendship for the people of your country, and I am grateful for the cordial good wishes sent by your President, His Excellency Dr. Bakili Muluzi. I ask you to assure him of my continued prayers for the peace and well-being of your nation.

The challenge of building an ever more united, just and peaceful world demands that all sectors of society, at the national and international levels, should work together for the good of humanity. The vision which shapes and guides this work cannot be focused on economic interests alone, but must look ultimately to authentic human development, that is, development which responds to the cultural, ethical and spiritual needs of all men and women. Economic and political resources are important in this task, but of even greater importance is the human dimension of development, the human resources which must be tapped and directed to the cause of progress. These, to name but a few, include creative initiative, self-sacrifice, commitment to education and research, and an unshakable resolve to achieve the goals of social justice and the rule of law.

True development demands that every nation should grow in self-affirmation. This involves international co-operation which allows developing nations themselves to decide on the appropriate means of pursuing their own advancement. But it also demands that within each nation individual citizens should be enabled to grow in the responsible exercise of their personal freedoms. Thus the establishment of more participatory political structures, based on a civil constitution which defends and honours human dignity, "is the necessary condition and sure guarantee of the development of the whole individual and of all people" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 44).

In the light of this truth about the individual and society, I am pleased to note that the efforts of the people of Malawi to achieve a more representative and democratic form of government are bearing fruit. You have shown that through dialogue, goodwill and sincere co-operation, needed political and social changes can be brought about, within the framework of a peaceful and non-violent confrontation of ideas. Furthermore, while dealing with your own difficulties and problems you have given a helping hand to your neighbours in need: this was the case, for example, when your country opened its borders to the more than one million refugees who sought a safe haven from the violence and turmoil then ravaging Mozambique; this is also the case in Malawi's present involvement in various peace initiatives sponsored by the international community.

I note Your Excellency's reference to the significant contribution that the Catholic Church has made and continues to make to the life of your country. In fact, the Church's commitment to the promotion of the dignity of the human person and the good of society manifests itself in her actions in the fields of education, health care and social services. This commitment testifies to the co-operative spirit of the Catholic faithful in working for a better future for themselves and their fellow citizens. By reason of their profound conviction regarding the universal brotherhood of all men and women as God's beloved children, the Catholic citizens of Malawi are dedicated to fostering the common good in the context of a healthy and legitimate pride in their own country and heritage.

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your mission, I assure you of the readiness of the various offices and agencies of the Roman Curia to help you in the fulfilment of your duties. I am confident that your work will serve to strengthen in every way the good relations which already exist between the Holy See and the Republic of Malawi. Upon Your Excellency, and upon the President, Government and people of your country I invoke God's blessings of peace and well-being.

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