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LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: DANIMARCA, SINGAPORE, QATAR, ESTONIA

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Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Danimarca, Singapore, Qatar ed Estonia.

Di seguito pubblichiamo i discorsi consegnati dal Papa agli Ambasciatori degli Stati sopra elencati, nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di ciascuno:

- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI DANIMARCA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR BIRGER DAN NIELSEN

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you today and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Holy See. Though my visit to your country took place some years ago, I fondly recall the warmth and hospitality with which I was received. I thank you for the gracious words of greeting 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 Denmark my good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the nation.

The Holy See's steadfast commitment to promoting the dignity of the human person stands at the heart of her diplomatic activity. Without an authentic understanding of the incomparable worth of men and women, claims to defend fundamental human rights and efforts to attain peaceful coexistence among peoples will prove vain. It is only in the respect and protection of the inviolable dignity of every person that the search for solidarity and harmony in our world finds its sure basis. Indeed, the urgent need for the entire human family to give practical expression to what my predecessor, Blessed Pope John XXIII, called the four pillars of peace – truth, justice, love and freedom – stems precisely from their being "requirements of the human spirit" (*Message for the 2003 World Day of Peace*, No. 3).

Within the international community Denmark has long been esteemed for the generosity which has marked its relations with the developing nations of the world. Tangible expression of such solidarity is found in Danish leadership of peace-keeping operations, generous assistance with aid projects, and readiness to contribute to the requirements of international stability and security necessary for social and economic advancement across the globe. In this regard, I am particularly glad to acknowledge Your Excellency's observation concerning the way in which Denmark and the Holy See have mutually supported the Millennium Declaration. Your nation's exemplary commitment to funding that Declaration's goals has not gone unnoticed and I am confident that Denmark will be a reliable supporter of the newly proposed International Finance Facility, the initiatives of which the Holy See welcomes.

Effective solidarity is always an expression of a firm and persevering desire to promote the common good. Though this desire resonates deeply within the hearts of all men and women, it also requires the determination to foster actively a culture of acceptance. To this end, your country has sought to introduce peace education programmes, to support projects combating poverty and injustice, and to encourage tolerance especially in regard to the immigrant community. At their most significant level such laudable initiatives help to elicit a recognition of the essential nature of human life as a gift and of our world as a family of persons. True commitment to human solidarity on an international level in fact finds its roots in the domestic family. If authentic and mature communion between persons within the family – the first and irreplaceable school of social life – is not truly appreciated and protected, then the relationships of international solidarity, marked by respect, justice, dialogue and love, which serve the common good will be severely impeded (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, No. 43).

During my visit to Denmark I observed that your flag, the *Dannebrog*, is marked with the sign of the Cross. I suggested that by being faithful to this historical symbol of your existence as a people, Denmark will be faithful to her very self. Integral to your history is the Christian Gospel which, as an inspiration and support for your people (cf. *Arrival Speech*, Copenhagen, 6 June 1989), is as crucial today as it has been for over a thousand years. However, one cannot but notice that an eclipse of the sense of God has cast its shadow not only over your own country but over others on the Continent of Europe as well. Many people are disoriented, uncertain, and some even without hope. With numbers of Europeans living without spiritual roots, it is not surprising that there are political and social moves to create a vision of Europe which ignores its religious heritage and, in particular, its profoundly Christian soul (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 7). The advocates of these misguided efforts assert the rights of the peoples of Europe, and claim to speak in their name, yet are blind to the reality of the higher objective law written on the heart of every man and woman and known to the human conscience.

A vision of Europe detached from God can only herald social fragmentation, moral confusion and political disunity. In the face of the troubling signs which cloud the horizon of the European continent I wish to repeat again the words from Scripture which I quoted during my visit to your country: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ... this light has come into the world and those who live by his truth come out into the light so that it may be plainly seen that what they do is done in God" (*Jn* 3:16; 19-21). Christ's truth does not disappoint. It illuminates and directs our ways, dispelling the shadows of bewilderment and fear. Christ again invites us all "to blaze new trails leading to a 'Europe of the spirit', in order to make the continent a true 'common home' filled with the joy of life" (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 121).

With these words of encouragement I assure you that the Catholic Church, in ecumenical fellowship with her Christian brothers and sisters in your land, will continue to work for the spiritual enrichment and social development of the Danish people. Through the witness of charity the Church reaches out to all men and women, irrespective of ethnicity or religion, facilitating the growth of a "culture of solidarity" and restoring life to the universal values of human existence (cf. *ibid.*, No. 85).

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that the mission which you begin today will help to strengthen the cordial bonds of understanding and cooperation between Denmark and the Holy See. As you take up your new responsibilities be assured that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you, your family and your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Birger Dan Nielsen
Ambasciatore di Danimarca presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Copenaghen il 17 settembre 1943.

È sposato.

Si è laureato in Scienze Politiche ed Economiche (1967, Università di Copenaghen).

Ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1967, ricoprendo, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1967-1972 e 1975-1978); Segretario di Ambasciata presso le Comunità Europee a Bruxelles (1972); Capo di Gabinetto del Membro danese della Commissione delle Comunità Europee (1973-1975); Capo Dipartimento presso l'Ufficio per l'Energia e la Politica Industriale Internazionale (1978-1985); Ministro di Ambasciata negli Stati Uniti d'America (1985-1988); Ambasciatore in Kuwait, Bahrain e Qatar (1988-1991); Segretario Generale della Conferenza promossa dalle Nazioni Unite sullo Sviluppo Industriale Ecologicamente Sostenibile (1991); Ambasciatore in Lituania (1991-1997); Ambasciatore incaricato della Presidenza danese per il Consiglio degli Stati del Mar Baltico (1997-1998); Ambasciatore incaricato delle relazioni con le Repubbliche dell'Asia centrale (1998-2001); Ambasciatore incaricato dei negoziati internazionali sullo Sviluppo Sostenibile e Ambiente (2001-2003).

Attualmente è anche Ambasciatore in Svizzera, ove risiede.

[01969-02.02] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI SINGAPORE PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR WALTER WOON

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Singapore to the Holy See. I thank you for the kind greetings you have expressed on behalf of President S. R. Nathan and the Government and people of Singapore, and I ask you kindly to convey my good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the nation.

Your presence here today takes my thoughts to the visit I was privileged to make to your country in 1986. The time I spent in Singapore allowed me the opportunity to experience at first hand a culture shaped by the influence of so many different ethnic and religious groups, which have for years lived in harmony with one another. Singapore has been greatly enriched by its variety of cultures and peoples and should take pride in its tradition of respect and esteem for this patrimony. In fact, your country's commitment to encouraging an authentic spirit of unity in diversity has made a significant contribution to the region and you can rightly claim that it is one of the most developed in Asia. Although Singapore is small in size and population, it nevertheless plays an important role in the area, often acting as a bridge of cultural exchange between East and West.

In order for authentic globalization to be achieved, governments and peoples should encourage cultural

diversity, at all times ensuring that it remains grounded in the moral principles and values which govern human behaviour and relationships. Singapore has demonstrated its dedication to these precepts by the ongoing commitment to religious tolerance, which it has enthusiastically fostered since independence. It is to be hoped that the harmony which has traditionally prevailed among the followers of the various religions in Singapore will continue and grow even stronger. This is especially important today, as moments of recent tension and tragic incidents in your region have challenged the mutual respect which is basic to the peaceful co-existence of all peoples. In accordance with your best traditions, there is a need for continued dialogue, understanding and cooperation among the followers of the various religions in order to ensure that all people work together for a civilization built upon the universal values of solidarity, justice and freedom.

Singaporean society is permeated by a deep appreciation for the importance of the spiritual and transcendent dimensions of human life. This has contributed to a recognition of the need to develop a culture in which "people live together" always avoiding the temptation to become a society which rejects, marginalizes, uproots or oppresses others (cf. Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, No. 18). This fundamental responsibility towards our brothers and sisters is a characteristic of social interaction which must be exercised at both national and international levels. Your country's resolve to assist those beyond its borders is evident in the impressive international support which you offer. In fact, our shared commitment to the less fortunate is one of many areas which unite Singapore and the Holy See in our desire to serve the common good. An example of this cooperation can be seen in our joint efforts to form young professionals from poor countries in the region through the Singapore-Vatican Third Country Training Programme, initiated five years ago. Education is a key to sustained development. I am therefore hopeful that our attempts to train young people as conscientious and honest citizens will not only benefit their individual countries but will also assist Asia and the entire global community.

Responsibility for the well-being of others extends to all sectors of life. In this regard, I am aware of the significant contributions your country has made, especially in the spheres of science and technology. The ability to serve humanity through these is a gift demanding great respect. At no time can governments support initiatives which threaten the sanctity of human life for scientific or economic gain. "The great moral challenge facing nations and the international community in relation to development is to have the courage of a new solidarity, capable of taking imaginative and effective steps to overcome both dehumanizing underdevelopment and the 'overdevelopment' which tends to reduce the person to an economic unit" (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, No. 32). For this reason, proper judgment and prudent deliberation concerning the control of these fields is essential. Such discussions should include the different religious traditions which play a significant role in the life of your nation. These groups make an essential contribution to the genuine progress of society by drawing attention to the most profound human questions and values and by giving the spiritual and moral direction which must always accompany scientific and technological advances.

Even though the Catholic Church in Singapore is relatively small, her members are proud contributors to the country's political, cultural and social development. At a time when your nation and much of Asia are attempting to rethink past policies concerning family life and demographics, Catholics have much to offer. As I stated in 1986, "Families have a unique place in the Church as a community of life and love. While being a communion of persons in dialogue with God, they have an important role in society. They must remain open to the larger community, so that the loving concern they show in their homes may be extended to others for the betterment of all" (*Homily in Singapore*, No. 9). A firm commitment to a culture of life and a culture of the family is an essential building block to the social fabric of every country and a requirement for long-term success.

Mr Ambassador, it is my hope that, as you take up your new responsibilities, the bonds of friendship between the Holy See and Singapore will be increasingly strengthened. You can be assured that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in fulfilling your mission. Upon yourself and the beloved people of your nation I invoke abundant divine blessings.

S.E. il Signor Walter Woon
Ambasciatore di Singapore presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Singapore il 12 settembre 1956.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Si è laureato in Scienze Giuridiche presso l'Università Nazionale di Singapore e la *Cambridge University*. Ha il titolo di Avvocato.

Dal 1981 è docente di Diritto presso l'Università Nazionale di Singapore, ove ha anche ricoperto le funzioni di Vice Decano (1988-1995) della Facoltà di Legge. È autore di numerosi testi giuridici.

È stato inoltre: Membro del Parlamento (1992-1996); Assessore giuridico della Presidenza (1995-1997); Direttore di due Società finanziarie (1989-2001); Ambasciatore in Germania (2001-2003).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Belgio, ove risiede.

Parla inglese, tedesco e malay.

[01970-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL QATAR PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR MOHAMAD JAHAM ABDULAZIZ AL- KAWARI

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. Je suis heureux d'accueillir Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme premier Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de l'État du Qatar près le Saint-Siège et je La remercie de ses aimables paroles.

Je vous saurais gré, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de transmettre à Son Altesse l'Émir du Qatar, Cheikh Hamad ben Khalifa Al-Thani, ainsi qu'à Son Altesse le Prince héritier, Cheikh Tamim ben Hamad ben Khalifa Al-Thani, mes remerciements pour les salutations courtoises qu'Elles m'ont fait parvenir par votre intermédiaire, et de Leur exprimer en retour mes souhaits cordiaux de bonheur et de paix pour tous les habitants du pays.

2. Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, votre jeune pays, qui est situé dans une partie du monde considérée à bien des égards comme stratégique, s'attache à prendre sa place dans le concert des Nations, s'ouvrant aux échanges régionaux et internationaux et participant de diverses manières à la vie internationale. Convaincu de l'intérêt et de la fécondité de la rencontre entre les cultures et entre les religions, il s'efforce de promouvoir le dialogue comme moyen de résoudre les tensions entre les peuples et de progresser vers une meilleure entente, pour le bien de tous. C'est aussi, vous le savez, une préoccupation constante du Saint-Siège, qui encourage les nations à mettre tout en œuvre pour résoudre les nombreuses et graves difficultés qui pèsent aujourd'hui sur la vie internationale et pour désamorcer les risques d'affrontements, au moyen d'un dialogue courageux et inlassable qui respecte toutes les parties en cause. Ainsi, les conditions d'une paix solide et durable seront vraiment assurées.

La mondialisation qui caractérise notre temps ne doit pas être appréhendée seulement comme un phénomène économique, marqué par l'interdépendance de plus en plus étroite des échanges financiers et commerciaux, ni comme une accélération prodigieuse de la communication entre les hommes, grâce aux avancées considérables de la technique. Elle exprime plus fondamentalement la prise de conscience «qu'il existe des valeurs communes à toutes les cultures, parce qu'elles sont enracinées dans la nature de la personne. Par ces valeurs, l'humanité exprime ses traits les plus vrais et les plus caractéristiques» (*Message pour la Journée mondiale de la Paix*, 1er janvier 2001, n. 16). La reconnaissance de notre commune appartenance à un même monde et à une même famille humaine doit donc transformer les rapports entre les personnes et entre les peuples, de sorte que soit toujours respecté le bien commun et que cessent les affrontements violents et meurtriers entre les hommes, puisqu'ils sont tous frères, créés à la gloire du Dieu unique.

3. Pour l'Église catholique, la liberté religieuse fait partie des droits humains les plus fondamentaux parce qu'elle exprime précisément la dignité inviolable de tout homme dans sa dimension la plus noble, son rapport au Créateur, et parce qu'elle appartient à la liberté de conscience. Voilà pourquoi le Saint-Siège s'efforce de rappeler partout dans le monde le nécessaire respect de ce droit, qui vaut pour tous les croyants de toutes les religions. Je me réjouis vivement de savoir que l'État du Qatar reconnaît à tous les croyants la liberté de culte, appréciant l'attitude accueillante de votre gouvernement vis-à-vis des chrétiens, notamment de l'Église catholique. Je remercie chaleureusement ceux qui se sont engagés en ce domaine. Je sais que, pour leur part, les fidèles catholiques s'emploient à travailler avec cœur au bien du pays où ils vivent, dans le respect de ses lois et de ses traditions, et dans le souci du dialogue de la vie avec tous, particulièrement avec les Musulmans.

Le dialogue souhaité entre les nations doit permettre de dépasser la violence et de préparer les conditions d'une véritable paix. Il s'impose aussi comme une nécessité entre les religions. À ce sujet, je salue l'attention que portent les Autorités de votre pays à promouvoir activement le dialogue entre chrétiens et musulmans. Je suis convaincu, pour ma part, que «les confessions chrétiennes et les grandes religions de l'humanité doivent collaborer entre elles pour éliminer les causes sociales et culturelles du terrorisme, en enseignant la grandeur et la dignité de la personne, et en favorisant une conscience plus grande de l'unité du genre humain. Il s'agit là d'un domaine précis de dialogue et de collaboration œcuméniques et interreligieux, pour que les religions se mettent d'urgence au service de la paix entre les peuples» (*Message pour la Journée mondiale de la Paix*, 1er janvier 2002, n. 12).

4. Je vous sais gré d'avoir évoqué, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la situation dramatique de la Terre sainte et le souhait ardent qui est le vôtre de voir ce conflit prendre fin dans un avenir proche. Le Saint-Siège partage cette préoccupation de manière constante et il ne manque jamais une occasion de rappeler à la communauté internationale son devoir d'œuvrer avec insistance auprès des parties en cause pour que s'engagent de vraies négociations, invitant aussi les Autorités et les peuples en présence à saisir toutes les occasions pour envisager un avenir de paix et de fraternité. En effet, il n'y aura de paix véritable dans cette région que moyennant le renoncement aux violences réciproques et le recours à un dialogue courageux qui puisse aboutir à la reconnaissance du droit de chacun à vivre librement sur sa terre, dans le respect de la justice et de la sécurité pour tous, particulièrement autour des Lieux saints. Puisse venir le jour tant désiré où cette terre, si chère à tous les fils d'Abraham, verra revenir la paix !

Permettez-moi, par l'intermédiaire de votre personne, d'adresser un salut chaleureux à la communauté catholique qui vit au Qatar, ainsi qu'à tous les fidèles chrétiens d'autres confessions. Qu'ils aient à cœur de se comporter en vrais disciples du Christ, mettant en pratique le double commandement de l'amour de Dieu et du prochain ! Mes souhaits fervents rejoignent aussi tous les habitants de votre noble terre.

Au moment où Votre Excellence commence sa noble mission, je L'assure de la disponibilité attentive de tous mes collaborateurs, et je Lui adresse mes vœux les meilleurs pour un travail fructueux, afin que se développent des relations harmonieuses entre le Saint-Siège et l'État du Qatar.

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille, sur ses collaborateurs et sur tous ses compatriotes, j'invoque l'abondance des Bénédiction du Très-Haut.

S.E. il Signor Mohamad Jaham Abdulaziz Al-Kawari
Ambasciatore del Qatar presso la Santa Sede

È nato nel Qatar il 20 maggio 1958.

È sposato ed ha quattro figli.

Si è laureato in Relazioni Internazionali presso l'Università Complutense (Madrid, 1985).

Ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1981 ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Segretario di Ambasciata a Washington (1981-1986) ed a Madrid (1986-1990); Capo Sezione presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1990-

1991); Consigliere di Ambasciata a Teheran (1991-1992); Vice Capo di Gabinetto del Ministro degli Esteri (1993-1995); Direttore di Dipartimento (1995-1997); Membro del Comitato dei Servizi diplomatico e consolare (1997-2001); Capo di Gabinetto del Ministro degli Esteri (1997-2001); Direttore di Dipartimento e Capo della Delegazione per il Dialogo politico e strategico con la Francia (2001-2002).

Dall'aprile 2003 è portavoce per la Costituzione.

Il 30 giugno 2003 ha ricevuto il rango di Ambasciatore.

Inoltre ha rappresentato il Qatar in diverse Conferenze internazionali.

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Francia, ove risiede.

Parla inglese, spagnolo e francese.

[01971-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI ESTONIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR PRIIT KOLBRE

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure 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 Estonia to the Holy See. I would ask you kindly to convey to His Excellency Mr Arnold Rüütel my appreciation of his good wishes, which I warmly reciprocate, and to assure him and the people of Estonia of my prayers for the nation's well-being. Ten years ago I embarked on my "pilgrimage of peace" to various Baltic nations including your own beloved country, where I thanked God that "the lamp of freedom" had been lit anew. That visit remains vivid in my mind and I gratefully recall the warmth and hospitality with which I was received by civic and religious leaders alike.

The Church's diplomatic relations form a part of her mission of service to the whole human family. Her heartfelt desire to foster fruitful relations with civil society is anchored in her conviction that the hope of building a more just world – a world more worthy of man – cannot ignore an understanding of man's supernatural vocation. The Holy See's diplomatic activity seeks therefore to promote an understanding of the human person who "receives from God his essential dignity and with it the capacity to transcend every social order so as to move towards truth and goodness" (Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, No. 38). From this foundation the Church applies the universal values pertaining to truth and love to the vast array of cultures and nations that constitute our world.

As Your Excellency has observed, the arrival of the Catholic Church in Estonia dates back to the twelfth century. Together with other Europeans, Estonians rightly understand that the truths and values of Christianity have long been the foundation of the very fabric of European society. This heritage does not, however, belong just to the past. It is a project always in the making. It is therefore imperative that as the nations of Europe move towards a new configuration, Christianity's perennial proclamation of the truth should be recognized and reclaimed. It is in recovering Europe's true identity, upon which its freedom and democracy are founded, that the genuine progress of its cultural and civic institutions can be assured (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 109).

The people of Estonia know only too well that, when the treasure of the Christian faith is repressed or even denied, authentic social development founders and the vision of a society marked with hope fades. In the wake of a tragic period of fear and intimidation in European history, when the supremacy of force prevailed, the Christian faith proposes its Gospel of life assuring a future of hope and freedom, a future in which the supremacy of love and truth will prevail. No human folly or shallow sense of inclusiveness can be allowed to deny future generations this path to genuine personal fulfilment and sustainable solidarity between peoples, rooted in the hope that "does not disappoint" (*Rm* 5:5). In this regard I am confident that the Government of Estonia will

support the efforts of the Holy See to ensure that the Treaty of the Constitution of Europe will recognize Christianity's place at the heart of the Continent's life and future.

As Estonia continues to engage in the delicate but profoundly satisfying task of forging its national spirit there is much for which to be grateful. Freedom of thought and expression, now enjoyed by your citizens, is the condition for the search for truth which defines the human person. The experience of history teaches us however that the journey from oppression to liberty is arduous. It is often marked by hollow promises of hope and the lure of false forms of freedom detached from an essential link with truth. The passing of an era of repressive political ideology must not be allowed to usher in one of destructive secularist ideology. The human person – the one who seeks truth – is also the one who lives by belief (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, No. 31). It is to believing communities then that political and civic authorities can turn with confidence for a commitment to the humanization of society, by shaping a European social order respectful of every man and woman and thus in accordance with the common good (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 117).

There is no doubt that one of the greatest needs in Estonia today is to ensure that the sacred institution of marriage, willed by God in the very act of creation, with its concomitant of stable family life, is affirmed and supported. Both civic and religious leaders of all denominations must work together towards this end. Many cultural, social and political factors are in fact conspiring to create an increasingly obvious crisis of the family. The tragedy of divorce desolates family life and harms communities and individuals, especially children. The scourge of abortion, in addition to violating the essential dignity of human life, often causes untold emotional and psychological pain to the mother who herself is frequently a victim of circumstances contrary to her deepest hopes and desires. Faced with these afflictions, I again remind civil leaders that they have a duty to make courageous choices to protect life through legislative measures (cf. Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, No. 90) and to uphold the values and demands of the family through effective social policies. I also appeal to the Christian community of Estonia to bear steadfast witness to the sublime beauty of the intimate communion of life and love which defines the family and brings joy to human society.

Members of the Catholic Church, though few in number in your country, will continue to pray and work for the continuing development of the Estonian people and nation. I thank you for your gracious words of appreciation for what the Church is achieving through her humanitarian organizations, notably *Caritas*, in bringing a spirit of hope and practical assistance to vulnerable groups. Her mission of service to all peoples, particularly the poor and marginalized, stands at the heart of her witness to Christ's all-encompassing love.

Mr Ambassador, during your term as Estonia'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.

S.E. il Signor Priit Kolbre
Ambasciatore di Estonia presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Tallinn nel 1956.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Si è laureato in Economia (1979, Università di Tallinn), ed in Diplomazia (1990, Scuola Estone di Diplomazia). Ha conseguito inoltre un Dottorato in Economia (1986, Accademia Estone delle Scienze) ed ha frequentato un corso di specializzazione presso la Facoltà di Economia e Commercio dell'Università di Roma (1988-1989).

Ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Ricercatore presso l'Università di Tallinn (1979-1986); Professore Associato e Capo Dipartimento della Facoltà di Economia Industriale dell'Università di Tallinn (1986-1990); Direttore del Dipartimento di Politica Economica Estera presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1990-1992); Vice-Segretario Generale del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1993); Vice-Segretario Generale e Responsabile del Dipartimento di Politica Economica Estera presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1994-1996); Ambasciatore presso l'Unione Europea. In tale veste è stato Capo Negoziatore per l'ammissione dell'Estonia all'U.E. (1997-

2001).

Dal 2002 è Sotto-Segretario Permanente del Ministero degli Affari Esteri.

Risiede a Tallinn.

[01972-02.01] [Original text: English]
