



The Holy See

***LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MR. ROH MOO-HYUN
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA****

*To His Excellency Mr. Roh Moo-hyun
President of the Republic of Korea*

I am pleased to welcome Your Excellency to the Vatican and I thank you for your visit, which serves to strengthen the good relations that exist between your country and the Holy See. Your presence here is also a clear sign of your esteem for the Catholic Church. I would ask you to convey my affectionate greetings to the people of Korea, and to assure them of my prayers for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and throughout the region.

For over fifty years, the Korean people have suffered the consequences of division. Families have been split, close relatives have been separated from one another. Please let them know that I am spiritually close to them in their suffering. On compassionate grounds, I pray for a speedy solution to the problem which impedes so many from communicating with one another.

Sadly, the modern world is marked by an increasing number of threats to the dignity of human life. I wish therefore to commend all those in your country who work to uphold and defend the sanctity of life, marriage and the family, areas in which, as you know, the Catholic Church in Korea is particularly active. The risk of a nuclear arms race in the region is a further source of concern, fully shared by the Holy See. I urge all interested parties to make every effort to resolve the present tensions through peaceful means and to refrain from any gesture or initiative that might endanger the negotiations, while ensuring that the most vulnerable part of the North Korean population has access to humanitarian aid.

Mr. President, your country has experienced remarkable economic growth in recent times, for which I give thanks to God. At the same time, I am conscious that not all citizens are yet able to benefit fully from this increased prosperity. I therefore urge your Government to work in harmony

with all those who seek to promote the common good and social justice.

In the meantime, I call upon Saint Andrew Kim Taegon and the Korean martyrs to protect the citizen of your beloved nation, and I assure you of my prayers and good wishes for all the people of Korea.

From the Vatican, 15 February 2007

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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