



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday, 12 May 2005

*Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to meet you today, a little less than a month after I began my pastoral service as Successor of Peter. I am touched by the words that His Excellency Prof. Giovanni Galassi, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps to the Holy See, has just addressed to me, and appreciate the attention that all the diplomats pay to the Church's mission in the world. I offer my cordial greetings to each one of you and to those who work with you. I thank you for your courtesy during the great events that we lived through this past April, as well as for your daily work.

As I speak to you, I am thinking in addition of the countries you represent and of their Leaders. I am also thinking of the nations with which the Holy See does not yet have diplomatic relations. Some of them took part in the celebrations for the funeral of my Predecessor and for my election to the Chair of Peter.

Having appreciated these gestures, today I would like to thank them and to address a respectful greeting to the civil Authorities of those countries. Moreover, I express the hope that sooner or later I will see them represented at the Holy See.

I have received messages from them, especially those with numerous Catholic communities, which I particularly appreciated. I would like to say that I cherish these communities and all the peoples that belong to them, and assure them all of my remembrance in prayer.

In seeing you, how can I fail to recall the long and fruitful ministry of our beloved Pope John Paul

III! An unflagging Gospel missionary in the many countries that he visited, he also rendered a unique service to the cause of the unity of the human family. He pointed out the way to God, inviting all people of good will to sharpen their consciences all the time and to build a society of justice, peace and solidarity, in charity and in mutual forgiveness.

Nor should we forget his countless meetings here in the Vatican with Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ambassadors, at which he devoted himself to defending the cause of peace.

For my part, I come from a Country where peace and brotherhood are treasured by all the inhabitants, especially those who, like myself, lived through the war and the separation of brothers and sisters belonging to the same Nation because of destructive and inhuman ideologies that, beneath a mask of dreams and illusions, burdened men and women with the heavy yoke of oppression. Thus, you will understand that I am particularly sensitive to dialogue between all human beings in order to overcome every kind of conflict and tension and to make our earth an earth of peace and brotherhood.

All together, by combining their efforts, Christian communities, national Leaders, Diplomats and all people of good will are called to achieve a peaceful society, to overcome the temptation of confrontation between cultures, races and worlds that are different. For this, each people must find in its spiritual and cultural patrimony the best values it possesses so that it may advance undaunted to encounter the other, ready to share its own spiritual and material riches for the benefit of all.

In order to continue in this direction, the Church never ceases to proclaim and defend the fundamental human rights, which unfortunately are still violated in various parts of the earth. She is working for recognition of the rights of every human person to life, food, a home, work, health-care assistance, the protection of the family and the promotion of social development, with respect for the dignity of men and of women, created in the image of God.

Rest assured that the Catholic Church will continue to offer to cooperate, in her own province and with her own means, to safeguard the dignity of every person and to serve the common good. She asks no privileges for herself but only the legitimate conditions of freedom to carry out her mission. In the concert of nations, she always seeks to encourage understanding and cooperation between peoples based on loyalty, discretion and friendliness.

Lastly, I ask you to renew my thanks to your Governments for their participation in the celebrations on the occasion of the death of Pope John Paul II and of my election, as well as my respectful and cordial greeting, which I accompany with a special prayer that God will pour out an abundance of his Blessings upon you personally, upon your families, upon your countries and upon all who live in them.

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