



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. PIO BOSCO TIKOISUVA
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS
TO THE HOLY SEE**

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 18 December 2008*

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Fiji Islands to the Holy See. I would like to express my gratitude for the good wishes that you bring from President Ratu Josefa Iloilo and Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama. Please convey my greetings to each of them and assure them of my continued prayers for all the people of the Fiji Islands.

The Holy See is always encouraged to see signs of progress towards greater peace and stability, and hopes very much that the steps being taken towards re-establishing a democratically elected form of government in Fiji, drawing on the talents and energies of all the inhabitants, will bear fruit. Indeed, one of the key principles of the Christian view of social and political organization is the virtue of solidarity, through which the different elements of society work together to achieve the common good of all, thereby producing what my predecessor Pope Paul VI so beautifully described as a “civilization of love” (*Homily for the close of the Holy Year 1975*). For this reason the Church values the democratic system, as one which gives a voice to all the different sectors of society and encourages shared responsibility. It remains the case, however, that “the moral well-being of the world can never be guaranteed simply through structures alone, however good they are” (*Spe Salvi*, 24): democracy on its own is not enough, unless it is guided and enlightened by values rooted in the truth about the human person (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 46).

It is here that the Holy See’s diplomatic relations with States can make an important contribution to

the common good. While governments take responsibility for the political ordering of the State, the Church unceasingly proclaims her vision of the God-given dignity and rights of the human person. It is on this basis that she urges political leaders to ensure that all their people can live in peace and freedom, without fear of discrimination or injustice of any kind. She urges civil authorities to guarantee the most fundamental of all rights, namely the right to life from the moment of conception until natural death. Following on from this is the right to live in a united family and a moral environment conducive to personal growth, the right to seek and know the truth through education, the right to work and to enjoy the fruits of one's labour, the right to establish a family and rear children responsibly. The synthesis of all these rights is found in religious freedom, understood as "the right to live in the truth of one's faith and in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person" (*Centesimus Annus*, 47).

The Catholic community in Fiji is eager to play its part in promoting the respect due to the human person, especially through commitment to education and charitable activity. Indeed, the proper formation of the young and the service of the needy is integral to the Church's mission in the world, and both are key elements in her contribution to the common good of society. Owing to the presence of Christians from different traditions, as well as members of other religions, Fiji provides fertile ground for the development of ecumenical initiatives and inter-religious dialogue. The Catholic Church is pleased to contribute her expertise in these areas, and to cooperate with all men and women of good will so as to offer a common witness to the values that must underpin a "civilization of love". In particular, it behoves those who worship God to champion the cause of the poor, the lowly and the defenceless, those who have always been recognized as especially close to him.

Mr Ambassador, as you know, the Pacific region faces many challenges at this time, not least the effects of climate change, especially on island populations, and the need to preserve natural resources. The beauty of God's creation is especially evident to those who live in the South Pacific. It is my earnest hope that through regional and global cooperation, agreement can be reached on "a model of sustainable development capable of ensuring the well-being of all while respecting environmental balances" (*Message for the 2008 World Day of Peace*, 7). In this way, future generations of Pacific islanders will still be able to enjoy the wonders of God's creative genius and to live in true peace and harmony with nature.

Your Excellency, in offering my best wishes for the success of your mission, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon Your Excellency, your family and all the people of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

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