



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr HIDEKAZU YAMAGUCHI
NEW AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE HOLY SEE**
Saturday, 27 November 2010

Your Excellency,

I am happy to welcome you and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Holy See. I am grateful for the cordial greetings you have conveyed to me from His Majesty the Emperor. In reciprocation, please pass on my cordial good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for his health and for the members of the Imperial Family.

I am also glad to greet the Government and all the people of Japan. The Holy See congratulates itself on the excellent relations it has always maintained with your country since they were established almost 60 years ago. They have constantly been marked by cordiality and mutual understanding. Through Your Excellency's good offices I would therefore like to assure His Imperial Majesty, as well as the Government, of the Holy See's commitment to pursue and reinforce these relations. Since its entry into the United Nations Organization, Japan has played an important role on the regional and international scene and has contributed significantly to the expansion of peace, democracy and human rights in the Far East and beyond, especially in the world's developing countries.

Through its diplomatic missions in these States, the Holy See has noted with pleasure the funding that your country has granted for development, as well as other forms of assistance. The repercussions on the beneficiaries are immediate, it is true, but this assistance is certainly an essential cornerstone for the establishment of solid peace and prosperity in the symphony of the world's nations.

By working in this way to build the unity of the human family, through international cooperation you

will help to build a world economy where each one will occupy his proper place and will be able to profit, as never before, from global resources. May I be permitted to encourage your Government to continue its policy of cooperation in development, particularly in the domains that affect the poorest and weakest people?

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the tragic atomic bombing of the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The memory of this sombre episode in the history of humanity becomes more poignant every year, while those who witnessed this horror are disappearing. This tragedy insistently reminds us of how necessary it is to persevere in the effort for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for disarmament. The nuclear weapon remains a major source of concern. Possession of it and the risk of its possible use give rise to tensions and distrust in many of the world's regions. Your nation, Mr Ambassador, must be cited as an example for its constant support in the search for political solutions that not only make it possible to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also to prevent war from being seen as a means to resolve conflicts between nations and between peoples.

While sharing with Japan this concern for a world without nuclear weapons, the Holy See encourages all the nations to weave patiently the economic and political bonds of peace that stand like a rampart against every claim of recourse to arms and that make it possible to promote the integral human development of all the peoples (cf. [General Audience, 5 May 2010](#)).

A part of the sums allocated for weapons could be redeployed for the development of economic, educational and health-care projects. This would undoubtedly contribute to the inner stability of the country and to stability among peoples (cf. [Caritas in Veritate](#), n. 29). Now, in these times of the precarious situation of the market and of employment, the need to find reliable funding for development remains a constant concern.

Difficulties linked to the current world economic recession have not spared any country. In spite of this, Japan's place in the international economy remains very important and because of the increasing globalization of the commercial system and the movements of capital, which are a reality, the decisions taken by your Government will continue to have an impact far beyond your frontiers. May all people of good will see in the present world economic crisis "an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future" ([Caritas in Veritate](#), n. 21), for projects marked by charity in truth, by solidarity and by a commitment to an ethically-oriented economic sphere ([ibid.](#), n. 36).

Your country, Your Excellency, has enjoyed freedom of conscience and of worship for many years, and the Catholic Church in Japan thus has the possibility of living in peace and brotherhood with each one. Her members are not only free to commit themselves to Japanese culture and society, but also to play a lively and active role in contemporary Japan, particularly through its universities, schools, hospitals and charitable institutions, which it very willingly puts at the service

of the whole community. These institutions have recently been glad to respond also to the needs of migrant populations that have come to Japan and whose situation certainly requires prudent attention and effective aid on the part of the whole of society.

I emphasize even more that the members of the Catholic Church in Japan have long been involved in an open and respectful dialogue with other religions, especially those that are rooted in your nation. The Church has always promoted respect for the human person in his integrity and in his spiritual dimension as an essential element common to all cultures and which is expressed in the personal search for the sacred and in religious practice.

“God is the guarantor of man's true development, inasmuch as, having created him in his image, he also establishes the transcendent dignity of men and women and feeds their innate yearning to ‘be more’” (ibid., n. 29). I would like to assure the Japanese people of the high esteem in which the Catholic Church holds interreligious dialogue, engaging in it with determination in order to encourage mutual trust, understanding and friendship in the interest of the entire human family.

Lastly, Mr Ambassador, may I be permitted to offer you my best wishes, accompanied by my prayers for the success of your mission, and to assure you that the different offices of the Roman Curia are ready to help you in the exercise of your functions. Upon you, Your Excellency, upon your family and upon the noble people of Japan, I cordially invoke an abundance of God's Blessings.

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