



## The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO H.E. MR ANTONIO GANADO  
AMBASSADOR OF MALTA TO THE HOLY SEE\****

*Thursday, 16 June 2005*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I have the pleasure of welcoming you in the initial phase of my service on the Chair of Peter: welcome! Today you are presenting to me the Letters with which the President of the Republic of Malta accredits you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See.

As I greet you, I address a thought of gratitude to the President of the Republic for the kind words that he has addressed to me through you, and that witness to the solid bond that has united the Community of Malta to the Church of Rome since the times of St Paul the Apostle.

Mr Ambassador, please be kind enough to convey to the President and his family my sentiments of friendship and spiritual closeness, together with my fervent good wishes for the entire Nation.

I feel close to the Maltese People. Down the centuries they have always shown their special, deep attachment to the Successor of Peter, Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the universal Church.

I am well acquainted with the fidelity to the Gospel and to the Church, Mr Ambassador, which are features of the Christians in the Country that you represent. Consistent with their Christian roots, they feel the importance of their mission also in this delicate phase of European and world history. The Maltese People know that it is an integral part of the large expanse known as Europe.

Moreover, in keeping with the noble spiritual and cultural traditions that have marked it down the centuries, it wishes to do its utmost to prevent the European Community in the third millennium from losing the patrimony of cultural and religious values of its past. Indeed, it is only on this

condition that it will be possible to build a future of solidarity and peace with firm hope.

To give life to a united and supportive Europe is a commitment of all its peoples. Indeed, Europe must be able to combine the legitimate interests of each nation with the requirements of the common good of the whole Continent.

I am grateful to you, Mr Ambassador, for expressing the renewed desire of your Country to play the lead in this new phase of the Continent's history, by helping to reinforce its capacity for dialogue, for the defence and promotion of the family founded on marriage, for the Christian traditions and for openness to and an encounter with the different cultures and religions.

Mr Ambassador, these are some of the reflections that spontaneously rise in my heart at our first meeting. I assure you of the complete and sincere readiness of my collaborators to carry on a constructive dialogue with you, in order to facilitate the fulfilment of your lofty mission.

Lastly, allow me to express once again my high esteem for the citizens of Malta, a Country as dear to my venerable Predecessors as it is to me. I express fervent good wishes for the well-being of the entire population, which I accompany with a special Apostolic Blessing strengthened by prayer for you, for the Authorities, for your loved ones and for all the citizens of your illustrious Nation.

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