



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO NEW AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE*

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 29 May 2009*

Your Excellencies,

I receive you with joy this morning for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries to the Holy See: Mongolia, India, the Republic of Benin, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, Burkina Faso, Namibia and Norway. I thank you for conveying to me the courteous words of your respective Heads of State. I ask you kindly to reciprocate with my cordial greetings and respectful good wishes for them and for their lofty mission at the service of their countries, as well as for their peoples. May I also greet through you all the civil and religious authorities of your nations, as well as your compatriots. My prayers and thoughts go in particular to the Catholic communities present in your countries. You may rest assured that they wish to collaborate in a brotherly manner in building the nation and in doing the best they can to make their own contribution, founded on the Gospel.

Your Excellencies, commitment to the service of peace and to the strengthening of brotherly relations between nations is at the heart of your mission as diplomats. In the social and economic crisis that the world is experiencing today, it is urgently necessary to acquire a renewed awareness that a battle must be effectively fought to establish authentic peace, with a view to building a more just and prosperous world for all. Indeed, the frequently glaring forms of injustice between nations or within them as well as all the processes that contribute to causing divisions between peoples or marginalizing them, are a threat to peace and create serious risks of war. We are all called from this moment to make our own contribution to the common good and to peace, each in accordance with his own responsibilities. As I wrote in my *[Message for the World Day of Peace](#)*, celebrated on 1 January last, "One of the most important ways of building peace is through a form of globalization directed towards the interests of the whole human family. In order to govern

globalization, however, there needs to be a strong sense of *global solidarity* between rich and poor countries, as well as within individual countries, including affluent ones" (n. 8). Peace can only be built by seeking courageously to eliminate the disparities spawned by unjust systems in order to assure to all a standard of living that makes possible a worthy and prosperous existence.

These disparities have become even more blatant because of the current economic and financial crisis that is spreading through different channels in the countries with a small income. It suffices for me to mention just a few: the dwindling of foreign investments, the fall in the demand for raw materials and the tendency to reduce international aid. In addition, migrant workers, victims of the recession that is also afflicting their host countries, are sending smaller amounts to their families at home. This crisis may turn into a human catastrophe for the inhabitants of some of the numerous destabilized countries. Those who already live in extreme poverty are the first to be affected because they are the most vulnerable. This crisis has also engulfed in poverty people who until now had led a dignified life even though they could not be called wealthy. Poverty is increasing and it has serious and sometimes irreversible consequences. Indeed, the recession engendered by the economic crisis could become a threat to the very existence of innumerable individuals. Children are its first innocent victims who must be given priority protection. The financial crisis likewise has another effect. The despair it causes leads some people to an anguished search for a solution that will enable them to survive from day to day. Alas, this search is sometimes accompanied by individual or collective acts of violence that can lead to internal conflicts which risk further destabilizing the weaker societies. To deal with the current situation of crisis and find a solution to it some countries have decided not to reduce their aid to the most threatened countries, proposing on the contrary to increase it. It would be good if their example were followed by other developed countries, in order to permit countries in need to sustain their economy and to consolidate social measures designed to protect the neediest populations. I appeal for a supplement of brotherhood and solidarity and for a global generosity that is really lived. This sharing requires that developed countries rediscover a sense of proportion and moderation in their economies and lifestyles.

Your Excellencies, you are not unaware that new forms of violence have been manifested in recent years and that unfortunately they rely on the Name of God to justify dangerous behaviour. Knowing man's weakness, did not God reveal to him on Sinai these words: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain" (Ex 20: 7)? Such excesses have sometimes led to seeing religions as a threat to societies. People then attack them and discredit them, maintaining that they are not factors of peace. Religious leaders are duty bound to guide believers and to enlighten them so that they may advance in holiness and interpret the divine words in truth. It is therefore appropriate to encourage the emergence of a world in which religions and societies can be open to one another through the openness that exists in them and with one another. This would be bearing an authentic witness of life. It would be to create a space that would render dialogue positive and necessary. In making her own contribution to the world, the Catholic Church seeks to witness to a positive vision of

humanity's future. I am convinced "of the irreplaceable role of religion for the formation of consciences and the contribution which it can bring to among other things the creation of a basic ethical consensus in society" (*Welcome Ceremony, Elysée Palace*, 12 September 2008).

Your mission to the Holy See, Your Excellencies, has just begun. You will find with my collaborators the necessary support to carry it out successfully. I once again express my most cordial good wishes for the success of your sensitive mission. May the Almighty support and accompany you yourselves, your loved ones, your collaborators and all your compatriots! May God fill you with an abundance of his Blessings.

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