



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIAL LETTERS BY THE AMBASSADORS OF
BELIZE, BAHAMAS, THAILAND, NORWAY, MONGOLIA, NIGER, UGANDA AND SUDAN**

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 15 December 2022

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Your Excellencies,

I extend a heartfelt welcome to each of you at this presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See of your countries: Belize, Bahamas, Thailand, Norway, Mongolia, Niger, Uganda and Sudan. Please convey my sentiments of esteem to your respective Heads of State, together with the assurance of my prayers for them and all the people they serve.

As you take up your new responsibilities, I wish first to acknowledge the variety of ways in which your nations contribute to the common good not only of their citizens but of our entire human family. Each of you rightly shares the concern for building up the international community, as can be seen in your participation in the various international organizations and institutions that are a practical expression of the need for solidarity and cooperation among peoples.

In this vital and collective task of striving to safeguard and advance the wellbeing of men and women everywhere, especially in these days marked by the continued problems associated with the global health crisis and by the entrenched violent conflicts around the world, the concerted action of the whole family of nations and the work of diplomacy are required more than ever. Without them it is not possible to protect the dignity and human rights of all, to promote justice, reconciliation and dialogue for the sake of enduring peace, and to care for our common home as a precious gift for us and for future generations.

In particular, you begin your new diplomatic roles at a time of heightened political sensitivity to the increase in violations of international law and to what I have called a third world war being fought piecemeal. If peace is to have a chance and the poor the prospect of a better future, especially in those parts of the world where longstanding conflicts risk generating habituation in the public consciousness, we are all called to show greater vigilance and respond to the call to be peacemakers in our time.

In responding to these challenges, each of your nations, whether they be old or young, can draw upon a deep trove of historical, intellectual, technological, artistic and cultural treasures, that are unique contributions of your particular peoples. At the same time, in paying tribute to the ingenuity of those you represent, which will surely leave a legacy of goodness for the future, I see your national riches not just as abilities and skills to be celebrated and nurtured, nor merely as high standards of which you can rightly be proud. Your resourcefulness and talents are also gifts that can be placed at the service of the wider world, in both bilateral and multilateral contexts, for the betterment of humanity.

By generously offering their material, human, moral and spiritual resources, countries respond to a noble and essential vocation. Indeed, it is only by striving to confront the problems facing humanity in an increasingly integrated and solidary way that solutions may be found, and not only to the above-mentioned challenges. Attention must also be drawn to other widespread situations affecting fundamental human rights: the lack of universal access to drinking water, food or basic healthcare; the need for equitable access to education for those all too often excluded; as well as the opportunity for dignified work for all. I think too of the sick, the disabled, and the young – especially girls – who are frequently given insufficient opportunities for realizing their potential, and all those from impoverished backgrounds at risk of being left behind, forgotten or even deliberately excluded from fully participating in their communities.

Through constantly raising awareness of those on the existential margins of society, your role as diplomats can help shine a light into the darkest corners of our world, bring those on the peripheries to the centre, and lend a voice to the voiceless and those who have been silenced. It is my hope that in the exercise of your high duties, you will be able to seek, both here in Rome and elsewhere, fresh and creative ways of promoting solidarity and social friendship, particularly with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters (cf. Enc. *Fratelli Tutti*, 112-117). In this regard, I assure you of the cooperation and support of the Secretariat of State and of the Dicasteries and Offices of the Roman Curia. By building on the many existing initiatives and areas of common concern, I am confident that the positive and cordial relations between your countries and the Holy See will continue to develop and bear fruit.

Dear Ambassadors, as you commence your new missions in service to your nations, I offer you my prayerful best wishes for your important work. Upon you, your families and all your fellow citizens, I gladly invoke the Almighty's abundant blessings.

Thank you.

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