



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO MR. ALI ABEID A. KARUME
AMBASSADOR OF TANZANIA
ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday 1 December 2005

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you today as you present the Letters appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Holy See. I offer the assurance of my prayers for the well-being and prosperity of your nation and I ask that you thank President Benjamin Mkapa for his warm greetings.

Tanzania, like so much of Africa, is known for its natural beauty and has been blessed with a rich variety of cultures and traditions. These are customs which emphasize the importance of community, mutual respect and human dignity and can offer much to humanity as a whole. Diplomatic relations between Tanzania and the Holy See express our shared conviction that these qualities are essential for fostering understanding between peoples and peace in the world. At the same time, the Holy See's diplomatic role is distinguished from others in the international community in that it is marked by its dedication to serving the advancement of individuals and society through the affirmation of the values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty (cf. Pope John Paul II, [*Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations*](#), New York 5 October 1995, 18).

These central values, founded on the intrinsic dignity of every human being, are also the keys to developing and sustaining vibrant and successful democracies. In this regard, I wish to encourage your Government in its efforts to ensure that the country remains open to the richness that political diversity offers. Genuine democracies require that self-interest and efforts to reinforce positions of dominance be resisted, so that every citizen will enjoy the right to choose leaders through free and

transparent multiparty elections. Respect for human dignity demands that "public administration at any level - national, regional, community - is oriented toward the service of its citizens" who, in turn, make a valuable contribution to the nation as true partners in governance (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 412).

Along these same lines, I am pleased to note that your nation, as a founding member of the East Africa Community, is committed to working with other nations in the area for the creation of a common market. The adoption of a single customs union for the member nations is indeed a positive sign of the progress being made in this important undertaking. Communal solidarity at this level not only assists in the integral development of the region, but also develops a level of rapport and mutual concern which can be most helpful in addressing any differences which may arise. Moreover, the generosity that your country has shown by taking in nearly a million refugees fleeing the violence and bloodshed of wars in their homelands is most praiseworthy. The nation can certainly be proud of these instances of concern for the greater good of all; they represent significant gestures that make Tanzania an example for Africa and the world. I am also aware of the great material burden which this generosity has placed on your country, and I encourage the international community to continue to support you in your efforts to assist marginalized and displaced peoples.

Mr Ambassador, I wish to assure you that the Catholic Church will continue to help your country address its many needs. Indeed, she has much to offer in her social teaching which seeks to increase moral awareness of the demands of justice and solidarity, demands which are predicated on the incomparable worth and centrality of the human person. This is the motivation behind her attempts to comfort the poor and the suffering and to promote solidarity and cooperation among the people of Tanzania. In fact, initiatives sponsored by the Catholic Bishops have focused attention on the mobilization of the poor themselves in the fight to eradicate poverty and to foster development. The Bishops' endeavours are more than an eloquent expression of the Church's concern for the poor. They are an example of her keen desire to work with governmental authorities for the spiritual and material well-being of every citizen, regardless of race, religion or social affiliation.

Your Excellency, during your term as Tanzania's Representative to the Holy See the various departments of the Roman Curia will do all they can to assist you in the discharge of your duties. I offer my good wishes for the success of your efforts to build further on the positive relations already existing between us, and I pray that Almighty God will bestow abundant blessings upon yourself and the beloved people of Tanzania.

* *L'Osservatore Romano* 2.12.2005 p.4.

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