



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr FÉLIX KODJO SAGBO,
AMBASSADOR OF THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC TO THE HOLY SEE***

Thursday, 1st December 2005

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you, Your Excellency, at the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Togo to the Holy See.

I thank you for the kind words you have addressed to me recalling my venerable Predecessor Pope John Paul II, as well as the greeting you have brought me from H.E. Mr Faure Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic. I would be grateful if you would kindly reciprocate by expressing my best wishes to him. I also greet very cordially the entire Togolese People and wish them happiness and prosperity.

In your address, Mr Ambassador, you recalled the democratic process in which your Country has engaged with a view to the establishment of a State of rights. I am particularly appreciative of this. Indeed, from the start of my Pontificate, I have wanted to be close to the peoples of Togo who were then living through a painful situation (cf. *Regina Caeli, 1 May 2005*).

I warmly hope that the wounds opened, especially in these recent months, may be healed by an authentic reconciliation of all the children of the Nation. Violence cannot be the appropriate way to build a just and supportive society.

To achieve a reconciled existence where each person can live in peace and security and the displaced people return to their homes without fear, it is essential to establish the framework for dialogue between all members of the Nation. This will enable all sensitivities to be expressed, heard and associated in the construction of the Country. It is then that everyone's confidence will

gradually be restored for the good of the Nation.

In fact, to achieve a harmonious development of society, it is necessary that relations based on law and justice be established for all. The search for the common good must be a priority that involves leaders in particular and all social classes in order to encourage each person's complete human and spiritual fulfilment, respecting and promoting individuals and their fundamental rights as well as the essential moral principles.

This is because the common good is not simply socio-economic well-being. It also has a transcendent dimension, for God is the ultimate aim of his creatures.

The integral development of people and of society, often hampered by numerous and profound evils whose causes are multiple and complex, must be fostered with determination and sustained by international solidarity.

It is also true, however, that it is the citizens and their leaders who are primarily responsible to work for this as well as for making peace and reconciliation prevail.

As you know, Mr Ambassador, the Catholic Church is fully engaged in this struggle for the integral development of human beings and for the promotion of a future of justice and peace for the benefit of the entire population without distinction, in collaboration with all people of good will. Yet, to accomplish this mission, the Church must be able to express herself freely, with respect for the autonomy of the leaders of civil society.

The mission the Church has received from Christ is neither political, nor economic, nor social: its purpose is religious. The Church does not seek any special advantages for herself but, as Vatican Council II emphasized, "desires nothing more ardently than to develop herself untrammelled in the service of all men under any regime which recognizes the basic rights of the person and the family, and the needs of the common good" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 42).

Allow me, Mr Ambassador, to greet through you the Catholics in your Country. I hope that united with their Bishops, who have been entrusted with the governance of God's Church, they will be enthusiastic witnesses of the Gospel message and will work generously with their fellow citizens to establish a fraternal society in solidarity.

At the moment when your mission to the Apostolic See is beginning, I offer you my very best wishes for its success. Rest assured that you will always find with my collaborators the attentive welcome and cordial understanding you may need.

I wholeheartedly invoke upon you, Your Excellency, and upon your collaborators, your family and the Togolese People and their leaders, an abundance of divine Blessings.

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