



The Holy See

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

Consistory Hall

Thursday, 14 December 2006

Your Excellences,

I welcome you with joy for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries: Denmark, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Uganda, Syria and Lesotho. As I thank you for the courteous words you have conveyed to me from your Heads of State, I would be grateful if you would kindly reciprocate them by conveying my respectful good wishes for themselves and for their lofty mission at the service of their Nation. Through you, I would also like to greet all the civil and religious Authorities of your respective countries as well as all your fellow countrymen, with a special thought for the Catholic communities who work among and collaborate with their brothers and sisters.

The year that is drawing to a close has seen numerous conflicts on the different continents. As diplomats, you are doubtless concerned by the situations and hotbeds of tension that are constantly developing, to the detriment of the local populations, and reaping a multitude of innocent victims.

For its part, the Holy See also shares in this anxiety; it is a threat to the survival of certain peoples and burdens the poorest with suffering, depriving them of the most essential goods.

To keep these phenomena in check, the Authorities and all who have responsibilities in civil society must listen increasingly to their people; they must seek the most fitting solutions to respond to conditions of distress and poverty and for the most equitable sharing in each nation and in the international community.

In fact, it is the duty of social Leaders not to create or allow situations of serious political, economic

or social discontent to persist in a country or a region that would make people feel they were social outcasts, barred from the areas of decision making and management, and that they had no right to benefit from the fruits of the gross national product.

Such forms of injustice cannot but be a source of unrest and engender a sort of spiral of violence. The search for peace, justice and understanding among all must be priority targets that demand of people in responsible positions attention to practical situations in the country and an effort to eliminate all that opposes equity and solidarity, especially corruption and the lack of sharing of resources.

This implies, therefore, that people with authority in the nation be constantly concerned to consider their political and social commitment as a service to individuals and not a quest for benefits for a minority to the detriment of the common good. I know that a certain amount of courage is necessary to keep on course in the midst of difficulties, bound for the good of individual persons and the national community.

However, in public life, courage is an indispensable virtue if we are not to allow ourselves to be swayed by partisan ideologies or pressure groups or by the greed for power. As the Church's social doctrine reminds us, the good of the person and peoples must always remain the primordial criterion for decisions in social life.

As you begin your mission as ambassadors to the Holy See, Your Excellencies, I address my most cordial good wishes to you for success with your work. May the Most High accompany you, your dear ones, your collaborators and all the inhabitants of your country, and may he crown each one with an abundance of his Blessings.

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