



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO H.E. Mr KAGEFUMI UENO  
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE HOLY SEE\****

*Monday, 13 November 2006*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am pleased to welcome you, Your Excellency, at this solemn ceremony for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Holy See.

I was touched by your friendly words and by the greetings you have conveyed to me from His Majesty Emperor Akihito. I should be grateful if you would kindly reciprocate by expressing to him my best wishes for himself and for the Imperial Family.

I am delighted with Japan's respectful and friendly relations with the Holy See and I offer my very cordial greetings to the Japanese People in the hope that they will pursue their human and spiritual development with respect for the dignity of the human person, seeking tirelessly to further peace and solidarity between peoples.

Mr Ambassador, as you have stressed, the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of your Country have contributed to spreading the fundamental human values. Society's recognition of the spiritual dimension, which is giving rise to an authentic dialogue between religions and cultures, cannot but encourage a common journey in brotherhood and solidarity; this alone will make possible the integral development of the human being.

In fact, many possible fields of action are open to these interreligious and intercultural forms of cooperation, especially in the areas of commitment to a just society, to world peace and to the fight against poverty in growing solidarity.

More than ever, the search for peace between nations must be a priority in international relations. No definitive solution to the crises that the world is going through can be found in violence.

On the contrary, they will be settled by peaceful means and respect for the commitments made.

As people know and as experience never ceases to demonstrate, violence can never be a correct answer to the problems of societies, for it destroys the dignity, life and freedom of the human person whom it claims to defend.

To build peace, cultural, political and economic policies are important. However, "first of all peace must be built in hearts. It is here, in fact, that sentiments develop that can nurture it or, on the contrary, threaten, weaken and stifle it" (*Message for the 20th Anniversary of the Interreligious Meeting in Assisi*, 2 September 2006; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 13 September, p. 3).

Thus, while I hail the steps it has taken, I ask your Country to persevere with determination in its efforts to help establish a just and stable peace in the world, especially in the Far East.

In the crisis this region is currently experiencing, the Holy See encourages bilateral or multilateral negotiations, convinced that a solution must be sought by peaceful means and with respect for the engagement of all the parties present, to achieve the nuclear disarmament of the Korean Peninsula.

Ongoing humanitarian aid

In this same perspective, I ardently hope that the international community will pursue and intensify its humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable peoples, especially in North Korea, to forestall the serious consequences to civilians that a possible interruption of it might cause.

Furthermore, Mr Ambassador, I am delighted with your Country's generous contribution to assisting the poorer nations. It is indeed essential that the constantly developing bonds of interdependence between peoples be accompanied by an intense commitment to prevent consequences of the disastrous escalation of the marked inequalities that persist between developed and developing countries.

These bonds must be transformed into genuine solidarity that encourages the economic and social growth of the poorer countries.

I rejoice in the respect that the Catholic Church enjoys in Japan. Through you, Mr Ambassador, I desire to greet warmly its Bishops and all the members of their Dioceses, as I encourage them to live ever more firmly in the communion of faith and to pursue their commitment to peace and reconciliation among the region's peoples, generously collaborating with their compatriots.

At the time when your mission to the Apostolic See is beginning, I offer you my best wishes for its success. I wish to assure you of the cordial and attentive support that you will always find here with my collaborators.

I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon His Majesty Emperor Akihito and upon the Imperial Family, upon the Japanese People and its leaders, as well as upon you, Your Excellency, your collaborators and your family.

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*\*L'Osservatore Romano* n. 48 p. 4.

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