



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. JUAN PABLO CAFIERO
NEW AMBASSADOR OF ARGENTINA TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 5 December 2008

Mr Ambassador,

This ceremony at the beginning of your great responsibility, at which you, Your Excellency, present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Argentine Republic to the Holy See is a particularly important moment in the process of bilateral relations between the Apostolic See and your noble country, which we trust will be increasingly fluid and fruitful.

I would like to reciprocate with my warm thanks for your attentive words and the respectful greetings you have conveyed to me on behalf of H.E. Mrs Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, President of the Argentine nation, while at the same time I accompany with my prayers every initiative that encourages harmony, justice and the aspiration to the common good in this beloved land. The Argentines know well that they have a place of special importance in the Pope's heart. I think of them and present their projects, their joys and their worries to God, so that horizons of prosperity may unfold for all, for a present rich in fruitful achievements and a bright and tranquil future.

I am particularly pleased to receive you, Your Excellency, as Ambassador of a country with deep-rooted Christian traditions. These traditions have sown and cultivated important customs, shaping within them the identity and religious sense of people who yearn to surpass themselves every day and to give the international community the best of themselves, as they have shown on various occasions, giving proof of their generosity and their lofty goals. This valuable spiritual patrimony illuminates and strengthens the fundamental aspirations of the human being. As well as viewing it as a heritage to be preserved, it is also important to see it as a treasure from which to draw constantly the strength to face the present and to offer it as a precious gift to the new generations.

The Gospel message is profoundly rooted in this nation and bears abundant fruits, especially in outstanding models of conduct that have enriched others with the exemplary witness of their human and Christian virtues. Among them, I call to mind with pleasure the famous figure of Ceferino Numuncurà, whose Beatification at the end of last year was a joy for the entire People of God. This young Mapuche, a spiritual son of St John Bosco, is a splendid sign of how "Christ, being in truth the incarnate Logos, 'love to the end', is not alien to any culture, nor to any person; on the contrary, the response that he seeks in the heart of cultures is what gives them their ultimate identity, uniting humanity and at the same time respecting the wealth of diversity, opening people everywhere to growth in genuine humanity" (*Address at the opening session of the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops' Conferences*, Aparecida, Brazil, 3 May 2007).

In exercising her proper mission, the Church seeks at every moment to promote the dignity of the person and to raise him in an integral way for the benefit of all. In this context, faith in Christ has given an impetus to many charitable initiatives and projects of social assistance in dioceses in Argentina as well as through religious institutes and secular associations. The concern and activity of the Church, focused in particular in the moral and spiritual context, has also spread, and with particular intensity in the sectors of health-care, culture, education and work, and attention to the deprived.

With its works, the Catholic community continues uniquely to bear a witness of charity and to project the light of the Gospel for consciences, so that man may discover a fullness of life that shines in a dignified personal conduct and in responsible and harmonious coexistence, reciprocal understanding and forgiveness. It is necessary to point out in this respect the importance of avoiding those attitudes that damage brotherhood and mutual understanding, but on the contrary strengthening all that fosters a sense of civil responsibility with a view to the good of society as a whole.

In this perspective, without wishing to become a political subject, the Church, with the independence of her moral authority, aspires to loyal and open cooperation with all who are responsible for the temporal order in the noble plan of building a civilization of justice, peace, reconciliation and solidarity, and those other norms that can never be abolished or left at the mercy of partisan consensus, since they are engraved in the human heart and correspond to the truth. In this sense, God's presence both in the conscience of each person and in the public sphere gives firm support to respect for the person's fundamental rights and firmly supports the construction of a society founded on them. I therefore desire to express my best wishes for the strengthening of dialogue and collaboration between the Argentine Authorities and the episcopate of this country for the sake of the common good of the whole population.

The 21st century is showing ever more clearly the need to build a personal, family and social life in harmony with the indispensable values that uplift the person and the entire community. Among

these values emphasis should be placed on: the endorsement of the family based on the marriage of a man and a woman, the inclination to a morality whose main traits are engraved in the depths of the human soul, the spirit of sacrifice and generous solidarity expressed especially when circumstances are particularly adverse, the defence of human life from its conception to its natural end, the eradication of poverty, promoting honesty, the fight against corruption, the adoption of means that help parents in their inalienable right to raise their children with their own ethical and religious convictions, as well as the promotion of young people so that they may be men and women of peace and reconciliation.

In this regard, precisely today, with the presence of the Delegation of this Apostolic See, the Presidents of Argentina and Chile are meeting to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the mediation undertaken by my venerable Predecessor Pope John Paul II in the resolution of the controversy between the two nations concerning the determination of their boundaries in the southern zone of the continent. The memorial monument that is to be built in the locality of Mount Aymond will be an eloquent testimony and will serve to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and the desire for understanding between both countries. It is thanks to the efforts of their governments and institutions and their common cultural, social and religious ideals that they succeeded in abandoning the paths of confrontation to demonstrate that, with dialogue and magnanimity, it is possible to achieve a dignified, stable and solid peace as befits wise and civilized nations.

To conclude this meeting, I express my best wishes to you, Your Excellency, to your family and to the staff of this diplomatic mission, and I express to you the availability and support of my collaborators in all that may help the successful fulfilment of your office as Ambassador. I ask you to bring the Pope's cordial greetings to all your fellow countrymen, and most particularly to the President of the Argentine Republic and its Government. I pray the Lord, through the motherly intercession of Our Lady of Luján, to bestow an abundance of gifts upon the sons and daughters of this beloved country, to whom I impart with pleasure the Apostolic Blessing.