



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. BOUBACAR SIDIKI TOURÉ
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI
TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 16 December 2010*

Mr Ambassador,

I very willingly receive the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See. On this happy occasion I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and I thank you for your kind words expressing the respectful tribute of the President of the Republic and of the people of Mali. I would be grateful if you would kindly convey in reciprocation to H.E. Mr Amadou Toumani Touré, Head of State, my sentiments of gratitude and respect and the assurance of my prayers for him and for all the people of Mali.

This year Mali, like a large number of African countries, celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Independence. I would like to congratulate all Malians on the considerable progress they have made in this half-century.

As you know, Mr Ambassador, the progress achieved is always accompanied by challenges to be met. I mention among others social peace, education and the right to food. In order to build a peaceful and stable society, Mali can draw on its cultural patrimony which contains human, intellectual and religious values. I encourage you to preserve them and to pass them on to the new generations, since a society served by people endowed with profound moral perspicacity never fails to promote justice and peace.

The leaders of such a society are able to transcend their own interests so as to be virtuous governors, totally dedicated to the common good. They also know how to cultivate human

relations inspired by trust and solidarity, reciprocal respect and sincere dialogue. I therefore encourage the various Malian leaders to help their compatriots to be reconciled with each other in the aftermath of the conflicts that have punctuated Mali's recent history.

I also invite them to fight all forms of discrimination between races and religions. Indeed it is legitimate for each ethnic or religious community to be able to express itself visibly, with mutual respect, fostering a peaceful coexistence at every level of the national community (cf. *Address to the Bishops of Mali, 18 May 2007*).

Looking to the future, the Malian Government has included among its priorities the formation of executives capable of assuring the development of their country. In a world characterized by the interdependence of people and the rapid spread of copied human behaviour accompanied by growing individualism, education constitutes a vital and existential need.

Yet it cannot be reduced to an accumulation of intellectual knowledge or technical competencies. Knowledge of how to do things must go hand in hand with knowledge of how to live and how to be, which, based on human wisdom and on spiritual resources, reflects more clearly the essential truth of human existence. This is why, in the education of their children, Malian families should not be satisfied only with the scholastic results to be achieved while disregarding the human, cultural and religious virtues. May they offer their children guidelines that will point them towards the truth about life, the duty of solidarity and dialogue which are coexistential with human nature.

It is also incumbent on the State to support families in their task of education and to watch over the intellectual and human quality of educational personnel. May young Malians not let themselves be seduced by easy gain, which might incite them to ally themselves with networks that drive them into crime or drug-trafficking!

Your country has set out, Mr Ambassador, on the path of harmonious development, elaborating projects such as the new Persons and Family Code. I nourish great hope that it will be able to overcome the inequalities between people and social groups. This new Code will contribute to social peace if those in charge of your country also work to guarantee the right to food.

As I acknowledge the efforts made to increase cotton and rice production, I encourage your Government to tackle the problem of food insecurity "by eliminating the structural causes that lie at its roots and by promoting agricultural development [...] through investment in rural infrastructures [...] that can make the best use of the human, natural and socio-economic resources that are more readily available at the local level [...]. All this needs to be accomplished with the involvement of local communities in choices and decisions that concern the use of agricultural land" (*Caritas in Veritate, n. 27*).

As you may note, Your Excellency, several executives from your country were trained at Catholic

schools. The Church's engagement in formation and education, as well as in the charitable, health-care and social sectors, demonstrates her desire to collaborate with the State while preserving the particular character of her structures.

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the Convention on Health Care, which was signed by the Bishops' Conference and the Ministry for Health of Mali, as well as this Ministry's commitment to allocating funds to the health-care structures of the Church.

To conclude, through you I warmly greet the Catholic community of Mali with its pastors, and I invite it to continue its courageous and joyful witness of faith and of the brotherly love taught by Christ. I would also like to encourage the efforts made by the Bishops' Conference and by the Government to consolidate the relations of reciprocal respect between Mali and the Holy See.

At this time when you are inaugurating your mission I offer you, Mr Ambassador, my best wishes, as I assure you of the support of the different services of the Roman Curia in the accomplishment of your office. To this end, I very willingly invoke upon you and upon your family, as well as upon your collaborators, an abundance of divine Blessings.

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