



The Holy See

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

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 9 June 2011*

Your Excellencies,

I receive you with joy at the Apostolic Palace this morning for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries to the Holy See: Moldova, Equatorial Guinea, Belize, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ghana and New Zealand. I thank you for the courteous words you have just addressed to me on behalf of your respective Heads of State. I ask you kindly to reciprocate and to convey, in turn, my respectful greetings to them and my good wishes both for themselves and for the lofty mission they are carrying out at the service of their country and their people. I would also like to greet through you all the civil and religious authorities of your nations, as well as all of your compatriots. My prayers and thoughts of course also go to the Catholic communities in your countries.

Since I have the opportunity for a special meeting with each one of you, I would now like to speak more broadly. The first six months of this year have been marked by innumerable tragedies which have concerned nature, technology and peoples. The magnitude of these catastrophes calls us to wonder. Man comes first, as it is right to remember. Man, to whom God entrusted the good stewardship of nature, cannot be dominated by technology or subjected to it. An awareness of this must bring States to reflect together on the future of the planet in the short term, facing their responsibility for our life and for technology. A human ecology is an imperative need. One of our political and economic priorities must be to adopt in every way a manner of life that respects the environment and supports the research in and use of forms of energy that preserve the patrimony of creation and are that safe for human beings. In this regard, it is necessary to review our entire approach to nature. It is not a place solely for exploitation or for play. It is man's native land, in a certain sense his "home". This is fundamental for us. The shift of mentality in this domain, that is,

the constraints it brings, allows us rapidly to become more proficient in the art of living together that respects the alliance between man and nature, without which the human family risks disappearing.

Serious reflection must therefore be undertaken and precise and viable solutions proposed. Every Government must be committed to protecting nature and to helping it carry out its essential role in humanity's survival. The United Nations seem to me the natural setting for such reflection which, if it is to give priority to solidarity rather than to personal interest, must not be clouded by political and economic interests that are blind and partisan.

It is also right to question oneself about the proper place for technology. Its marvellous potential goes hand in hand with social and ecological disasters. By extending the relational aspect of work to the planet, technology impresses on globalization a particularly accelerated rhythm. Now, it is the human worker who is responsible for this dynamic of progress and not technology which is only a human creation. To stake everything on technology or to believe that it is the exclusive agent for happiness brings a reification of the human being which results in blindness and unhappiness when powers it does not possess are attributed and delegated to it.

It suffices to note the "damage" of progress and the risks to humanity of an all powerful technology which, ultimately, has not been mastered. Technology that dominates human beings deprives them of their humanity. The pride it engenders has brought an inflexible economic focus into our societies and a certain hedonism that determines behaviour subjectively and egotistically.

The weakening of the primacy of the human being brings existential bewilderment and a loss of the meaning of life. For a vision of the human person and of things without a reference to transcendence uproots man from the earth and fundamentally impoverishes his very identity. Hence it is urgently necessary to succeed in combining technology with a strong ethical dimension, for the human capacity to transform and, in a sense, to create the world through his own work is always based on the first and original gift of things that are made by God (cf. John Paul ii, *Centesimus Annus*, n. 37). Technology must help nature blossom according to the will of the Creator. Working in this way the researcher and the scientist adhere to design of God, who willed that man be the summit and steward of creation. Solutions with this as its foundation will protect human life and human vulnerability, as well as the rights of present generations and those to come. And humanity will be able to continue to benefit from the progress that man, with his intelligence, succeeds in achieving.

Aware of the risk humanity runs in the face of a technology seen as a more efficient "response" than political voluntarism or the patient effort of education in cultivating morals, government leaders must promote a humanism respectful of the human being's spiritual and religious dimension — because the dignity of the human person does not vary with the fluctuation of opinions. Respecting the human aspiration to justice and peace makes it possible to build a

society that promotes itself, when, for example, it supports families or rejects the exclusive primacy of money. A country thrives on the fullness of the life of its citizens, each aware of his or her own responsibilities and each able to bring to bear his or her own convictions.

Furthermore, the natural tendency towards the true and the good is a source of dynamism which generates the desire to collaborate in order to realize the common good. Therefore social life can be constantly enriched by integrating cultural and religious diversity through the sharing of values, a source of brotherhood and communion. Life in society must be considered first and foremost as a spiritual reality. It is the role of political leaders to guide people towards human harmony and towards the wisdom so longed for which must culminate in religious freedom, the authentic face of peace.

At the time when you are beginning your mission to the Holy See, I would like to assure you, Your Excellencies, that you will always find with my collaborators the attention and help you may need. Upon you, upon your families, upon the members of your diplomatic missions and upon all the nations which you represent, I invoke an abundance of divine blessings.