



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF DJIBOUTI TO THE HOLY SEE****

Thursday, 6 December 2001

Mr Ambassador,

1. I am pleased to welcome your Excellency on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Djibouti to the Holy See, and I thank you for your kind words.

I would be grateful, Mr Ambassador, if you would kindly convey my thanks to President Ismaël Omar Guelleh for the courteous wishes he has conveyed to me through you and pass on to him my cordial good wishes for the prosperity and peace of all the inhabitants of your country.

2. You wished to stress the importance of peace and dialogue for understanding among nations. In the context of the recent events, safeguarding peace at an international level has become a priority for the collective union of the civil authorities and citizens of the countries in the world. As you know, this has long been a constant concern of the Holy See. It endeavours to encourage nations to seek peace with patience and determination, setting forth the necessary conditions to maintain it, fostering a dialogue that respects the parties involved, especially minorities, for whom every society should make room by appreciating each group's special contribution to the common good.

At both the local, regional and world levels dialogue is essential: on the one hand to avoid the tragically painful clashes and conflicts that unleash violence among human beings and peoples, and on the other, to assure an increasingly fraternal understanding. North East Africa, the region of the world in which your country is located, has not escaped distressing situations of tension and conflict. Mr Ambassador, I want to recognize the authorities of your country for their active part in

solving the Somali conflict, thanks to the Conference on Reconciliation that took place in Arta last year. I hope that the lasting effort expended on the quest for friendly coexistence among the different protagonists will be followed up and if possible extended to other troubled areas, giving priority to negotiation and the avoidance of every form of violence. There is no doubt that this is the way to peace, a solid, enduring peace, to which all people of good will aspire.

3. However, whether it is between persons, among the different members of a single nation or among states, there can be no solid, lasting peace unless all are guaranteed living conditions which respect their dignity. This need for justice certainly calls for a more equitable sharing of resources among the rich and the poor at all levels of social life, and for the institution of a real culture of solidarity (*Message for World Day of Peace, 2001*, n. 17). It is a fundamental right, and at the beginning of this new millennium, requires that we develop a new and fruitful dialogue among cultures and religions with the desire for mutual recognition and in order to offer a common service to men and women that may truly respect their moral and spiritual values. Initiating, keeping up and intensifying this dialogue is one of the missions that the Holy See will continue to pursue. As you recalled, Mr Ambassador, your presence here also shows that your country, "a land of exchanges and encounters", is interested in and eager to defend these values, which are an expression of the fundamental dignity of every human being and must be respected as such.

4. I am pleased, Mr Ambassador, through you to be able to greet the Catholic community of the Republic of Djibouti. It is small in numbers, but is actively involved in the nation's economic and social development, as well as in the service of the education of youth. I know that the Catholic schools are appreciated, not only because of the teachers' competence but also because of the quality of human values they pass on. The Catholic Church in your country has good relations with the entire population, as well as with the different religious authorities. She wishes to keep alive a fraternal dialogue with everyone, in mutual respect and with a view to greater mutual esteem and the quest for the common good. Through you, may I greet all the members of the Catholic community, the bishop and the priests, and encourage them, through a creative charity, to witness tirelessly to God's love for every man, woman and child.

5. Mr Ambassador, at the time that you are beginning your mission as representative to the Holy See, please accept my very best wishes for its success and for the continuation and development of harmonious relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Djibouti. I assure you that to assist you in your noble task, you will always find an attentive welcome and cordial understanding among those who work with me. I invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you, Your Excellency, and upon your family, your personnel and all the people of Djibouti.

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