



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

Friday, 18 May 2001

Mr Ambassador,

1. I welcome you with pleasure on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Guinea to the Holy See. I was touched by your kind words showing your country's attachment to spiritual values. Would you kindly convey my cordial good wishes to President Lansana Conté, for the accomplishment of his important office at the service of the nation. I warmly greet all the Guinean people, asking God to guide them and support them in their efforts to progress on the paths of human and spiritual development. May the Most High grant them all to live in peace and tranquillity!

2. As you have recalled, Mr Ambassador, for several months your country has been confronting serious problems of security on some of its frontiers and must generously welcome numerous refugees who are fleeing the episodes of violence in the neighbouring countries. In the face of all this suffering, it is urgently necessary that authentic peace be rapidly established in the region so that the peoples may at last return to their land and live there safely. If this is to happen, an awareness must develop everywhere that humanity is called by God to form one family. Creating harmonious relationships between individuals and human groups in each nation as well as among all nations must be a priority, especially for those whose mission is to govern peoples and keep the peace. I warmly hope that in Africa, a continent wounded by so many episodes of violence, everyone may be courageously committed to creating conditions of true reconciliation, to put an end to all the fratricidal wars once and for all.

3. However, as I have already had the opportunity to recall, "There is no true peace without

fairness, truth, justice and solidarity. Failure awaits every plan which would separate *two indivisible and interdependent rights: the right to peace and the right to an integral development born of solidarity*" (cf *Message for World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2000, n. 13).

At the beginning of the new millennium our world continues to be marked by many contradictions, one of the most blatant of which is that of entire peoples grappling with living conditions that do not respect their dignity as persons, while the privileged profit greatly from the immense possibilities offered by economic, cultural and technological growth. Here I would like to renew my appeal for solidarity in favour of the most underprivileged countries, especially on the African continent.

Indeed, while many nations are confronted by the new problems posed by globalization, it is necessary to be creative, to rethink international cooperation and to succeed in establishing a real culture of solidarity. Thus, while fostering a sense of universal moral values, particularly by fighting all forms of corruption, it will be possible to contribute to the development of the less economically advanced countries and enable the greatest possible number to benefit from the results.

4. In your country, relations between Christians and Muslims are generally good and collaboration with a view to the common good is usual. It is right and necessary to affirm national unity. The different religious communities which make up the country should seek increasingly to make the most of what unites them, without denying what separates them, in order to improve the daily life they share. The consolidation of brotherly relations among all the citizens involves the requirement of a sound education for people, especially for the young generations, in accepting and respecting others. As I recently had the opportunity to affirm, "It is crucial for the young to be taught the ways of respect and understanding, so that they will not be led to misuse religion itself to promote or justify hatred and violence" (*Address at the Ummayyad Mosque*, Damascus, 6 May 2001, n. 3).

5. On this happy occasion, Mr Ambassador, may I offer my warm greetings to the Bishops and Catholics of your country. I wholeheartedly encourage them in the following of Christ, so that the Great Jubilee, which they celebrated enthusiastically, may bear abundant fruit for the greatest good of their families and all society. May they continue in collaboration with their compatriots to work enthusiastically to build a society that is more and more fraternal and welcoming to all those who are suffering or in distress.

6. At the time when you are beginning your mission to the Holy See, I offer you my best wishes. Be assured that you will always find here with my co-workers an attentive welcome and cordial understanding.

I sincerely invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon Your Excellency, your family, the Guinean people and its leaders.

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