



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO HIS EXCELLENCY Mr. CARL-HENRI GUTEAU,  
NEW AMBASSADOR OF HAITI TO THE HOLY SEE\****

*Monday, 6 July 2009*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I welcome you with joy, Your Excellency, on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Haiti to the Holy See, a mission moreover which is not unknown to you, Your Excellency, since you formerly held the same office at the Holy See from 2002 to 2004.

I am grateful to you for conveying the cordial message addressed to me by H.E. Mr René Garcia Préval, President of the Republic. To reciprocate, I would be grateful to you if you would kindly express to him my best wishes for himself and for all Haitians, hoping that they may be able to live in dignity and safety and form a society that is increasingly just and fraternal. Mr Ambassador, as I thank you for your courteous words, I would also like to mention to you the forthcoming celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Concordat between the Holy See and Haiti, the oldest in America. On this occasion, I am delighted with the numerous fruits that the Agreements have produced for the Church and for the nation, emphasizing once again in this regard that in Haiti the Catholic community has always enjoyed the esteem of the Authorities and of the population.

In recent months, Your Excellency, your country has suffered natural disasters which have caused serious damage throughout the national territory. The widespread destruction of farmland caused by hurricanes have aggravated the already difficult situation of many families. I hope that the international solidarity, for which I appealed on various occasions last year will continue to be forthcoming. In fact, in this particularly delicate period of national life the international community must give concrete signs of support to people in need. Moreover, as is known, in recent years many Haitians have left their country to seek the means to support their families elsewhere. It is

therefore desirable that, despite the sometimes problematic administrative situations, rapid solutions be found to enable these families to live united.

Your country's vulnerability to bad and sometimes violent weather to which it is regularly subject has thus led to a better awareness of the need to take care of Creation. Indeed there is a sort of kinship of mankind with Creation which must lead him to respect each situation. The protection of the environment is a challenge to all, for it is a question of defending and making the most of a collective good, destined for all, a responsibility which must therefore encourage the present generations to be concerned about the generations to come. The thoughtless exploitation of the resources of Creation and its consequences, which all too often seriously affect the life of the poorest people, can only be effectively tackled by political and financial decisions in conformity with human dignity and by effective international cooperation.

However, your country is not without signs of hope. They are mainly based on the human and Christian values that exist in Haitian society, such as respect for life, attachment to the family, the sense of responsibility and above all faith in God who does not abandon those who trust in him. Attachment to these values makes it possible to avoid many of the evils that threaten social and family life. I therefore warmly encourage the efforts of all those in your country who contribute to promoting the protection of life and to restoring to the family institution its full importance, rediscovering in particular the value of marriage in social life. In fact, "every social model that intends to serve the good of man must not overlook the centrality and social responsibility of the family" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n. 214*). In this perspective, it is indispensable to provide families who are in need with real support, and to guarantee women and children who are sometimes the victims of violence, neglect or injustice with effective protection.

The education of youth is also a priority for the future of the nation. This task is important and urgent in order to develop the quality of human life, at both the individual and social levels. In fact, at the root of poverty there are often various forms of cultural deprivation. In this domain, the Catholic Church makes a considerable contribution, through her numerous educational institutions, through her presence in rural and distant regions and also through the quality of the education and training provided by the Catholic schools. I am glad to know that these institutions are appreciated by the authorities as well as by the population.

On this happy occasion, Mr Ambassador, I would also like to offer a warm greeting to the Catholic community in your country which, guided by its Bishops, bears a generous witness to the Gospel. I encourage it to pursue its service to Haitian society, ever attentive to the needs of the poorest people and seeking the nation's unity with all, in brotherhood and solidarity. Indeed, it is an authentic sign of hope for all Haitians.

Mr Ambassador, when your noble mission of representing your country to the Holy See is beginning, I address my most cordial wishes to you for its success, and I assure you that you will

always find with my collaborators the understanding and support that you need! I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine Blessings upon you yourself, your family, your collaborators, and upon the entire people of Haiti and its leaders.

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