



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE CHILEAN AND ARGENTINE DELEGATIONS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP****

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 28 November 2009

*Dear Presidents
of Argentina and Chile,
Your Eminences,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,
Your Excellencies,
Dear Friends*

All, I receive you with great pleasure and welcome you to this See of Peter, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship that ended the long drawn-out territorial controversy between your respective countries over the Southern Zone. Indeed, it is an opportune and happy commemoration of those intense negotiations which, with Pontifical mediation, ended with a dignified, reasonable and fair solution, thereby avoiding the armed conflict that was about to break out between your brother peoples.

The Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the mediation that made it possible are indissolubly united to the beloved figure of Pope [John Paul II](#), who, prompted by sentiments of affection for both these beloved nations and in keeping with his tireless work as a messenger and peacemaker, did not hesitate to accept the delicate and crucial task of acting as mediator in this dispute. With the invaluable help of Cardinal Antonio Samoré, the Pope personally followed all the vicissitudes of those long and complicated negotiations to the definition of the proposal which led to the signing of the Treaty in the presence of Delegations from both countries and of Cardinal [Agostino Casaroli](#), at that time Secretary of State of His Holiness and Prefect of the Council for Public Affairs of the Church.

The papal mediation was also in response to an express request from the Episcopates of Chile and Argentina. In communion with the Holy See, they offered their collaboration which was crucial for the achievement of the above-mentioned Accord. Further, gratitude is also due to the efforts of all the people in the Governments and diplomatic delegations of both countries who made a positive contribution to carrying ahead this process of peaceful resolution, thereby fulfilling the deep desire for peace of the Argentine and Chilean populations.

Twenty-five years later we can note with pleasure that this historic event has made a positive contribution to strengthening sentiments of brotherhood in both countries and to a more determined cooperation and integration. This was implemented in numerous financial projects, cultural exchanges and the creation of important infrastructures, surmounting in this way the prejudice, suspicion and reticence of the past. In fact, Chile and Argentina are not only two neighbouring nations but far more: they are two brother peoples with a common vocation to brotherhood, respect and friendship which are largely a result of the Catholic tradition at the root of their history and their rich cultural and spiritual patrimony.

The event we are commemorating today is already part of the great history of two noble nations but also of the whole of Latin America. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship is a shining example of the power of the human spirit and the desire for peace in the face of the barbarity and senselessness of violence and war as a means of solving differences. Once again, we should bear in mind the words that my Predecessor, Pope [Pius XII](#), spoke at an especially difficult moment in history: "Nothing is lost by peace. Everything may be lost by war" (*Radio Message*, 24 August 1939).

It is necessary, therefore, to persevere at every moment with firm determination to the final consequences in an endeavour to solve disputes with a real desire for dialogue and agreement, through patient negotiation and with the necessary compromises, always taking into account the just requirements and legitimate interests of all.

To further the cause of peace in the minds and hearts of all and, in a special way, of those called to serve their fellow-citizens in the loftiest magistratures of nations, it needs to be based on firm moral convictions, on the calmness of mind, at times tense and polarized, in a constant quest for the national, regional and global common good. The achievement of peace, in fact, requires the promotion of an authentic culture of life that fully respects the dignity of the human being, together with the reinforcement of the family as the basic cell of society. It also requires the fight against poverty and corruption, access to a sound education for all, economic growth in solidarity, the consolidation of democracy and the eradication of violence and exploitation, especially that of women and children.

The Catholic Church, which continues on earth the mission of Christ who with his death on the Cross brought peace to the world (cf. Eph 2: 14-17), does not cease to proclaim her message of

salvation and reconciliation to all and, joining forces with all people of good will, commits herself with determination to fulfilling the aspirations to peace and harmony of all humankind.

Your Excellencies the Presidents, dear friends, in thanking you once again for your important visit, I turn my gaze to Christ of the Andes on the summit of the Cordillera range and ask him, as a constant gift of his grace, to seal for ever the peace and friendship between Argentinians and Chileans while, at the same time, as a pledge of my affection, I impart to you a special Apostolic Blessing.

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