



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. ROYSON MABUKU MUKWENA
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 16 December 2010*

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are accredited Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings which you have brought from President Rupiah Bwezani Banda, and I gladly reciprocate with my own good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for His Excellency and for all the beloved people of Zambia.

The Holy See values its diplomatic relations with your country as an important instrument for achieving mutual cooperation for the spiritual, moral and material good of all Zambians. Indeed, with the cooperation of men and women of good will throughout Africa, the Church works for the promotion of a moral, legal and social equilibrium among the members of the human family. Through her various social, developmental and charitable works, she fosters a balanced realization of the rights and duties of individuals and of society as a whole. She seeks to draw attention to the need for justice, solidarity and harmony, always with a special care for the poorer and weaker members of society. The Church is therefore proud of the example of Christian men and women who bring honour to their country and its institutions by selflessly pursuing the common good and teaching others to do the same, rising above local, regional or ethnic concerns.

It is a source of particular satisfaction that Zambia's laws continue to respect and defend the dignity of every human life from conception. Powerful influences, many from beyond Africa, seek to place limitations on the right to life, seeing it as somehow restricting the freedom of others. Yet,

for her part, the Church affirms that the right to life of the innocent is inviolable, and must take precedence over all other supposed rights. In doing so, she draws attention to an objective moral principle, rooted in the natural law, the content of which is accessible to right reason and is not dependent upon political choices or social consensus (cf. *Address to Representatives of British Society*, London, 17 September 2010). It is greatly to be hoped, Mr Ambassador, that Zambia will continue to foster due respect for the rights of every human being without exception, in harmony with the duty to protect life from conception to natural death in the manner of a truly Christian country. Turning to the question of economic development, presently there appear to be encouraging signs of improvement in your country, particularly in the agricultural sector. With economic growth, funds have become available for important development projects, particularly in the extension of adequate sanitary conditions. The nation has been making significant progress in this area, as reflected in lower infant and maternal mortality rates and other areas related to health. Improvements too in infrastructure, the availability of suitable housing, the struggle against corruption and the extension of educational opportunities are indispensable for the economic, social and cultural progress of your country. Likewise, due attention must always be given to the needs of the less fortunate. It is to be hoped that a diversified economic structure will be encouraged, as well as an increase in the number of small enterprises since, “alongside macro-projects, there is a place for micro-projects and above all there is need for the active mobilization of all the subjects of civil society” (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 47).

I am pleased to note that the Church in your country has been contributing positively in the fields of education, development and health care, especially in the struggle against malaria and HIV/AIDS. Be assured that she will continue to be actively involved in promoting the health of the population with a strong emphasis on prevention through education. Long-lasting health improvements will be achieved through formation in moral responsibility and solidarity, and in particular through faithfulness in marriage. In this way, the Church works to encourage a greater sense of integrity on the part of individuals and the building of a society which truly cherishes life, the family and the wider community.

Allow me to conclude these welcoming remarks by reiterating my good wishes and prayers for Zambia and her people. As you begin your mission, Mr Ambassador, I assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia will be happy to assist you. Upon you and your family and upon all Zambia's citizens I cordially invoke Almighty God's abundant blessings.