



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. MRS. MAJA MARIA LOVRENČIČ SVETEK,
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
TO THE HOLY SEE**

Friday, 22 October 2010

Your Excellency,

It is a real pleasure to receive you at the moment when you are presenting the Letters accrediting you to the Apostolic See as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Slovenia. I would like to express my appreciation of the deferential testimony of the Civil Authorities and of your compatriots' sentiments of affection for the Successor of Peter which you have interpreted. Kindly convey my greetings to H.E. Dr Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as to the other members of the Government. I would like to assure every one of your fellow-countrymen of my affection and my closeness.

Among the fundamental presuppositions of the entry of the Slovenian nation into the European Union, which has taken place ever more naturally in these years, are the common Christian roots of "the Old Continent". We are particularly indebted to Sts Cyril and Methodius, unflagging and zealous missionaries in the central regions of Europe, for the proclamation of the Gospel and the rooting of Christianity in the soul of the Slav peoples. So it was that Slovenia's anchorage in the Gospel values, which always reinforce a nation's identity and enrich its culture, made an important contribution to the country's cohesion and fostered feelings of friendship with other nations on that part of the continent.

On looking at the history of the Slovene People the stamp of moral values and the spirituality of Christianity stand out. In fact, the earliest evidence of the Slovenian language and literature are manuscripts of prayers and of other religious texts; but I am also thinking of the beautiful churches and chapels present in territory. Even in the most difficult and painful moments, this patrimony, a

perpetual source of consolation and hope, sustained Slovenia on its way to Independence after the fall of the Communist régime.

In that period the Holy See wanted to be especially close to the Slovenian nation. Madam Ambassador, you emphasized that the relations between the Republic of Slovenia and the Holy See have been good from the beginning and continue to be so today. I hope, therefore, that in this context a solution may be found to all the problems left unresolved by the Accord signed on the 14 December 2001.

In exercising democratic prerogatives, Slovenia has obtained a certain economic well-being which has permitted the consolidation of a peaceful civil and social coexistence. I noticed with pleasure the recent approval of a law regarding the issue of the so-called “erased”, who in many cases found themselves in very difficult situations. This is an important step forward in the attempt to find a solution to the cases of all those who have lost their right to residence, to work and to health care. I encourage you to continue in this direction and I hope that efforts will be made to alleviate their suffering.

As you, Your Excellency, underlined just now, the commitment to promote the good of the human being unites the action of the Holy See and of the Republic of Slovenia. You rightly alluded to the active presence of the Holy See at the international level and to its persevering work for the recognition of the fundamental dignity and freedoms of every human being, as well as safeguarding the right of every people to live in peace. For this reason the Apostolic See encourages the initiatives adopted in international circles to promote peace and justice, to overcome disagreements and to intensify constructive relations. In this regard, I am pleased to acknowledge as a positive move Slovenia's recent entry into the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, an important testimony to its openness and desire to collaborate with other nations. This intention to dedicate itself to issues concerning the international community and to global challenges is laudable. In international, as in interpersonal, relations it is of fundamental importance to fulfil the commitments assumed: *pacta sunt servanda*. It is my sincere wish that the Republic of Slovenia may make its own contribution in the international forums, as well as through a sound collaboration with the Holy See.

The specific mission of the Catholic Church which she carries out in the land of Slovenia, as in every part of the world, is to proclaim the Gospel and to carry to every man and woman the salvation which comes from the Lord Jesus. A sign of the vitality of the Church in Slovenia was the recently celebrated National Eucharistic Congress which saw a great number of the faithful gathered in Celje with their Bishops. The culminating moment of this event, at which my Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, presided was the Beatification of the young Lojze Grozde, martyred in hatred of the Faith during a difficult period in the country's history.

The numerous pastoral and charitable projects introduced into the various social contexts:

schools, hospitals, prisons, the armed forces and other institutions are a further demonstration of the vitality of the Ecclesial Community in Slovenia. I take this opportunity to address a warm greeting to all the Catholics in your country. Through various initiatives they commit themselves to helping everyone to deepen the spiritual meaning of life and they want to contribute to building an increasingly just and stable society with respect for the convictions and the religious practices of each member.

Your Excellency, the Holy See desires to intensify the fruitful collaboration with the Slovenian Authorities; in observing the respective duties and goals, it wishes to continue to pursue the shared commitment for the true good of every person and of society. As you begin your mission of representing the Republic of Slovenia to the Holy See, I offer you my best wishes. In the exercise of your office, be assured that you will always find in my collaborators the attentive support and cordial understanding that you may need.

Upon you, Madam Ambassador, upon the Slovenian people, and upon its leaders, I warmly invoke abundant Blessings.

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