



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE NEW AMBASSADORS AT THE PRESENTATION
OF THE LETTERS ACCREDITING THEM TO THE HOLY SEE***Clementine Hall
Thursday, 15 December 2011*

Your Excellencies,

I receive you with joy this morning in the Apostolic Palace for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary of your respective countries to the Holy See: Trinidad and Tobago, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, the Swiss Confederation, Burundi, Thailand, Pakistan, Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan, the Principality of Andorra, Sri Lanka and Burkina Faso. You have just addressed to me the courteous words of your Heads of State, for which I thank you. I would be grateful if you would kindly reciprocate by conveying to them my respectful greetings and good wishes, for themselves and for the lofty office they are carrying out at the service of their country and their people. I also wish to greet through you all the civil and religious authorities of your nations, as well as all your compatriots, I likewise naturally address my prayers and thoughts to the Catholic communities resident in your countries.

The unity of the human family is being lived today as a fact. By virtue of the means of social communication, which link all the regions of the globe, the means of transport which facilitate human exchanges, trade agreements that make economies interdependent and the challenges which are acquiring a global dimension — such as the safeguard of the environment and the importance of migratory flows — people have realized that henceforth they have a common destiny.

Next to the positive aspects, this awareness is sometimes seen as a burden, in the sense that it considerably extends the realm of individual responsibility and makes the resolution of problems all the more complex the greater the number of people actively involved. This cannot be denied; however, the way humanity sees itself must develop if it is not to find this interdependence a threat but rather an advantage: that of human beings who work with and for each other. We are all responsible for everyone and it is important to have a positive concept of solidarity. Solidarity is

the real pivot that enables humanity to achieve integral development and to move on towards its fulfilment. In considering all the areas where solidarity deserves to be practised, we must welcome as a positive sign of today's culture the need, ever more present in the conscience of our contemporaries, for an intergenerational solidarity. This is naturally rooted in families, which it is right to support so that they continue to carry out their essential role in society.

And, at the same time, in order to broaden the field of solidarity to allow it to advance, the education of youth is the main priority. In this sphere I encourage each one — whatever the level of his or her responsibility — and governments in particular to show creativity, to use and invest the necessary means to give youth the fundamental ethical bases, helping them in particular to acquire a training and to combat the social evils inherent in unemployment, drugs, crime and the lack of respect for the person. Concern for the future generations and their future will bring significant headway in the perception of the unity of the human race.

There is no need to fear that this common, shared responsibility for the good of the human race in its entirety may constantly collide with cultural and religious diversity as a dead end. The plurality of cultures and religions does not oppose the common search for truth, goodness and beauty. Illuminated and sustained by the light of Revelation, the Church encourages men and women to trust in reason which, if it is purified by faith is exalted by Revelation and thereby enabled “to broaden its horizons to enter into a field of research as unfathomably expansive as the mystery itself” (cf. *Address to Congress on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Encyclical 'Fides et Ratio'*, 16 October 2008).

It is then capable of surmounting partisan or interested forms of conditioning, to recognize the universal goods that all human beings need. Among these goods, peace and social and religious harmony, so deeply desired, are not only linked to a just and adapted legislative framework but also to the moral calibre of each citizen since “solidarity is seen... under two complementary aspects: that of a social principle and that of a moral virtue” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 193).

Solidarity totally fulfils its role as a social principle when it relies on structures of subsidiarity and on each person's firm and persevering determination to work for the common good in the awareness of a common responsibility. The new challenges that your countries are facing today call for a mobilization of minds and human creativity in order to fight poverty and for a more effective and healthier use of the available resources and energy. At both individual and political levels it is a matter of advancing firmly towards a more practical, more widely shared commitment with regard to respect and to the protection of creation. I therefore warmly encourage the political authorities of your countries to work with this in mind.

Lastly, increasing the responsibility of all also entails exercising active and effective vigilance over respect for human dignity and its promotion, in the face of every attempt to diminish it, such as its

denial or the exploitation of every individual. This approach will contribute to preventing social action from too easily falling prey to private interests and the logic of power that lead to the disintegration of society and accentuate poverty.

It is reliance on the notion of the integral development of the human person that will make solidarity possible and permit greater justice. In this regard it is not only the task of religions to honour the primacy of the spirit, but it is also up to states to do so, especially by means of a cultural policy that encourages the access of all to the goods of the spirit, promotes good social ties and never discourages human beings from freely pursuing their spiritual quest.

While you are beginning your mission to the Holy See I would like to assure you, Your Excellencies, that you will always find with my collaborators attentive listening and the help you may need. I invoke upon you yourselves, upon your families, upon the members of your diplomatic mission and upon all the nations that you represent, an abundance of divine Blessings.