



The Holy See

PRESENTATION OF THE LETTERS OF CREDENCE OF THE AMBASSADORS OF ETHIOPIA,
MALAYSIA, IRELAND, FIJI AND ARMENIA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 4 May 2012*

Your Excellencies,

I receive you with joy this morning for the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries to the Holy See: the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Malaysia, Ireland, the Republic of the Fiji Islands and the Republic of Armenia. You have just addressed friendly words to me on behalf of your Heads of State for which I thank you. Please kindly reciprocate my deferential greetings and respectful good wishes to them, both for them personally and for the lofty mission they are carrying out at the service of their country and their people. I likewise wish to greet through you all the civil and religious authorities of your countries, as well as all your compatriots. Naturally, my thoughts also turn to the Catholic communities present in your countries, to assure them of my prayers.

The development of the means of communication has in a certain way made our planet smaller. The almost immediate transmission of events taking place across the world and knowledge of the needs of peoples and individuals is a pressing appeal to be close to them in their joys and in their trials. Awareness of the great suffering caused in the world by poverty and destitution, physical as well as spiritual, calls for a new drive to face with justice and solidarity all that threatens humankind, society and its surroundings.

The migration to the cities, the armed conflicts, famine and the pandemics that are affecting so many populations exacerbate poverty which today comes in new forms. The world economic crisis is precipitating more and more families into an increasingly precarious situation. While the creation

of multiple needs gave the impression that unlimited enjoyment and consumption were impossible, the lack of the necessary means to satisfy them has resulted in sentiments of frustration. Loneliness due to exclusion has increased. And when poverty exists beside great wealth, an impression of injustice arises that can become a trigger of uprisings. It is thus right for States to ensure that social legislation does not widen inequalities and enables everyone to live a dignified life.

In order to do this, considering the people in need of help before considering the shortage to be remedied means restoring their role as active members of society and enabling them to take their future in their own hands, to occupy a place in society that befits them. For “it is what a man is, rather than what he has, that counts” (Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 35). The development to which every nation aspires must concern the whole dimension of each person and not merely economic growth. This conviction must motivate effective action. Expedients such as micro credit and initiatives to create fair partnerships show that it is possible to harmonize economic targets with social ties, democratic management and respect for nature. It is also right, for example, that restoring dignity to manual work will promote and foster an agriculture that is first and foremost at the service of the local inhabitants. It will provide effective help which, implemented at the local, national and international levels, takes into account the uniqueness, value and integral good of each person. The quality of human relationships and the sharing of resources are at the root of society, enabling each and every one to have a place and to live a dignified life in it, in conformity with their aspirations

To strengthen the human basis of the social and political situation it is necessary to be attentive to another kind of poverty: that of the loss of reference to spiritual values and to God. This emptiness makes the discernment of good and evil more difficult as well as the surmounting of personal interests with a view to the common good. It facilitates adherence to the current trends by evading the effort required by reflection and criticism. And many young people in search of an ideal, turn to artificial paradises which destroy them. Addiction, consumerism, materialism and well-being do not fulfil the human heart which is made for the Infinite. For the greatest poverty is the lack of love. In distress, sympathetic and disinterested listening are a comfort. It is possible to be happy without great material resources. It is possible to live simply in harmony with what one believes and become ever more so. I encourage all efforts made, especially for families. Furthermore, education must awaken awareness of the spiritual dimension, for “the human being develops when he grows in the spirit” (*Caritas in Veritate*, n. 76). Such an education makes it possible to weave and to reinforce more authentic relations because education opens people to a more fraternal society which it helps to build.

It is the duty of States to make the most of the cultural and religious patrimony which contributes to the standing of a nation, and to facilitate access to it to all, for in becoming acquainted with history each one is brought to discover the roots of his or her own existence. Religion enables one to recognize in the other a brother or sister in humanity. Allowing anyone the possibility of knowing

God in full freedom, is to help him to forge a strong inner personality which will prepare him to witness to the good and to carry it out even at great personal cost. "Openness to God makes us open towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity" (*ibid.*, n. 78). Thus a society may be built in which moderation experienced will reduce poverty, stem indifference and selfishness, profit and waste and above all exclusion, to the advantage of brotherhood.

As you are beginning your mission to the Holy See, I am eager to assure you, Your Excellencies, that you will always find courteous attention and the help you may need from my collaborators. Upon you yourselves, upon your families, upon the members of your diplomatic missions and upon all the nations you represent, I invoke an abundance of divine Blessings.