



# The Holy See

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*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO H.E. Mr Filipe Savadogo,  
AMBASSADOR OF Burkina Faso TO THE HOLY SEE*

*Saturday, 11 January 1997*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I welcome Your Excellency with pleasure on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Burkina Faso to the Holy See.

Your words to me just now, for which I am most grateful, show the interest your country's authorities pay to fostering relations of esteem and respect between Burkina Faso and the Apostolic See. Through you, I am pleased to offer President Blaise Compaoré my best wishes for his person and for the accomplishment of his lofty office in the service of the nation. I also cordially greet the people of Burkina Faso and pray God to help them in their efforts to build an ever more just and fraternal society.

In your address, Mr Ambassador, you recalled the Holy See's contribution to humanity's well-being. I am grateful to you for this appreciation. In fact, for the Catholic Church integral human development is at the very heart of her mission to proclaim the divine commandment of fraternal love. This is why she wishes to promote the genuine growth of the human person in justice and peace. It is essential that every man, every woman and all the members of society be able to devote themselves to their people's development. And I am pleased with what you said about the common commitment of the people of Burkina Faso to fight against all forms of poverty and marginalization.

Aware of the interdependence existing between people, it is by practising true solidarity that they will be able to contribute to a better organization of society with proper respect for the social and religious characteristics that constitute the nation's wealth. As you have said, Mr Ambassador, respect for the religious convictions of each individual is a basic value which must be preserved. It is also the principle and basis of peaceful coexistence (cf. Message for the 25th annual World Day of Peace, 1992, n. 7). It is fortunate that believers from the different religious traditions in your country can

work together to promote the common good in an atmosphere of trust and reciprocal esteem.

I also hope that all peoples increase their solidarity, so that each one of them may have access to integral, material and spiritual development. It is in this perspective that the Holy See, through its collaboration with the local Churches and especially through the Foundation for the Sahel, wishes to help promote mutual aid, development and training projects for the benefit of the peoples in your region, victims of drought and desertification. Nations must become increasingly aware of their duties to one another and to all humanity. As I stated at the 50th anniversary of the United Nations: "The international economic scene needs an ethic of solidarity, if participation, economic growth and a just distribution of goods are to characterize the future of humanity" (*Address to the United Nations*, 5 October, n. 13; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 11 October 1995, p. 9).

Mr Ambassador, your presence here is a sign that your country is open to spiritual and religious values, and that it considers them profoundly necessary for the building of a truly human society. I am sure that the mission you begin today will further strengthen the ties of understanding and friendship between Burkina Faso and the Apostolic See.

On this solemn occasion, I would like through you, Mr Ambassador, to address an affectionate greeting to the members of Burkina Faso's Catholic community and their Pastors. I encourage them to bear witness to Christ's universal love among each other and with everyone, without distinction. I urge them ardently to pursue, in fraternal cooperation with all their compatriots, their commitment to building a stable and prosperous society where each individual may find his place in mutual respect.

As you begin your mission, I offer you my best wishes for the noble task before you. Be assured that my coworkers will always offer you an attentive welcome and understanding of whatever you may need.

I cordially invoke an abundance of divine blessings on Your Excellency, on the people of Burkina Faso and on those who preside over its destiny.

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