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Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Bangladesh, Gibuti, Finlandia, Eritrea, Georgia, Lesotho, Rwanda, Maurizio e Malì.

Di seguito pubblichiamo i discorsi consegnati dal Papa agli Ambasciatori degli Stati sopra elencati, nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di ciascuno:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL BANGLADESH PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR TOUFIQ ALI

Mr Ambassador,

With great pleasure I welcome you to the Vatican and accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bangladesh to the Holy See. I thank you for conveying the greetings of President A.Q.M. Badruddoza Chowdhury and of the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, and I would ask you to assure them of my fervent prayers for the well-being of the entire nation.

Since the dramatic events of 11 September, it is clearer than ever that there is an urgent need for what you yourself have called "constructive dialogue to foster understanding among cultures and civilizations". Rather than dwelling upon what separates them, people of different cultures and religions must learn to respect one another on the basis of the many fundamental truths and values which they share. As I noted in this year's World Day of Peace Message, "dialogue between cultures... is based upon the recognition that *there are values which are common to all cultures* because they are rooted in the very nature of the person" (No. 16). And given that Islam and Christianity worship the one God, Creator of heaven and earth, there is ample room for agreement and cooperation between them. A clash ensues only if Islam or Christianity is misconstrued or manipulated for political or ideological ends.

Among the values which provide a rich soil for fruitful dialogue, one that stands out is the universal need for human solidarity. With increasing global interdependence, the common destiny of the human family and the urgent need for a culture of solidarity become more evident. Yet this growing interdependence has also thrown new light on the many inequalities existing in our world. Despite the promises held out by globalization, social and economic imbalances in some places have become worse, and certain poorer nations may have reached a point of even further decline. For the sake of peace in the world, and in order to meet the demands of justice, these nations and their peoples must be helped, not only with immediate aid but also with the educational and technological support that will enable them to be a part of the process of global development and not remain excluded or marginalized. It is not a matter of dispensing favours but of recognizing the basic human right to a just share of resources. The promotion of justice is essential to a culture of solidarity.

Another point of quasi-universal agreement among the world's peoples is a yearning for true peace. Sadly, there are some in the world who want conflict, and they will always try to wreak havoc. But most individuals and nations are prepared to make the courageous choices required to build genuine peace. At a time like this, the

quest for peace sets before the international community decisions which can no longer be postponed. Even the most entrenched and long-standing conflict can be resolved if the will to work for reconciliation prevails.

Religion has an important role in this regard. The view of the person and of the world which it teaches greatly determines attitudes and thinking in facing the challenge of building a properly ordered society. Both Muslims and Christians insist upon the essentially transcendent character of the human person, created by God for a higher destiny, and the need to respect that element of transcendence in each individual. They agree further that the Creator has also revealed a way of life, based upon what you rightly call "fundamental human values and norms" which have their origin in God himself. In a sense, it is in regard to these fundamental values and norms that Islam and Christianity can most fruitfully engage in the constructive dialogue needed at this time.

A clear example of the possibility of such dialogue is to be seen in the shared reverence for the value of life itself. For Islam and Christianity, human life is a sacred and inviolable reality, since it has its origin and destiny in God himself. Therefore, it is never possible to invoke peace and despise life, a contradiction found all too often within human societies and human hearts. In cultures of both East and West, rich and poor, traditional and post-industrial, respect for human life is being threatened and eroded in so many ways. A great educational effort is needed in all religious traditions to teach the sacred value of life and spread an attitude of respect for it in every circumstance.

In the values which all people share we find what I have called the "moral logic which is built into human life and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples" (*Speech to the United Nations General Assembly*, 5 October 1995). This is the point where Islam and Christianity can and must meet, not only in a dialogue of words, but in a dialogue of service for the peace of the world.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that the mission you are assuming today will help to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between your nation and the Holy See; and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Renewing my good wishes for your success and happiness, I invoke the abundant blessings of the Most High God upon yourself, the Government and the beloved people of Bangladesh.

S.E. il Signor Toufiq ALI
Ambasciatore del Bangladesh presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 27 giugno 1946.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Ha compiuto studi universitari in patria ed ha conseguito un dottorato in Economia all'Università di Boston (USA).

Diplomatico di carriera, ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1972-1976); Primo Segretario dell'Ambasciata del Bangladesh ad Ankara (1977-1979); Primo Segretario e Consigliere dell'Alto Commissariato a Colombo (1980-1981); Direttore Generale al Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1982-1991); Ministro dell'Ambasciata a Washington (1992-1995); Ambasciatore all'Aia (1996-1997); Segretario agli Esteri per gli Affari multilaterali (1998-2001).

Attualmente è Rappresentante Permanente del Bangladesh presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra.

[02002-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI GIBUTI PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR BARKAT GOURAD HAMADOU

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. Je suis heureux d'accueillir Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme premier Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République de Djibouti près le Saint-Siège et je La remercie de ses aimables paroles.

Je vous saurais gré, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de transmettre à Son Excellence Monsieur le Président Ismaël Omar Guelleh mes remerciements pour les vœux courtois qu'il m'a fait parvenir par votre intermédiaire, et de lui exprimer en retour mes souhaits cordiaux de prospérité et de paix pour tous les habitants du pays.

2. Vous avez tenu à souligner l'importance de la paix et du dialogue pour la bonne entente entre les nations. Dans le contexte des événements de ces derniers mois, la préservation de la paix au niveau international est devenue une priorité pour les Autorités civiles et pour les citoyens de l'ensemble des pays du monde. Elle est depuis longtemps, vous le savez, une préoccupation constante du Saint-Siège, qui s'efforce d'encourager les nations à la recherche patiente et obstinée de la paix, dans un souci permanent des conditions mêmes de son établissement, par un dialogue respectueux de toutes les parties en présence, notamment des minorités, auxquelles il convient de faire place en toute société, en mettant en avant tout ce que chaque composante peut apporter à la construction commune.

Tant au niveau local que régional ou mondial, le dialogue est une nécessité, d'une part pour éviter des affrontements et des conflits tragiquement douloureux qui voient la violence se déchaîner entre les hommes et entre les peuples et, d'autre part, pour assurer une entente toujours plus fraternelle entre tous. La région du monde dans laquelle se situe votre pays, celle du Nord-Est de l'Afrique, n'échappe pas à ces situations de tensions ou de conflits préoccupants. Permettez-moi, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de rendre ici hommage aux Autorités de votre pays pour la part active qu'elles ont prise dans la résolution du conflit somalien, grâce notamment à la conférence de réconciliation qui s'est tenue à Arta l'année dernière. Je souhaite que soit poursuivi et, si possible, étendu à d'autres lieux de conflits, le travail de longue haleine que représente la recherche de la convivialité entre les différents protagonistes, en préférant en toute circonstance la négociation et en renonçant à toute forme de violence. Dans cette perspective, il faut souhaiter que de véritables artisans de paix poursuivent l'œuvre engagée. C'est là assurément le chemin vers la paix, une paix solide et durable, à laquelle aspirent tous les hommes de bonne volonté.

3. Cependant, que ce soit entre les personnes, entre les différentes composantes d'une même nation ou encore entre les États, il ne peut y avoir de paix solide et durable sans la justice, c'est-à-dire sans que soient assurées pour tous des conditions de vie qui respectent leur dignité. Cette exigence de justice réclame certainement un meilleur partage des ressources entre riches et pauvres à tous les niveaux de la vie sociale, et l'instauration d'une véritable culture de la solidarité (cf. *Message pour la Journée mondiale de la paix 2001*, n. 17). Cela fait partie des droits fondamentaux et demande que se développe dans notre monde, au début de ce nouveau millénaire, un dialogue nouveau et fructueux entre les cultures et entre les religions, dans un désir de reconnaissance mutuelle, pour permettre un service commun de l'homme qui soit véritablement respectueux des valeurs morales et spirituelles. Travailler à susciter, à entretenir et à intensifier ce dialogue est l'une des missions du Saint-Siège, qui continuera à œuvrer en ce sens. Votre présence en ces lieux, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, témoigne aussi de l'intérêt et de l'attachement de votre pays, «terre d'échanges et de rencontres», vous l'avez rappelé, à la défense de ces valeurs, qui sont l'expression de la dignité fondamentale de tout être humain et qui doivent être respectées comme telles.

4. Je suis heureux, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de pouvoir saluer, à travers votre personne, la communauté catholique de la République de Djibouti. Elle est peu nombreuse, mais elle est engagée activement dans le développement économique et social de la nation, ainsi que dans le service de l'éducation des jeunes. Je sais que la présence des écoles catholiques est appréciée, pour la compétence éducative des formateurs mais aussi pour la qualité des valeurs humaines que ceux-ci transmettent. L'Église catholique dans votre pays entretient de bons rapports avec l'ensemble de la population ainsi qu'avec les différentes autorités religieuses. Elle souhaite pratiquer le dialogue fraternel avec tous, dans le respect mutuel, en vue d'une meilleure estime réciproque et de la recherche du bien commun. Permettez-moi, par votre entremise, de saluer affectueusement tous les membres de la communauté catholique, son évêque et ses prêtres, et de les encourager à témoigner sans se lasser de l'amour de Dieu pour chaque homme, par une charité inventive.

5. Au moment où vous inaugurez votre mission de représentation auprès du Saint-Siège, recevez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, mes vœux les meilleurs pour son heureux accomplissement et pour que se poursuivent et se développent des relations harmonieuses entre le Saint-Siège et la République de Djibouti. Je vous assure que vous trouverez toujours auprès de mes collaborateurs un accueil attentif et une compréhension cordiale, afin de

vous aider dans votre noble fonction.

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille, sur ses collaborateurs et sur le peuple de Djibouti tout entier, j'invoque l'abondance des Bénédiction du Tout-Puissant.

S.E. il Signor Barkat Gourad HAMADOU
Ambasciatore di Gibuti presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 1° giugno 1930.

È sposato ed ha tre figli.

Autodidatta, dopo aver lavorato come operaio presso il porto di Gibuti si è dedicato all'attività politica.

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Consigliere dell'Assemblea territoriale (1957-1962); Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione (1962-1963); Ministro della Sanità (1963-1965); Senatore (1965-1968 e 1974-1977); nel 1977, con l'indipendenza di Gibuti, viene eletto Deputato della neonata Repubblica; Primo Ministro (1978-2001).

[02003-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLA FINLANDIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE.
S.E. IL SIGNOR ANTTI HYNINEN

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. Je suis heureux d'accueillir Votre Excellence en cette circonstance solennelle de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent en qualité d'Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République de Finlande près le Saint-Siège.

Je vous remercie vivement, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, des salutations que vous m'avez adressées de la part de Son Excellence Madame Tarja Halonen, Président de la République. En retour, je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir lui exprimer mes vœux respectueux pour sa personne ainsi que pour le peuple finlandais qui célèbre aujourd'hui même sa fête nationale. Je prie Dieu d'accompagner les efforts de chacun dans l'œuvre d'édification d'une nation toujours plus fraternelle et plus solidaire.

2. Vous avez rappelé, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, que la Finlande fêtait en ce jour le quatre-vingt-quatrième anniversaire de son indépendance, acquise durant la tragédie de la grande guerre qui ravagea l'Europe. Votre pays, qui s'est toujours attaché à la recherche de la paix, s'est associé au projet de construction de l'Europe et il y participe aujourd'hui pleinement. Le Saint-Siège suit avec attention, vous le savez, le développement de cette réalisation, qui est significative de l'esprit de dialogue et de négociation puisqu'elle a permis à des nations autrefois ennemies de s'engager d'abord dans un projet de coopération mutuelle, et maintenant dans une véritable communauté de nations. La monnaie commune, qui aura cours à partir du 1er janvier prochain, constitue un pas de plus dans le sens de cette évolution. Le processus d'élargissement de l'Union à de nouveaux pays membres en Europe est désormais clairement engagé et l'on s'en réjouit; comment ne pas penser que ce qui se réalise sur ce continent ne puisse pas, d'une manière ou d'une autre, être un exemple pour beaucoup d'autres nations ou de régions du monde encore sujettes à l'hostilité et aux conflits internes ? On se félicite que, dans cet esprit, votre pays, conscient de cette responsabilité morale et politique de l'Europe, s'investisse avec détermination dans la défense des droits de l'homme et dans l'aide aux pays en voie de développement.

3. Vous avez aussi souligné, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, combien la situation internationale que connaît notre monde depuis plusieurs mois suscite de questions chez les Autorités civiles des nations et leurs citoyens. Au-delà du déchaînement épouvantable et intolérable du terrorisme qui a frappé les États-Unis d'Amérique, une telle situation a mis en lumière les graves tensions qui menacent des équilibres fragiles entre les nations, et des situations d'injustice qui, sévissant depuis trop longtemps et attisant les rancœurs et les haines, sont devenues de véritables sources de violences entre les hommes. Comme vous l'avez dit opportunément, cette situation nous conduit à faire une réévaluation du monde actuel et à nous interroger sur les valeurs fondamentales qui sont les nôtres.

Le projet européen, que nous évoquions à l'instant, n'est pas né par hasard. Il a une histoire et une âme, forgées par des siècles de tradition culturelle, morale et religieuse, où la foi chrétienne tient une place importante que nul ne peut nier. Et si, aujourd'hui, les États européens vivent selon le principe de la légitime autonomie des réalités terrestres, ils ne peuvent ni ne doivent oublier la tradition qui les soutient. L'homme européen a le goût de la liberté et le sens de la personne, il connaît les droits de l'homme et la dignité fondamentale de chacun, il aspire à la paix. Tout cela, il le doit en grande partie à cette riche histoire. L'Europe est appelée à maintenir vivant cet héritage, en donnant une nouvelle vigueur aux institutions qui sont à la base de sa vie sociale, comme le mariage et la famille. Elle ne peut non plus proclamer les droits imprescriptibles de la personne et, en même temps, laisser attenter à l'existence humaine, que ce soit à ses débuts ou à sa fin, ou à travers des manipulations qui sont contraires au respect dû à tout être humain. Puisse-t-elle au contraire promouvoir en tous domaines une véritable culture de la vie !

4. Je suis heureux de pouvoir saluer, par votre entremise, la communauté catholique de Finlande. Elle est peu nombreuse et bien habituée à vivre un œcuménisme du quotidien avec les chrétiens d'autres confessions, qui sont les plus nombreux. Je l'encourage à assumer sa place originale dans la société finlandaise, témoignant avec assurance de sa foi au Christ, développant des liens fraternels dans la prière et par le témoignage avec les frères chrétiens d'autres confessions, de manière commune chaque fois que c'est possible. Je me réjouis de savoir que la présence de l'Église catholique est appréciée dans votre pays, non seulement pour son apport spirituel mais aussi pour sa contribution sociale et éducative, et je forme le vœu que la nouvelle loi sur la liberté religieuse permette de reconnaître et de promouvoir concrètement une égalité de plus en plus grande entre toutes les religions officiellement reconnues en Finlande.

5. Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous inaugurez aujourd'hui la noble mission de représenter votre pays auprès du Saint-Siège. Veuillez accepter les vœux très cordiaux que je forme pour son heureuse réussite et soyez sûr de toujours trouver auprès de mes collaborateurs la compréhension et le soutien nécessaires !

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille, sur tous ses collaborateurs et sur tous ses compatriotes, j'invoque de grand cœur l'abondance des Bénédiction divines.

S.E. il Signor Antti HYNNINEN

Ambasciatore della Finlandia presso la Santa Sede

È nato l'11 novembre 1940.

È sposato.

Ha conseguito la laurea in Scienze Politiche (1965).

Ha intrapreso nel 1966 la carriera diplomatica, ricoprendo, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Addetto di Ambasciata presso il Ministero (1966-1967 e 1968-1969), in Israele (1967-1968) e a Ginevra presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite (1969-1971); Segretario di Ambasciata presso l'Organizzazione per la Cooperazione e lo Sviluppo in Europa (OCDE) a Parigi (1971-1973), ed al Ministero (1973-1974); Capo Sezione al Ministero (1974-1976); Consigliere di Ambasciata in Belgio (1976-1979); Direttore Generale presso il Ministero (1979-1987); Ambasciatore in Egitto ed in Sudan (1987-1989); Rappresentante Permanente presso l'Ufficio dell'ONU a Ginevra (1989-1995); Segretario Generale Aggiunto al Ministero degli Esteri (1995-1997); Ambasciatore presso l'UNESCO (1997-1998); Ambasciatore in Francia (1997-2001).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Svizzera.

[02004-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELL'ERITREA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ZEMEDE TEKLE WOLDETATIOS

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican today as you present the Letters appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Eritrea to the Holy See. The greetings which you bring from President Isaias Afwerki and from the Government and people of Eritrea are very much appreciated, and I assure you of my own prayerful good wishes for the well-being of your country, especially at this time when it is

striving to recover from the ravages of war and to enable its citizens to return to a normal life.

Mentioning the Agreements on Cessation of Hostilities signed by Eritrea and Ethiopia last year, you have commented on the difficulties and tensions that remain in trying to implement fully the provisions of those accords. Certainly, the continued commitment of all parties is absolutely necessary if a just and lasting peace based on reconciliation and cooperation is to be achieved. The international community cannot forget its responsibility in this regard. Even as attention is rivetted on the far-reaching emergency which was unleashed on the world on 11 September last, the more developed countries must nevertheless continue to lend needed support in so many other situations, if global peace and solidarity are to be achieved.

In recent decades a direct link has been noted between peace and development, two of the greatest challenges facing our modern world. In the wake of the recent terrorist attacks and subsequent events, the relationship between authentic development and true peace has been thrown into even clearer perspective. It has become more evident that political and economic relations between nations and peoples need to be built on a new basis. Self-interest and efforts to reinforce positions of dominance must be left aside. Developing nations cannot be perceived as mere sources of raw materials or markets for finished products, but as true partners in a more just international order, partners who have a vital contribution to make to the good of the entire human family.

A higher philosophy of progress is urgently needed. Policies of development cannot be limited to producing material progress alone; they must aim at helping men and women to attain to that true freedom for which all people have a deep and unfailing longing. The quest for freedom arises from a sense of the inestimable dignity and value of the human person, and it is precisely this inalienable worth of each and every person that has to be accepted as the criterion of economic, social and political action. The human person must ever remain the focal point. At all levels of development, a strong and unwavering commitment to inalienable human rights and dignity is required. It is this commitment that the Holy See seeks to foster and strengthen by its presence in the international community.

Furthermore, a correct understanding of the human person is necessary if efforts to foster development and to promote peace are to succeed. The Church has an important contribution to make in this very area. Through her social teaching she seeks to increase awareness of the demands of justice and solidarity. Sharing with the people of our time a profound and ardent desire for a life which is just and dignified in every aspect, the Church is involved in many practical efforts aimed at improving society and responding to concrete human needs. This is the motivation behind her work in the areas of education, health care and social services, all of which she undertakes in faithfulness to her Divine Founder, who "came not to be served but to serve" (*Mt 20:28*). Here I wish to express my gratitude for your words of appreciation of the positive contribution which the Church has made to Eritrean society, and especially now in efforts to aid the war victims.

Mr Ambassador, during your term of office you will lack no assistance on the part of the Holy See in the discharge of your responsibilities. I offer my good wishes for the success of your efforts to build further on the positive relations already existing between your country and the Holy See, and I pray that Almighty God will bestow abundant blessings upon yourself and the beloved people of Eritrea.

S.E. il Signor Zemed Tekle WOLDETATIOS
Ambasciatore dell'Eritrea presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 12 maggio 1948.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Ha compiuto studi universitari in Architettura (1972-1975).

Ha ricoperto, in Europa, tra il 1975 ed il 1991, vari incarichi nel Fronte per la Liberazione del Popolo Eritreo (EPLF), occupandosi degli studenti, delle relazioni estere e della pubblica amministrazione.

In seguito, in patria, ha svolto i seguenti compiti: Capo dell'Unione Nazionale dei Lavoratori Eritrei (1992-1993); Capo del Dipartimento della Cultura del Ministero dell'Informazione e della Cultura (1993-1995); Direttore Esecutivo Capo del Fronte Popolare per la Democrazia e la Giustizia (1995-1997); Direttore Generale del Ministero per il Governo Locale (1997-2001).

[02005-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELLA GEORGIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR AMIRAN KAVADZE

Mr Ambassador,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you today and accept the Letters of Credence appointing you as the first Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Georgia to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings which you bring from President Eduard Shevardnadze, and I ask you to convey to him, to the Government and to the people of Georgia my good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the peace and prosperity of the nation. Your presence here today, inaugurating a new period of formal diplomatic relations between Georgia and the Holy See, is a most welcome occasion, filled with hope and promise.

I am grateful for your words of appreciation of the Holy See's efforts to build peace and bring reconciliation in the face of what you call "the emergence and growth of old and new tensions in many parts of the world". Through its activity, including its diplomatic activity, the Holy See seeks to help all peoples live a fully human life in peace and harmony, with an eye to the integral development of individuals and nations. You have spoken of Georgia's efforts aimed at "strengthening democratic principles... and securing protection for the fundamental freedoms of citizens"; and these principles and freedoms are also central to the Holy See's perspective on international issues.

The Holy See's approach is distinctive because it is not tied to national interest of any kind, but seeks instead the common good of the whole human family. It is a perspective driven not by ideology, but by a vision of the human person, and a conviction that when this vision is undermined or abandoned the very foundation of human society is shaken. It is a vision of freedom, but of freedom linked to truth – in particular, to the truth of the human person, which alone provides a sound basis for constructive political and diplomatic activity. The history of your own nation teaches that freedom is always fragile; and the last century showed dramatically how freedom is eroded once the truth of the human person is denied.

The most destructive of the lies about the human person which the twentieth century produced were born of materialistic views of the world and the person. Communism and Fascism may have foundered, but in their wake we see at times new forms of materialism, less ideologically driven and less spectacular in their manifestations perhaps, but nonetheless destructive in their own way. They stem from a flawed vision of the human person, measured almost exclusively by concern for economic well-being. It is of course right that people should aspire to well-being, but there are other fundamental features of our humanity which must be taken into account.

During my brief but intense visit to Georgia in 1999, I saw clearly that the nation's spiritual and cultural resources, though they may have been driven underground during the years of Communist oppression, are still vibrant. Even if the process of rebuilding is more difficult and complex than was hoped or imagined a decade ago, Communism did not succeed in alienating Georgian culture completely from its religious sources. I am convinced that these are the surest guarantee of a bright future beyond the difficulties of the present time.

In speaking of the process of rebuilding the nation, let me repeat what I said in Tbilisi, that "one of the most difficult challenges of our time is the encounter between tradition and modernity. This dialogue between old and new will in great part determine the future of the younger generation, and therefore the future of the nation" (*Address to the World of Culture and Learning*, 9 November 1999). The rediscovery of Georgia's deep spiritual heritage and of your traditional humanism, developed over centuries of Christian life, will be society's greatest asset in achieving the genuine civic and cultural renewal for which so many of your citizens long.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will help to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation between Georgia and the Holy See. I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. With every good wish for your personal success and happiness, I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon you and the people of your beloved land.

S.E. il Signor Amiran KAVADZE
Ambasciatore di Georgia presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 21 aprile 1951.

È sposato ed ha due figlie.

Ha compiuto studi superiori in Ingegneria a Tbilisi (Georgia), in Biologia a Mosca (Federazione Russa) ed in Scienze Politiche a Baku (Azerbaijan), conseguendo il titolo di Docente scienze sociali e politiche.

Nel 1992 ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica, ricoprendo tra gli altri, l'incarico di Direttore del Dipartimento per le Relazioni Economiche Internazionali del Ministero degli Affari Esteri; ha pubblicato studi sulle Relazioni Economiche Internazionali e sullo Sviluppo dell'Industria Alimentare.

Dal 1997 è Ambasciatore in Svizzera e Rappresentante del Suo Paese presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra.

[02006-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL LESOTHO PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR SEYMOUR REHAULELE KIKINE

Mr Ambassador,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican at the beginning of your mission as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the Holy See. In accepting your Letters of Credence, I ask you to convey to His Majesty King Letsie III and to the Right Hon. Prime Minister my good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the peace and prosperity of the nation.

The tragic world events of recent times and the crisis in which the international community is now embroiled show more clearly than ever the need for radical personal and social renewal in order to bring greater justice and solidarity to the world. Such renewal will require enormous effort, because of the many imbalances which must be redressed.

This is dramatically true of Africa, whose peoples continue to suffer more than most under the weight of endemic poverty, political instability, social disorientation and mismanagement of resources. Throughout my pontificate, therefore, I have sought to draw attention to Africa's needs and to the responsibility of the richer nations to contribute more effectively to the development of her peoples; and I do so once again now, lest the troubles in other parts of the world divert attention from the urgent needs of Africa.

Regrettably, the international community's interest in the continent has not always been motivated by genuine concern for the well-being of her peoples. It is especially disappointing that, with some notable exceptions, little has been done to improve educational opportunities for young people; for this is surely one key to a better future for Africa's peoples.

The lack of progress means that smaller countries such as Lesotho are especially vulnerable to the economic pressures accompanying the process of globalization. Indeed, there is a danger that globalization will increase the gap between rich and poor, leaving developing countries such as yours to face ever more difficult and almost insurmountable challenges. In such a situation, the Church will continue to work for a globalization of solidarity, in order to ensure that the potential benefits will reach all peoples and all levels of society.

The pressures upon Africa are not only external; for within Africa itself the winds of change are blowing strongly (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, 44), as people become increasingly aware of their human dignity and the need to defend their rights and freedoms. Many countries are striving to consolidate democracy at every level of public life, and to overcome resistance to the rule of law. Your Excellency has noted that your own country is fully engaged in the process of democratization, which will undoubtedly bring positive results in terms of furthering the values of human dignity and rights, good governance, dialogue and peace. The Holy See is fully supportive of this process, since there is no other foundation upon which a nation can build a future worthy of its citizens.

The process of change now evident in Lesotho is far from superficial. Indeed it goes to the very heart of your culture; for it touches people's moral sense, which in turn is intimately linked with religion (cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, 98). At the core of every culture is the attitude that men and women adopt to the greatest mystery of life – the mystery of God. As I noted in my Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, "Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted" (No. 24). Therefore, as peoples, nations and international bodies seek to improve social and political life, bolster security and foster economic growth, they must not fail at the same time to promote those transcendent values and perspectives which are genuinely religious and which enable individuals, communities and nations to develop in a truly human way. Among the many implications of this is that the human person must be at the centre of all analysis and decision-making, so that the good of the individual and the common good may be effectively safeguarded and promoted.

It is this vision of the person and society which inspires the Catholic Church's commitment to serve the human family in every part of the world through educational, health care and social assistance programmes. In this regard, I very much appreciate your recognition of the positive influence of the Catholic Church in your country since the days of King Moshoeshoe I; and the Church will not fail to offer every possible assistance as Lesotho strives to move through these turbulent times into a stable and prosperous future.

Mr Ambassador, as you enter the diplomatic community accredited to the Holy See, I assure you that the offices of the Holy See will be ready to offer whatever assistance you may need in the performance of your duties. May your mission serve to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation between your nation and the Holy See. Upon you, your family and the beloved people of Lesotho I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Seymour Rehaulele KIKINE
Ambasciatore del Lesotho presso la Santa Sede

È nato l'11 novembre 1946.

È sposato ed ha tre figlie.

Ha conseguito la laurea in Lettere ed è specializzato in Scienze dell'Educazione.

Si è dedicato all'insegnamento, occupando anche diversi incarichi presso il Ministero dell'Educazione (1971-1979). Ha svolto quindi attività dirigenziale nel settore industriale privato (1979-1994). Nel 1994 è stato designato Ambasciatore in Danimarca con accreditamento simultaneo in Polonia e nella Federazione Russa (1994-1999). Nel 1999 è stato nominato Segretario Generale del Ministero degli Esteri.

Attualmente è Ambasciatore nella Repubblica Federale di Germania.

[02007-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI RWANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. LA SIGNORA CHRISTINE NYINAWUMWAMI UMUTONI

Your Excellency,

As I accept the Letters accrediting you as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Rwanda, I offer you a cordial welcome to the Vatican. I ask you kindly to convey to President Kagame and to all your fellow citizens the assurance of my closeness as you continue the challenging work of material and spiritual rebuilding after the immense sufferings caused by the genocidal violence of the past decade. May Almighty God inspire in the hearts of all an ever more firm commitment to the moral values of justice, solidarity, reconciliation and forgiveness, which are the only sure foundation for the nation's rebirth.

I have followed with close interest your country's continuing efforts to restore national unity on the basis of a new Constitution and social programmes aimed at restoring the rule of law, providing assistance to the surviving victims of the genocide and reintegrating the refugees. The commitment of all Rwandans to social, political and moral renewal, demanding as it is, is essential not only to the future of your country but also, on a larger scale, to the pacification of the entire Great Lakes Region. It is my hope that as Rwanda emerges from the nightmare of the recent past it will have the support of the international community in its efforts to re-establish the structures of civil society and promote an integral economic and human development capable of eliminating the deeper

causes of injustice and social unrest.

Your Excellency, if the tragic events of the recent past revealed the destructive power of evil and hatred, the present work of national reconstruction presents an important opportunity for the Rwandan people to bear witness to the even greater power of good ever present in the human heart, a good which expresses itself politically in the pursuit of a just and fraternal society based on unstinting respect for the innate dignity and rights of each human person, regardless of ethnic origin or political views. As the Church's teaching affirms and experience shows, changes in outward structures and programmes are never enough in themselves: true social renewal requires an underlying renewal of hearts and minds which can change hardened attitudes and inspire practical programmes. This is particularly true in the administration of justice, which must safeguard and promote the common good while scrupulously protecting human rights, the rule of law, fairness and equity in the infliction of punishment, especially by avoiding such drastic measures as recourse to the death penalty. In the end, there can be no peace without a firm resolve to respect and protect life as the most sacred and inviolable human reality: "it is not possible to invoke peace and despise life" (*Message for the 2001 World Day of Peace*, 19).

The Catholic Church in your country has placed itself at the service of this great moral awakening and of the programme of national reconciliation and renewal. This year the Church in Rwanda commemorates the centenary of its birth, and has just recently celebrated, in union with the universal Church, the Great Jubilee of the birth of Jesus Christ. Both these events have challenged her to a sober assessment of her past, a "purification of memory", and a recommitment to her divine mission. Through her proclamation of the Gospel and her witness to the moral law, the Church seeks to inculcate reverence for God, the Creator of all, an understanding of the sublime destiny of each man and woman, and an awareness of the God-given unity of the human race, a unity which embraces and is enriched by diversity. I deeply appreciate Your Excellency's expression of gratitude for the Catholic Church's past and present contribution to Rwandan national life through her programmes of education, charitable assistance and health care. In all these areas, the Church strives to express her own nature as a communion of faith which works through love (cf. *Gal* 5:6). By calling for a constant conversion of hearts and a sincere examination of consciences, she seeks to be a prophetic voice in Rwandan society. She is moved only by a desire to contribute to the well-being of the nation, in cooperation with the civil authorities, the members of other religious traditions and all men and women of good will.

In Rwanda, as elsewhere on the African continent, the future is already in the hands of the young. Africa's strong tradition of family life is her most precious resource in preparing the younger generation to take up the challenges of the new century. Rwanda's families need to be encouraged and given practical support and assistance in their task of shaping the minds and hearts of the young and training them to become responsible and generous members of society. The Rwanda of the future greatly needs the immense enthusiasm and reserves of energy which are unleashed when the young are inspired by high ideals and worthy goals, and are provided with the cultural and spiritual resources to attain them. At every level of national life efforts must be made to combat the threats posed to young people by illiteracy, idleness, drug abuse, and the importation of ways of thinking and patterns of behaviour that run counter to the noblest values of the African tradition. Most importantly, the young need to be provided with concrete examples of integrity, honesty and concern for others, and enabled to see that authentic human happiness and fulfilment comes only through the generous gift of self to others. In this way they will be "craftsmen of a new humanity, where brothers and sisters – members all of the same family – are able at last to live in peace" (*Message for the 2001 World Day of Peace*, 22).

Your Excellency, throughout the long years of your country's sufferings and her patient struggle to rebuild after the destruction, I have remained close to her people in prayer. As you now begin your mission to the Holy See, I wish to assure you once more of my esteem and concern for all Rwandans and to express my confidence that justice and fraternal solidarity will prevail. Invoking upon Your Excellency and your fellow-citizens the divine blessings of wisdom and strength, I ask Almighty God to guide your nation in the ways of development and peace.

S.E.la Signora Christine Nyinawumwami UMUTONI
Ambasciatore di Rwanda presso la Santa Sede

È nata il 22 febbraio 1963.

È sposata ed ha due figli.

Ha compiuto studi superiori in Diritto (1987) ed ha ottenuto un Master in "Business Administration" (1998-1999). Ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Direttore esecutivo della Fondazione per il *Welfare* dei rifugiati rwandesi in Uganda (1988); Coordinatore dell'Ufficio del Fronte Patriottico Rwandese (RPF) a Bruxelles (1990); Commissario per la Riabilitazione ed il *Welfare* e membro del Comitato Esecutivo del RPF (1993); Direttore di Gabinetto del Ministero per la riabilitazione e l'integrazione sociale (1994-1997); Consigliere presidenziale per gli affari economici (1997-2000) e consulente del Ministero delle Finanze (2000-2001).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Belgio e simultaneamente presso l'Unione Europea, nei Paesi Bassi e nel Lussemburgo.

[02008-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI MAURIZIO PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. MOHUNLALL GOBURDHUN

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to accept the Letters by which you have been accredited as Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Mauritius to the Holy See. I ask you kindly to convey to President Cassam Uteem and to the Right Honourable Prime Minister my cordial greetings and the assurance of my prayers for your country and its people. Although it is now twelve years since my Pastoral Visit to Mauritius, I still treasure memories of the warm welcome I received from your fellow citizens, and of the striking natural beauty which the Creator has bestowed upon your land.

During my visit I was able to observe for myself your nation's rich ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, and learn about the efforts being made to promote a civic life marked by tolerance, respect for others and the advancement of the common good. As you and your fellow-citizens prepare to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the establishment of Mauritius as a Republic, these values, deeply rooted in your history and culture, point the way to a future of promise and hope. In the Indian Ocean, your nation has sought to be a model of harmony between diverse groups, and of fruitful cooperation in building a just and welcoming world. By continuing to accept one another in the diversity of their cultures, beliefs, races and languages, the people of Mauritius will become, as I said during my Visit, "the image of a society of peaceful coexistence which can in some way prefigure an international community which would truly be a home for all peoples" (*Address in Plaisance*, 14 October 1989, No. 3).

Mr Ambassador, you are entering upon your mission to the Holy See at a time when the attention of the world is focused on the issue of global terrorism, which threatens to exacerbate already serious divisions within the human family and to hinder the progress being made towards greater solidarity in international life. The current crisis poses a challenge to all nations, great and small, to renew their efforts to build a culture of peace through dialogue, understanding and cooperation. It is precisely as a means of contributing to this great enterprise that the Holy See is present in the family of nations. The Holy See seeks to affirm the religious and spiritual values which are essential to humanity's quest to create an international order founded on respect for the specific culture of each people, while at the same time embodying the universal human aspiration to well-being and peace.

As Your Excellency has noted, and your country's long experience of ethnic, religious and cultural pluralism has shown, the followers of the various religions have an important role to play in serving the cause of peace. Indeed "a relationship with the one God, the common Father of all, cannot fail to bring about a greater sense of human brotherhood and a more fraternal life together" (*Message for the 2001 World Day of Peace*, 1). Today more than ever, believers are called to join in condemning every attempt to exploit race or religion for the sake of fomenting hatred, violence and division. At the same time, they can lay a firm foundation for authentic social renewal by helping to form consciences in the ways of brotherhood and in respect for the inviolable dignity and rights of each individual. At every level there has to be a firm commitment to eliminating all forms of hostility, prejudice and discord at their very root: in the depths of the human heart.

A fundamental role in building this culture of peace is played by the family, by teachers and by educational institutions. From the beginning of her presence in Mauritius, the Catholic Church, in fidelity to the Gospel, has proclaimed the dignity of the family and its role in God's plan for human society. Today especially, when the identity and the dignity of the family are being challenged by cultural models alien to the values which have traditionally shaped your society, it is essential that this "fundamental unit of society" receive due acknowledgment and the support necessary if it is to carry out its mission of providing for the sound moral and civic preparation of the citizens who have to build and defend the future of your democracy. Catholic education plays a significant role, not only by helping parents to bring up their children according to the human and spiritual values which guide their lives, but also by training young people to be mature, responsible and productive members of the community. This constitutes a vital service to the common good of the nation.

As you begin your mission at the Holy See, I offer Your Excellency prayerful good wishes for your success in the responsibilities which you are now undertaking in the service of your nation. I likewise assure you of the constant readiness of the offices of the Holy See to be of assistance. Upon you and your family, and upon all the beloved people of Mauritius, I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

S.E. il Signor Mohunlall GOBURDHUN
Ambasciatore di Maurizio presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 4 gennaio 1945.

È sposato ed ha un figlio.

Ha compiuto studi universitari in patria e si è specializzato in Diplomazia all'Università di Oxford.

Diplomatico di carriera, ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero della Pianificazione e dello Sviluppo Economico (1972-1976); Secondo Segretario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri e dell'Emigrazione (1976-1982); Primo Segretario dell'Alto Commissariato a New Delhi (1982-1985) ed a Canberra (1985-1988); Direttore dell'Alto Commissariato a Kuala Lumpur (1989); Primo Segretario (1989-1991) e Ministro Consigliere (1991-1993) presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri; Capo del Protocollo (1993-1994); Alto Commissario in India (1994-1996).

Dopo aver svolto importanti mansioni presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1996-2000) è stato nominato Alto Commissario in Gran Bretagna, ove risiede.

[02009-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI MALI PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. MOUSSA COULIBALY

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. C'est pour moi un plaisir d'accueillir Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent auprès du Saint-Siège en qualité d'Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République du Mali. Je remercie Votre Excellence pour les salutations cordiales qu'Elle vient de m'adresser en son nom et au nom du Président malien. Je Lui saurais gré en retour de bien vouloir transmettre à Son Excellence Monsieur Alpha Oumar Konaré les vœux que je forme pour sa personne et pour l'accomplissement de sa haute mission au service du peuple du Mali. Je demande au Très-Haut de bénir les efforts de tous ceux qui sont engagés dans l'édification d'une société érigée sur les valeurs de la justice et de la paix, dans la reconnaissance des droits de toutes les composantes de la nation.

2. Dans votre allocution, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous avez tenu à souligner la permanence des relations fructueuses et amicales qui existent entre votre pays et le Saint-Siège. Elles sont fondées sur la conviction commune que la dignité et les droits fondamentaux de la personne doivent être promus et défendus en tout temps et en toute situation. Après les jours sombres qui ont marqué il y a quelques mois la conscience de l'humanité tout entière, je tiens à saluer les efforts constants déployés par votre nation pour servir la cause de la paix, non seulement à l'intérieur de ses frontières, mais aussi par une action diplomatique soutenue, aux dimensions du Continent africain tout entier. Dans cette perspective, il convient de souligner l'importance de la rencontre de l'*Organisation de l'Unité africaine*, que votre capitale Bamako a accueillie en novembre 2000 et qui

portait sur la réduction de la prolifération des armes légères. Alors que votre pays s'est résolument engagé dans le processus d'édification d'une société démocratique, je forme le vœu que l'établissement et l'organisation d'un état de droit permette à chacun de jouir de ses prérogatives de citoyen, librement et dans le respect d'un pluralisme légitime, tout en concourant au bien commun, ce qui suppose en particulier le respect des valeurs et des traditions religieuses propres à chacun, respect qui contribue à l'unité nationale et au maintien de la paix et de la concorde entre tous les membres de la société.

Établir et développer une culture de paix est pour une nation un devoir exigeant et noble, inscrit dans la vocation de l'humanité à se reconnaître comme une famille. Cet engagement appelle chaque nation à assumer des choix courageux, afin de combattre l'égoïsme sous toutes ses formes, dont on constate les effets en particulier dans les déséquilibres d'ordre économique et social ainsi que dans l'absence de confiance qui, souvent, minent les relations de saine coopération entre les hommes et les peuples. À ce sujet, j'ai eu l'occasion de rappeler à maintes reprises qu'il n'y a pas «de paix véritable si elle ne s'accompagne pas d'équité, de vérité, de justice et de solidarité. Est voué à l'échec tout projet qui tend à séparer deux droits indivisibles et interdépendants: le droit à la paix et le droit à un développement intégral et solidaire» (*Message pour la Journée mondiale de la paix 2000*). Dans le but de remédier aux graves injustices qui maintiennent dans la misère des nations entières, j'invite les pays riches à soutenir les efforts des pays plus pauvres, en les aidant notamment à mettre en place des structures de développement et des moyens de formation appropriés. En effet, les pays en voie de développement doivent être aidés pour eux-mêmes et non en fonction d'intérêts particuliers des nations auxquelles ils seraient redevables. Ainsi sera véritablement mise en œuvre cette mondialisation de la solidarité que j'appelle de mes vœux, et qui représente une grande chance non seulement pour la croissance économique de l'humanité, mais aussi pour sa croissance culturelle et morale.

3. L'Église catholique, quant à elle, est désireuse d'être partie prenante dans la vie du peuple malien, souhaitant apporter une aide spécifique à la promotion du bien de la communauté nationale. Au nom de la mission de service de l'Évangile qu'elle a reçue de Jésus Christ, elle tient à encourager toute démarche qui participe à l'épanouissement intégral des personnes et des peuples, en conformité avec leur vocation. Elle a toujours considéré que l'éducation constituait un terreau irremplaçable pour la saine croissance des jeunes générations, contribuant à ouvrir leur conscience aux valeurs d'amour, de respect, de liberté, de justice et de solidarité. Dans ce domaine de l'éducation, comme dans celui de la santé ou de l'action sociale, l'Église catholique continuera à œuvrer pour le bien commun, avec toutes les composantes de la société civile. Une telle perspective suppose qu'elle ait les moyens matériels et la reconnaissance lui permettant d'assurer sa mission auprès des personnes qui lui sont confiées, sans discrimination. Pour permettre aux jeunes qui bénéficient de cette éducation intégrale d'apporter efficacement leur concours au progrès de la société vers une vie plus fraternelle, il est nécessaire de promouvoir et de soutenir la famille, valeur essentielle de la culture africaine, qui «a des liens organiques et vitaux avec la société parce qu'elle en constitue le fondement et qu'elle la sustente sans cesse en réalisant son service de la vie: c'est au sein de la famille, en effet, que naissent les citoyens et dans la famille qu'ils font le premier apprentissage des vertus sociales, qui sont pour la société l'âme de sa vie et de son développement» (Exhortation apostolique *Familiaris consortio*, n. 42). Il est enfin vivement souhaitable que cette éducation intégrale permette aux chrétiens et aux musulmans de tisser des relations faites de respect mutuel, de confiance et d'amitié, pour réaliser une coopération fructueuse, dans la concorde et l'estime réciproque. Que dans le patrimoine authentique de leurs traditions religieuses, ils puisent les forces nécessaires afin de collaborer au développement solidaire de leur pays !

4. Vous me permettrez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de saluer chaleureusement, par votre intermédiaire, les Évêques, les prêtres, les religieux, les religieuses, les catéchistes et les fidèles catholiques de votre pays. Je les encourage à mettre toujours plus leur espérance dans le Christ, pour rendre un vivant témoignage à l'amour de Dieu au milieu de leurs frères et sœurs. Je les invite à travailler avec ardeur, par le chemin du dialogue et par leur engagement dans la vie de la cité, pour faire disparaître les causes de division et pour parvenir à une société toujours plus équitable et plus unie.

5. Au moment où vous commencez votre mission près du Saint-Siège, je vous offre mes vœux cordiaux pour la noble tâche qui vous attend. Soyez assuré que vous trouverez ici, auprès de mes collaborateurs, l'accueil attentif et compréhensif dont vous pourrez avoir besoin.

Sur votre Excellence, sur sa famille et sur ses collaborateurs, sur le peuple malien et sur ceux qui président aux destinées de la nation, j'invoque de grand cœur l'abondance des Bénédictiones divines.

S.E. il Signor Moussa COULIBALY

Ambasciatore del Mali presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 6 dicembre 1953.

È sposato ed ha sei figlie.

Ha conseguito il titolo di docente nelle scuole secondarie (1978).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1979-1985); Secondo Consigliere della Missione Permanente presso le Nazioni Unite a New York (1985-1989); Primo Consigliere di Ambasciata a Bonn (1989-1990); Capo Ufficio presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1991-1993); Consigliere diplomatico del Presidente della Repubblica (1993-1999).

Dal 1999 è Ambasciatore in Francia.

[02010-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

UDIENZA ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI SVIZZERA IN MISSIONE SPECIALE PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE

Nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza S.E. il Signor Hansrudolf Hoffmann, Ambasciatore di Svizzera in Missione Speciale presso la Santa Sede.

S.E. il Signor Hansrudolf HOFFMANN

Ambasciatore di Svizzera in Missione Speciale presso la Santa Sede

È nato nel 1939.

È sposato.

Ha compiuto studi universitari a Zurigo, Berlino, Berna e Ginevra, ottenendo la Licenza in Diritto. Ha conseguito il titolo di Avvocato.

Nel 1969 è entrato al servizio del Dipartimento Federale degli Affari Esteri ed ha ricoperto successivamente incarichi a Berna e presso le Ambasciate a Bruxelles, a Brasilia ed a Parigi.

È stato quindi nominato: Incaricato d'Affari in Libia (1985-1988); Ambasciatore in Iraq (1988-1990); Direttore per le Organizzazioni Internazionali presso il Dipartimento Federale degli Affari Esteri (1990-1995); Ambasciatore in Portogallo (1995-1999); Ambasciatore in Finlandia ed in Estonia (1999-2001).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore nella Repubblica Ceca.

Dopo l'Udienza Pontificia, l'Ambasciatore Hoffmann è stato ricevuto dall'Em.mo Card. Angelo Sodano, Segretario di Stato.

[02011-01.01]

DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE AGLI AMBASCIATORI IN OCCASIONE DELLA PRESENTAZIONE COLLETTIVA DELLE LETTERE CREDENZIALI

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che Giovanni Paolo II ha rivolto questa mattina agli Ecc.mi nuovi Ambasciatori presso la Santa Sede, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, al termine dello scambio delle Lettere Credenziali di ciascun Ambasciatore al Santo Padre:

Excellences,

1. Je suis heureux de vous recevoir en ce jour et de vous souhaiter la bienvenue au moment où vous remettez les Lettres qui vous accréditent auprès du Siège apostolique comme Ambassadeurs extraordinaires et plénipotentiaires de vos pays: le Bangladesh, Djibouti, la Finlande, l'Érythrée, la Géorgie, le Lesotho, le Rwanda, l'Île Maurice, le Mali. Je salue aussi le nouvel Ambassadeur de Suisse en Mission spéciale. Je vous saurai gré d'exprimer à vos Chefs d'État respectifs ma gratitude pour les messages à mon intention dont vous êtes porteurs, leur transmettant en retour mes salutations cordiales et déférentes, ainsi que mes vœux fervents pour leurs personnes et pour leur mission au service de tous leurs concitoyens. Permettez-moi aussi de profiter de cette circonstance pour saluer par votre intermédiaire les Autorités de vos pays et l'ensemble de vos compatriotes. J'ajoute volontiers une intention spéciale pour vos concitoyens catholiques et pour leurs pasteurs. Tous ont le souci d'apporter leur contribution à la concorde et à la paix.

2. Nos contemporains sont aujourd'hui plus que jamais marqués par la peur, qui provient à la fois de la situation instable que connaît notre monde et de l'incertitude du lendemain; beaucoup semblent ne plus pouvoir envisager sereinement leur avenir, notamment les jeunes qui sont troublés par les événements dramatiques que leur offre le monde des adultes. Il appartient de manière toute spéciale aux Responsables des Nations et à leurs Représentants dans le service diplomatique de s'engager plus que jamais et de manière toujours plus intense, par la voie du dialogue et de la coopération internationale, pour l'éradication de tout ce qui est source de conflit et de tensions entre des groupes humains et entre des nations. Nulle question particulière, qui doit toujours pouvoir trouver des solutions négociées, ne doit l'emporter sur le respect des personnes et des peuples.

3. Votre mission, Messieurs et Mesdames les Ambassadeurs, consiste à servir à la fois la noble cause de votre pays et la noble cause de la paix. Ce sont là d'éminents actes d'amour envers le prochain, qui doivent être réalisés avec le désir de contribuer au bien commun et à une meilleure entente entre les personnes et entre les peuples. Nous pourrions alors offrir aux générations qui nous suivent une terre où il fait bon vivre. Nous devons sans cesse nous rappeler que toutes les injustices que peuvent connaître nos contemporains, que les situations de pauvreté, que le manque d'éducation de la jeunesse sont à la source de bon nombre de foyers de violence à travers le monde. La justice, la paix, la lutte contre la misère et contre le manque de formation spirituelle, morale et intellectuelle des jeunes, tels sont des aspects essentiels de l'engagement auquel j'appelle les Dirigeants des Nations, les services diplomatiques et tous les hommes de bonne volonté.

4. Au moment où vous commencez votre mission auprès du Saint-Siège, je tiens à vous exprimer mes vœux les meilleurs. J'invoque bien volontiers l'abondance des Bénédiction divines, sur vous-mêmes et sur vos familles, sur vos collaborateurs et sur les Nations que vous représentez.

[02001-03.01] [Texte original: Français]
