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LE UDIENZE

Il Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza:

S.E. il Signor Donald Smith, Ambasciatore del Canada presso la Santa Sede, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali;

S.E. il Signor Oto Agripino Maia, Ambasciatore del Brasile, in visita di congedo;

S.E. il Signor Kelebert Nkomani, Ambasciatore di Zimbabwe, in visita di congedo;

S.E. il Signor Philip McDonagh, Ambasciatore di Irlanda, presso la Santa Sede, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali;

Membri del Consiglio Direttivo della Federazione Internazionale dei Pueri Cantores;

Partecipanti al Convegno Internazionale promosso dall'Associazione Italiana Santa Cecilia.

[01361-01.01]

LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DELL'AMBASCIATORE DEL CANADA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE

Alle 11.00 di questa mattina il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza S.E. il Signor Donald Smith, Ambasciatore del Canada presso la Santa Sede, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali.

Riportiamo di seguito il discorso che il Papa ha rivolto al nuovo Ambasciatore, nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di S.E. il Signor Donald Smith:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Your Excellency,

It is a pleasure for me to extend a cordial welcome to you today as I accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Canada to the Holy See. My pastoral visits to your country, especially the joyous occasion of World Youth Day 2002 in Toronto, remain clearly etched in my mind. I thank you for the greetings which you bear from the Governor-General and the people of Canada. Please convey to them my heartfelt thanks and assure them of my prayers for the well-being of the nation.

Canada's generous and practical contributions to the building of a world of peace, justice and prosperity are widely recognized by the international community. Indeed, solidarity with developing nations is a well-known and laudable trait of your people, evidenced, among other things, by your nation's notable involvement in peace-keeping missions and the production of low-cost medicines for poorer nations. In the face of the suffering and divisions which so often afflict the human family, the need to find lasting solutions to human conflicts becomes all the more apparent. In this regard, as Your Excellency observed, during thirty-five years of diplomatic relations the Holy See has worked together with Canada on a number of projects for the betterment of disadvantaged people and communities, including the promotion and application of the Ottawa Convention on landmines and the WTO agreement on intellectual property and public health. Similarly, with other countries, Canada and the Holy See have endeavoured to bring stability, peace and development to the Great Lakes Region in Africa.

Such gestures of solidarity are more than just unilateral acts of good intent. Rather, they spring from values and convictions which have shaped Canadian society throughout its history and upon which all authentic social progress depends. For this reason, during my last visit to your country I encouraged all Canadians to treasure the core of their heritage: the spiritual vision of life inspired by the belief that all men and women receive their essential dignity from God and with it the capacity to grow towards truth and goodness (Homily of Concluding Mass, Toronto, 28 July 2002).

Your Excellency has noted that Canada's openness to migration has brought increasing diversity and a great richness to your culture, fostering mutual accommodation and respect between ethnic groups. The characteristics of tolerance and hospitality have endeared many to your land. With the successful integration of the multiple ethnic communities now found in your country, they also illustrate for other nations that the respect due to every person is rooted in the common origin of all men and women, rather than in the fact of differences between peoples. It is this sublime and fundamental truth concerning the human person – created male and female in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Gn* 1:26-27) – which constitutes the immutable basis for all other anthropological truths. From its nature as divine gift stems the inviolable and sacred dignity of all life, the respect owed to every individual, and the requirement that men and women adhere to the natural and moral structure

with which they have been endowed by God (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 38).

For generations Canadians have recognized and celebrated the place of marriage at the heart of your society. Established by the Creator with its own nature and purpose, and preserved in natural moral law, the institution of marriage necessarily entails the complementarity of husbands and wives who participate in God's creative activity through the raising of children. Spouses thereby ensure the survival of society and culture, and rightly deserve specific and categorical legal recognition by the State. Any attempts to change the meaning of the word "spouse" contradict right reason: legal guarantees, analogous to those granted to marriage, cannot be applied to unions between persons of the same sex without creating a false understanding of the nature of marriage.

Mr Ambassador, Canada is not alone in the difficult challenges facing individuals in contemporary culture. With goodwill, I am confident that the splendid vision of supportive and stable family life, so dear to the people of Canada, will continue to offer to society the foundation upon which the aspirations of your nation can be built. For her part the Catholic Church in Canada is willing to offer assistance in upholding the essential social foundations of civic life. She is heavily involved in the spiritual and intellectual formation of the young, especially through her schools, and her social apostolate extends to those facing some of the serious problems of modern society including alcohol and drug abuse as well as various forms of social displacement. I am confident that the Catholic community will respond generously to new social challenges as they arise.

Your Excellency, I know that your mission will serve to strengthen further the bonds of friendship which already exist between Canada and the Holy See. As you take up your new responsibilities, I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you, your family and fellow citizens, I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**S.E. il Signor Donald Smith,
Ambasciatore del Canada presso la Santa Sede**

È nato a Winnipeg (Manitoba) il 2 dicembre 1945.

È sposato ed ha due figlie.

Laureato in Legge (Università di Alberta, 1969), è membro del Collegio degli Avvocati di Alberta.

Entrato in carriera diplomatica nel 1969, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1969-1971); Terzo Segretario di Ambasciata e Vice-console al Cairo (1971-1973); Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1973-1976); Primo Segretario e Console a Dublino (1976-1979); Avvocato presso la *Harris and Co.* a Calgary (1979-1980);

Capo Sezione (1980-1982) e Vice-Direttore (1982-1987) di divisione del Ministero degli Esteri;

Consigliere dell'Alto Commissariato a Londra (1985-1989); Vice-Direttore (1989-1991) e Direttore (1991-2000) del dipartimento legale del Ministero degli Esteri; Ambasciatore a Zagabria (1997-2000); Direttore di Divisione del Ministero degli Esteri (2000-2004).

[01362-02.02] [Original text: English]

LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DELL'AMBASCIATORE DI IRLANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che il Santo Padre ha rivolto, in occasione della presentazione della Lettere Credenziali, a S.E. il Signor Philip McDonagh, Ambasciatore di Irlanda presso la Santa Sede, nonché i cenni

biografici essenziali del nuovo Ambasciatore:

• **DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE**

Mr Ambassador,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Ireland to the Holy See. I thank you for the generous words of greeting which you have addressed to me on behalf of President Mary McAleese, and I ask you kindly to convey to her and to all the beloved Irish people my cordial best wishes and the assurance of my prayers.

Ireland is rightly proud of its ancient heritage of warm hospitality and generous assistance to those in need. Based on a Christian love of neighbour and nurtured in stable family life, these virtues have formed the "soul" of Ireland and continue to be one of its most precious resources. The unwritten story of so many Irish men and women who have dedicated their lives to serve others is one of the most impressive chapters of your country's history. I very much appreciate your thoughtful reference to one of them, the late Archbishop Michael Courtney, who offered the supreme sacrifice of his life to bring peace and well-being to the suffering people of Burundi. It is encouraging to see that the same love of neighbour inspires so many young Irish people who generously volunteer their time, their talents and their professional skills for the service of others. In this spirit of assistance to those in need Ireland has done much within the international community to alleviate suffering by providing financial assistance, educational opportunities and professional guidance, and by sending emergency relief funds and peace-keeping troops when requested.

The experience of generations of Irish emigrants has made your people aware of the serious difficulties and precarious conditions often encountered by individuals and families seeking a new beginning in a foreign land. This sensitivity represents a great resource for developing a mature culture of acceptance. Such a culture calls for generosity and openness to legitimate diversity, while demanding a necessary respect for the nation's cultural patrimony and a commitment to the promotion of adequate forms of integration (cf. *Ecclesia in Europa*, 101-102). The plight of refugees and those displaced by poverty, war or persecution is particularly dramatic and calls for special consideration and generosity. The Holy See hopes that the steps taken during the Irish presidency of the European Union in favour of policies of openness to other peoples will continue to inspire the community's attitude to immigrants from other continents and cultures. I encourage your country to continue to address this important humanitarian problem together with your European counterparts with an open heart and a persevering commitment.

As Your Excellency has noted, Ireland has recently undergone significant social changes, including remarkable economic growth. A more prosperous society has greater possibilities of becoming a more just and open society, but it is also faced with new challenges, including the danger of a certain spiritual impoverishment and indifference to the deeper moral and religious dimensions of life. Your country's aspiration to become a profoundly modern society, within the family of European nations, will find its highest expression in a commitment to reaffirming above all the incomparable dignity and the right to life of each human person. I am confident that by remaining true to the values which have shaped Ireland as a nation from the time of its evangelization, your people will help to make an outstanding contribution to the future of Europe (cf. *Ecclesia in Europa*, 96).

You have mentioned Ireland's hopes for the peace process. I pray that every effort is being made to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Good Friday Agreement, which has given new impulse and new hope to the people of Northern Ireland. The Catholic Church in Ireland working together with other Christian communities is committed to consolidating positive attitudes of comprehension, respect and esteem of others through ecumenical activities and educational efforts. The message of the Gospel cannot be separated from the call to a change of heart; neither can evangelization be isolated from ecumenism and the promotion of fellowship, reconciliation and openness to others, especially to other Christians. May the initiatives of all those who seek peace and reconciliation be blessed by God's grace and bear fruit for the children of tomorrow.

Mr Ambassador, you begin your duties as the Representative of your country to the Holy See in the same year

that we together celebrate the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of our diplomatic relations. Let me assure you of my prayers for the success of your mission. I ask Almighty God's abundant blessings upon you and your family and upon the beloved people of Ireland.

**S.E. il Signor Philip McDonagh,
Ambasciatore di Irlanda presso la Santa Sede**

È nato a Dublino il 14 settembre 1952.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1975, ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1975-1976); Terzo Segretario e, successivamente, Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a Roma (1977-1978); Primo Segretario della Missione Permanente presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra (1979-1984); Primo Segretario al Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1984-1985; 1986-1988); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a Stoccolma (1985-1986) e della Rappresentanza Permanente presso l'Unione Europea a Bruxelles (1988-1989); in missione presso il Segretariato per la Cooperazione Politica Europea a Bruxelles (1989-1991); Primo Segretario, e successivamente Consigliere, presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1991-1993); Consigliere di Ambasciata a Londra (1994-1999); Ambasciatore in India (1999-2004).

[01363-02.01] [Original text: English]

TELEGRAMMA DI CORDOGLIO DEL SANTO PADRE PER LE VITTIME DELL'ATTENTATO TERRORISTICO COMPIUTO NELLA SCUOLA DI BESLAN IN OSSEZIA

Riportiamo di seguito il telegramma di cordoglio per le vittime dell'attentato terroristico compiuto nella scuola di Beslan in Ossezia, inviato dal Segretario di Stato, Cardinale Angelo Sodano, a nome del Santo Padre, alle Autorità della Federazione Russa, tramite il Rappresentante della Santa Sede, S.E. Mons. Antonio Mennini :

• TELEGRAMMA DEL SANTO PADRE

APPRESA NOTIZIA CRUENTO EPILOGO FEROCO SEQUESTRO IN OSSEZIA DEL NORD CON VILE ET SPIETATA AGGRESSIONE AT BAMBINI ET FAMIGLIE INERMI SOMMO PONTEFICE INCARICA VOSTRA ECCELLENZA RENDERSI INTERPRETE SUO PARTECIPE AFFETTO AT POPOLO RUSSO IN QUEST'ORA DI SGOMENTO ET ANGOSCIA (.) NELL'ESPRIMERE SUA SPIRITUALE VICINANZA SPECIALMENTE AT FAMILIARI DEI MORTI ET FERITI SANTO PADRE AFFIDA AT MISERICORDIA DELL'ALTISSIMO VITTIME INNOCENTI DI QUESTA TRAGEDIA IMPLORANDO PER LORO RIPOSO ETERNO (.) ANCORA UNA VOLTA SUA SANTITA' DEPLORA OGNI FORMA DI TERRORISMO ET AUSPICA CHE NON PREVALGA SPIRALE DELL'ODIO ET DELLA VIOLENZA ET MENTRE IMPLORA VERGINE SANTA TANTO VENERATA DAI CRISTIANI DELLA RUSSIA AFFINCHE' SUSCITI NEI CUORI DI TUTTI PENSIERI DI SAGGEZZA ET PROPOSITI DI PACE ET RICONCILIAZIONE INVOCA SU QUANTI SONO PROVATI DA COSI' EFFERATO ATTACCO CONFORTATRICE BENEDIZIONE DIO ONNIPOTENTE

CARDINALE ANGELO SODANO
SEGRETARIO DI STATO

[01366-01.02]

[B0427-XX.01]

