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LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: MONGOLIA, INDIA, BENIN, NUOVA ZELANDA, SUD AFRICA, BURKINA FASO, NAMIBIA, NORVEGIA

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Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Mongolia, India, Benin, Nuova Zelanda, Sud Africa, Burkina Faso, Namibia e Norvegia.

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 DELLA MONGOLIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. DANZANNOROV BOLDBAATAR

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to extend a cordial welcome to you as you present the Credential Letters appointing you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Holy See. Grateful for the warm greeting which you have conveyed to me on behalf of your President, Mr. Nambaryn Enkhbayar, I reciprocate with my own best wishes for his health and well-being. I assure him and all the citizens of Mongolia of my prayers as they continue to promote peace and social harmony at home and abroad.

I am grateful, Mr. Ambassador, that the cooperative spirit which has marked the diplomatic ties between Mongolia and the Holy See has yielded much fruit. An explicit and mutual recognition of the benefits to be gained through diplomatic relations paved the way for the establishment of the Apostolic Prefecture of Ulaanbaatar, thus making it possible to coordinate more effectively the pastoral care of Catholics in Mongolia and to give a new impetus to their charitable activities for the good of all your fellow citizens. A particular sign of this fruitful collaboration was the dedication of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in July of 2002, which took place on the auspicious occasion of the 10th Anniversary of diplomatic ties between Mongolia and the Holy See. I wish to voice personally my deep gratitude for all that your Government and the local civil authorities did to make this historic event possible. Not only did it help to build a sense of unity between the Catholic faithful in your land and their fellow believers throughout the world, it also bore clear witness to Mongolia's long-standing respect for religious freedom. This fundamental human right, enshrined in Mongolia's Constitution and upheld by its citizens as conducive to the full development of the human person, allows them to search for the truth, engage in dialogue and fulfil their duty to worship God immune from any undue coercion.

The opportunity for adherents of different religions to speak and listen to one another has a vital role in strengthening the human family. You have referred to the bold initiative of Chinggis Khan in the 13th century to invite Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Daoists to live together on the steppes of Mongolia: a gesture that continues to find expression in the openness of the Mongolian people, who treasure the religious customs passed down from generation to generation, and who show a profound respect for traditions other than their own. This religious earnestness was especially evident as Mongolia emerged from years of oppression under a totalitarian regime. In this time of greater peace and stability, I heartily encourage forums that facilitate the amicable exchange of ideas about religion and how it contributes to the good of civil society. Peoples who practise religious tolerance have an obligation to share the wisdom of this tenet with the entire human family, so that all men and women might perceive the beauty of tranquil co-existence and have the courage to build a society that respects human dignity and acts upon the divine injunction to love one's neighbour (cf. *Mk 12:32*).

Your Excellency, this spirit of fraternal cooperation will serve Mongolia well as she strives to achieve goals for

development in the years ahead. As you have noted, foremost among these is the reduction of poverty and unemployment. These objectives are placed within the framework of the overall economic growth and equitable distribution of goods your country wishes to sustain in the long-term future. The values of fairness and trust in the marketplace upheld by the Mongolian people provide a sure foundation to meet these goals. Criteria for designing programmes to this end must reflect social as well as commutative justice (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 303); they must take into account the objective value of work rendered, the dignity of the subjects who perform it, the varying needs of citizens, and the merit that justly corresponds to the quality of work done (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 35).

Mongolia is a country which acknowledges that human well-being cannot be measured solely in terms of wealth. Educational achievement – of which literary and artistic accomplishments are reliable indicators – is also an essential feature of a flourishing society. I am appreciative that your country has singled out the need to expand educational opportunities for the betterment of all its people. Systems of instruction must not, of course, neglect the technological formation that enables students to acquire and maintain gainful employment in this age of rapid globalization and technological progress. At the same time, an integral education attends to man as a whole rather than simply his ability to produce. In particular, the young deserve a comprehensive intellectual and spiritual formation that opens their eyes to the dignity of every human person and inspires them to hone the virtues necessary to place themselves at the service of all mankind. I therefore encourage the initiatives undertaken by your Government to increase access to education and to buttress it with a clear view of what is genuinely good for human beings.

For its part, the Catholic community, though still small in Mongolia, is eager to offer its assistance in fostering interreligious dialogue, promoting development, expanding educational opportunities, and furthering the noble goals that strengthen the solidarity of the human family and turn its gaze to the action of the divine in the world. While recognizing the due autonomy of the political community, the Catholic Church is compelled to cooperate with civil society in ways suitable to the circumstances of the time and place in which the two find themselves living together.

I therefore thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for the kind assurance of Mongolia's desire to build upon the accomplishments that have sprung from the diplomatic relations forged between your nation and the Holy See. As you begin your mission, I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties, and I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God upon you, the members of your family and all the citizens of Mongolia.

S.E. il Sig. Danzannorov BoldbaatarAmbasciatore di Mongolia presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 16 luglio 1956.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Laureato in economia (Università nazionale, Ulanbaatar, 1978), si è specializzato in economia internazionale (Accademia di Commercio internazionale, Mosca, 1987).

Direttore della "*Kompleximport*", impresa statale dipendente dal Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1978-1990), ha ricoperto successivamente i seguenti incarichi: Addetto per il commercio e l'economia presso la Missione Permanente dell'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra (1990-1993); Esperto di commercio presso il Ministero del Commercio e dell'Industria (1993-1994); Direttore generale della Società "Fortuna", in Ulaanbaatar (1994-1996); Direttore di dipartimento presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1996-2000); Consigliere della Missione presso le Nazioni Unite a Ginevra (2000-2002); Rappresentante della Camera nazionale di Commercio ed Industria della Mongolia in Svizzera (2002-2005).

Dal 2005 è Ambasciatore in Svizzera e Rappresentante permanente presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite a Ginevra, ove risiede.

Parla l'inglese, il francese e il russo.

[00857-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELL'INDIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. LA SIG.NA CHITRA NARAYANAN

Madam Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you today and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Holy See. Thanking you for the kind words which you have addressed to me in your own name and on behalf of the Government, I would ask to reciprocate my own respectful greetings to Her Excellency, Mrs Pratibha Patil, President of the Republic, and to the re-elected Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr Manmohan Singh, assuring them of my prayers for their well-being and for that of all the people of India.

India is a land fertile with ancient wisdom. Her people, representing many different religions and cultures, are sensitive to the need for self-awareness, integrity and harmonious coexistence with one's neighbour for overall personal and social well-being. The immense variety within your borders opens a range of possibilities for dialogue between philosophies and religious traditions intent upon probing life's deepest questions. Cultivating this dialogue not only enriches your own Nation but serves as an example to others throughout Asia and indeed throughout the world.

Notwithstanding the financial hardships currently facing the entire global community, India has made remarkable economic strides in recent years. Other nations have drawn inspiration from the diligence, human ingenuity and foresight which have contributed to your country's growth. Increased prosperity calls for heightened vigilance to ensure that the poor are protected from being exploited by the unbridled mechanisms of the economy which often tend to profit only an elite few. Hence the motive for your Country's ambitious rural jobs programme which was designed to help the disadvantaged – especially the rural poor – to earn a subsistent wage by participating in building projects and other cooperative initiatives. Programmes such as this show that labour is never a mere commodity but a specifically human activity. They must therefore be implemented in a way that upholds human dignity and repudiates any temptation to favouritism, corruption or fraud.

The principle of subsidiarity is of particular value in this regard. A society that allows subordinate organizations to perform their proper activities encourages citizens to take an active part in building up the common good, placing themselves at the service of others and committing themselves to resolving differences justly and peacefully. Subsidiarity both presupposes and fosters individual responsibility, enjoining all members of society to seek the good of others as their own. While bureaucratic structures are necessary, it must always be kept in mind that the various levels of governance – national, regional, and local – are oriented towards the service of citizens, as they themselves are administered by citizens.

Democratic systems of governance must be kept in check by broad social participation. Having recently completed an important round of national elections, India has shown the world that this key democratic process is not only possible, but can be conducted in an atmosphere of civility and peace. As the newly elected face the challenges ahead of them, I am confident that the same spirit of patient cooperation will prevail, sustaining them in their weighty responsibility of drafting laws and deliberating social policy. May they be ready to subordinate special interests, placing them within the wider context of the common good which is an essential and indispensable goal of political authority (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 409).

Madam Ambassador, as Chief Shepherd of the Catholic Church, I join religious and governmental leaders throughout the world who share a common desire that all members of the human family enjoy the freedom to practise religion and engage in civil life without fear of adverse repercussions on account of their beliefs. I therefore cannot help but express my deep concern for Christians who have suffered from outbreaks of violence in some areas within your borders. Today I have the opportunity to express my appreciation for your Country's efforts to provide the afflicted with shelter and assistance, relief and rehabilitation, as well as for the measures

taken to implement criminal investigations and fair judicial processes to resolve these issues. I appeal to all to show respect for human dignity by rejecting hatred and renouncing violence in all its forms.

For her part, the Catholic Church in your Country will continue to play a role promoting peace, harmony and reconciliation between followers of all religions, especially through education and formation in the virtues of justice, forbearance and charity. Indeed, this is the inherent goal of all genuine forms of education since – in conformity with the dignity of the human person and the call of all men and women to live in community – they aim at cultivating moral virtues and preparing young people to embrace their social responsibilities with a refined sensibility for what is good, just and noble.

Madam Ambassador, as you assume your responsibilities within the diplomatic community accredited to the Holy See, I offer you my good wishes for the successful fulfilment of your high mission. I assure you that the various offices and departments of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you. Upon yourself and upon the beloved people of India I invoke abundant divine blessings.

S.E. la Sig.na Chitra NarayananAmbasciatore dell'India presso la Santa Sede

È nata il 10 agosto 1952.

Laureata in Scienze politiche, ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1978, ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1978-1980); Terzo e Secondo Segretario di Ambasciata a Roma (1980-1983); Secondo e Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a Nairobi (1983-1986); Sotto-Segretario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1986-1991); Primo Segretario e Consigliere di Ambasciata a Washington (1991-1994); Direttore di Ricerca e Segretario aggiunto per le ricerche speciali a New Delhi (1995-2001); Ambasciatore a Stoccolma (2001-2004); Ambasciatore ad Ankara (2005-2008).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore a Berna, ove risiede.

[00858-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL BENIN PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. CHARLES BORROMÉE TODJINOU

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur

Je suis heureux de vous accueillir au Vatican au moment où vous présentez les Lettres qui vous accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire du Bénin près le Saint-Siège. Je vous exprime ma gratitude pour les aimables paroles que vous m'avez adressées ainsi que pour le message chaleureux que vous m'avez transmis de la part de Son Excellence Monsieur Boni Yayi, Président de la République. En retour, dans l'heureux souvenir de la visite qu'il m'a rendue au Vatican, je vous serais reconnaissant de lui faire parvenir mes remerciements et l'assurance de mes vœux cordiaux pour toute la nation, afin qu'elle progresse avec courage sur les chemins du développement humain et spirituel.

Vous l'avez relevé dans votre adresse, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la crise financière mondiale actuelle risque de compromettre les efforts méritoires accomplis par de nombreux pays pour leur développement. Aussi, est-il plus que jamais nécessaire que toutes les composantes de la nation travaillent ensemble au service du bien commun. Ceci exige dès lors qu'une démocratie authentique se mette en place, fondée sur une conception correcte de la personne humaine. Au cours des dernières années, votre pays s'est engagé courageusement sur ce chemin, avec notamment le soutien de l'Église catholique et des autres composantes religieuses. Le développement d'un tel processus de démocratisation est une garantie pour la paix sociale, la stabilité et l'unité du pays, s'il se base sur la dignité de chaque personne, le respect des droits de l'homme et le 'bien commun' accepté comme fin et critère de régulation de la vie politique (cf. *Compendium de la doctrine sociale de l'Église*, n. 407). Dans cette perspective, l'établissement d'un dialogue sincère entre les personnes et entre les Institutions est d'une grande importance.

Je voudrais saluer aussi l'engagement de votre pays pour la consolidation de la paix et de la stabilité dans plusieurs régions du monde. Cette marque de solidarité avec des nations éprouvées, notamment en Afrique, est une contribution notable pour la promotion des valeurs de bien, de vérité et de justice et pour la défense de vies innocentes. La recherche de la paix et de la réconciliation est une grave responsabilité pour ceux qui ont la charge de guider les nations, car la violence, qui ne résout jamais les problèmes, est une atteinte inacceptable à la dignité de l'homme.

Votre présence ici ce matin, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, témoigne des bonnes relations qui existent entre le Bénin et le Saint-Siège. Dans ce cadre, permettez-moi de rappeler ici l'œuvre éminente accomplie par le Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, dont la vie de la communauté catholique de votre pays a reçu une particulière impulsion et dont la personnalité est toujours respectée et admirée par tous les Béninois. Puisse son engagement généreux envers l'Église, le Bénin et l'Afrique, demeurer pour beaucoup de vos concitoyens un exemple d'abnégation et de don de soi pour les autres!

Ainsi que vous l'avez souligné, Excellence, le Bénin est une terre d'accueil, d'hospitalité et de tolérance. Enracinée dans le peuple béninois depuis de nombreuses années, l'Église catholique poursuit l'œuvre entreprise au service de la nation, offrant ainsi sa contribution propre au développement du pays dans de nombreux domaines, notamment dans l'éducation, la santé et la promotion humaine. Elle entend par là s'associer à l'effort national pour que chacun, comme chaque famille, puisse vivre dans la dignité. Cette participation de l'Église à la vie sociale est une part importante de sa mission. En effet, parce qu'elle souhaite annoncer et actualiser l'Évangile au cœur des relations sociales, l'Église ne peut rester indifférente devant aucune des réalités qui constituent la vie des hommes. Je me réjouis donc de savoir que ces œuvres de l'Église sont appréciées par la population et qu'elles jouissent aussi du soutien des Autorités.

Le développement de relations harmonieuses entre les catholiques et les membres des autres religions, qui dans votre pays sont généralement faites de compréhension réciproque, est aussi à encourager. Les diversités culturelles ou religieuses doivent permettre un enrichissement qualitatif de toute la société. Comme j'ai eu l'occasion de le dire récemment, « ensemble nous devons montrer, par notre respect et notre solidarité mutuels, que nous nous considérons comme les membres d'une seule famille : la famille que Dieu a aimée et réunie ensemble depuis la création du monde jusqu'à la fin de l'histoire humaine » (*Discours aux participants au Forum catholique-musulman*, 6 novembre 2008). Il est donc souhaitable qu'une connaissance mutuelle toujours plus vraie et lucide permette l'expression d'une entente sur les valeurs fondamentales, notamment sur celles qui concernent la protection et la promotion de la vie et de la famille, ainsi qu'une coopération en tout ce qui promeut le bien-être commun.

Permettez-moi, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de saluer par votre entremise la communauté catholique de votre pays, unie autour de ses Évêques. Je souhaite que les catholiques soient au milieu du peuple béninois des semeurs d'espérance et de paix. Je les invite à collaborer avec tous pour édifier une société toujours plus solidaire et fraternelle.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, en ce jour où vous commencez votre mission auprès du Siège apostolique, je vous adresse mes vœux les meilleurs de réussite et je vous assure que vous trouverez toujours auprès de mes collaborateurs compréhension et soutien pour son heureux accomplissement.

J'invoque de grand cœur sur votre personne, sur votre famille, sur vos collaborateurs ainsi que sur tous les Béninois et leurs dirigeants, l'abondance des Bénédiction du Tout-Puissant.

S.E. il Sig. Charles Borromée Todjinou Ambasciatore del Benin presso la Santa Sede

È nato ad Adjohoun il 4 novembre 1958.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Ha frequentato la scuola elementare presso le Scuole cattoliche di Saint Etienne d'Adjohoun e Notre Dame de

Toutes Grâces de Paouignan (1966-1971), e la scuola secondaria nei Seminari cattolici Sainte Jeanne d'Arc de Ouidah, Saint Paul de Djimè-Abomey e Notre Dame de Fatine de Parakoyu (1971-1979).

Ha ottenuto due Diplomi in Diplomazia e Relazioni internazionali (Università Nazionale, 1983 e 1987), un certificato di Studi diplomatici (Università di Oxford, 1989) e una specializzazione in Integrazione regionale e sviluppo (*Institut International d'Administration Publique de Paris*, 1993).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Capo di Divisione presso la Direzione degli Affari finanziari e amministrativi (1984-1986); Capo di Divisione presso la Direzione per l'Africa ed i Paesi arabi (1986); Assistente del Direttore generale del Ministero (1987); Capo di Divisione presso la Direzione per le Americhe (1987-1989); Capo del Servizio dell'Europa Occidentale presso la Direzione dell'Europa (1989-1996); Capo del Servizio dei Privilegi e le immunità diplomatiche presso la Direzione del Protocollo dello Stato (1996-1997); Ministro Consigliere della Missione Permanente del Benin presso l'ONU a New York (1997-1999); Ministro Consigliere di Ambasciata negli USA (1999-2004); Direttore di Dipartimento presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2004-2007).

Dal 2008 è Ambasciatore in Belgio, ove risiede.

[00859-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NUOVA ZELANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. ROBERT CAREY MOORE-JONES

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of New Zealand to the Holy See. I would ask you kindly to convey to the Governor General, and to Prime Minister John Key and his Government, together with all the people of New Zealand, my sincere best wishes and the assurance of my prayers for the well-being of the country.

The Church's engagement with civil society is anchored in her conviction that authentic human progress – whether as individuals or communities – is dependent upon the recognition of the spiritual dimension proper to every person. It is from God that men and women receive their essential dignity (cf. *Gen* 1:27) and the capacity to transcend particular interests in order to seek truth and goodness and so find purpose and meaning in their lives. This broad perspective provides a framework within which it is possible to counter any tendency to adopt superficial approaches to social policy which address only the symptoms of negative trends in family life and communities, rather than their roots. Indeed, when humanity's spiritual heart is brought to light, individuals are drawn beyond themselves to ponder God and the marvels of human life: being, truth, beauty, moral values, and relationships that respect the dignity of others. In this way a sure foundation to unite society and sustain a common vision of hope can be found.

The young people of Aotearoa rightly enjoy a reputation for generosity and a keen sense of what is fair. Appreciating the many privileges they are offered, they readily engage in voluntary work and service to others while assuming the ample opportunities they are afforded for personal achievement, and cultural and academic development. World Youth Day, held for the first time in Oceania last year, gave me an opportunity to experience something of the spirit of the thousands of young New Zealanders who took part. I pray that this new generation of Christians in New Zealand will channel their enthusiasm into forging friendships across divides and creating places of living faith in and for our world, settings of hope and practical charity. In this way they can assist other young people who might be misled by the lure of false promises of happiness and fulfilment, or find themselves struggling on the margins of society.

Your Excellency, cultural diversity brings much richness to the social fabric of New Zealand today. The growing presence within your shores of migrant communities from various religious traditions together with the Government's increasing participation in Pacific and Asian affairs has raised the awareness of the fruits that can

be obtained through inter-religious dialogue. Indeed, not so long ago, your nation hosted the Third Asian-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue in the historic setting of Waitangi. Yet some continue to question the place of religion in the public sphere and struggle to imagine how it might serve society, particularly in a highly secular culture. This of course heightens the responsibility of believers to bear witness to the significance of the essential relationship of every man and woman to God, in whose image they are made. When God's gift of human reason is exercised in reference to the truth he reveals to us, our powers of reflection are adorned with wisdom, and thus reach beyond the empirical and the piecemeal, and instead give expression to our deepest common human aspirations. In this way public debate, rather than being entrapped by the narrow horizon of particular interest groups, is broadened and held accountable to the true source of the common good and dignity of every member of society. Far from threatening the tolerance of differences or cultural plurality, truth makes consensus possible, ensures that political choices are determined by principles and values, and enriches culture with all that is good, uplifting and just.

New Zealand's diplomatic activity predominant in the Pacific and considerable in Asia and beyond is marked by a strong commitment to justice and peace, good governance, sustainable economic development and the promotion of human rights. Your generous commitment of personnel to peace-keeping initiatives can be found from Solomon Islands to Sudan, and New Zealand's innovative approaches to foreign aid include an outstanding recent example of the development of eco-tourism in Afghanistan. As Your Excellency has indicated, the Holy See has worked closely with New Zealand in developing the Convention on the Prohibition of Cluster Munitions; an achievement which illustrates well the need for ethics, which stem from the truth of the human person, to stand at the heart of all international relationships including those of defence.

Mr Ambassador, the Catholic Church in New Zealand continues to do all she can to uphold the Christian foundations of civic life. She is much involved in the spiritual and intellectual formation of the young, especially through her schools. Additionally her charitable work extends to those living on the margins of society and I am confident that, through her mission of service, she will respond generously to new social challenges as they arise. In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to express my spiritual closeness to those families in New Zealand who, like many across the globe, are suffering from the effects of the current economic uncertainty. I think especially of those who have lost their jobs and those young people finding it difficult to obtain employment.

Your Excellency, I trust that your appointment will serve to strengthen further the bonds of friendship which already exist between New Zealand and the Holy See. As you take up your new responsibilities you will find that the broad range of offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and your fellow citizens, I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Sig. Robert Carey Moore-JonesAmbasciatore di Nuova Zelanda presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 26 maggio 1956.

Laureato in Storia e Scienze politiche (Università di Victoria), ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1982, ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1982-1984); Segretario di Ambasciata nelle Filippine (1984-1987); Segretario privato del Ministro del Disarmo e del Controllo delle Armi, nonché del Ministro aggiunto degli Affari Esteri (1988-1989); Vice-Direttore del Dipartimento dell'Economia (1990-1991); Consigliere di Ambasciata negli USA (1992-1995); Vice-Direttore del Dipartimento per l'Aiuto estero (1996-1998); Alto Commissario nelle Isole Cook (1998-2001); Direttore per i Progetti speciali (2001-2002); Vice-Direttore del Dipartimento per il Nord-Asia (2002-2003); Ambasciatore nelle Filippine (2004-2006); Consigliere del Ministro degli Affari Esteri (2006-2009).

Dal mese di marzo 2009 è Ambasciatore a Madrid, ove risiede.

[00860-02.01] [Original text: English]

**• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL SUD AFRICA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE.
S.E. IL SIG. GEORGE JOHANNES**

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to receive the Letters of Credence that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa to the Holy See. I thank you for the courteous greetings and sentiments of good will which you have expressed on behalf of President Jacob Zuma. I gladly reciprocate, and I ask you kindly to convey my congratulations and good wishes to His Excellency, as he assumes the office of President, and to the civil authorities and people of your country.

South Africa's rapid and peaceful transition to democratic rule has been widely acclaimed and the Holy See has followed with interest and encouragement this historic period of change. None can doubt that much credit for the progress achieved is due to the outstanding political maturity and human qualities of former President Nelson Mandela. He has been a promoter of forgiveness and reconciliation, and enjoys great respect in your country and in the international community. I would ask you kindly to convey to him my personal good wishes for his health and well-being. I also wish to recognize the contribution of all those many ordinary men and women whose integrity, reflected in their honest approach to work, has also helped to lay the foundations for a future of peace and prosperity for all.

The size of your country, its population and economic resources and the generosity of your people make South Africa one of the most influential nations on the continent. This gives her a unique opportunity to support other African countries in their efforts to achieve stability and economic progress. Having overcome the isolation associated with the Apartheid era, yet drawing on its own painful experience, your country has made commendable efforts to bring about reconciliation in other lands through its peacekeeping forces and diplomatic initiatives. Countries such as Ruanda, Angola, Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe have benefited from this assistance. I encourage South Africa to strengthen her commitment to the noble task of assisting other nations along the road of peace and reconciliation and, especially in these difficult economic times, to continue to use her considerable human and material resources in ways conducive to the good governance and prosperity of neighbouring countries. Undoubtedly there are many challenges encountered along this path, not least of which is the large number of refugees in the region. I am confident, however, that these difficulties can continue to be addressed in the same spirit of solidarity and generosity already demonstrated by South Africans.

Mr Ambassador, you have spoken of some of the social challenges facing your country and of the development plans drawn up to meet them. Continuing poverty, and lack of basic services and employment opportunities, are present in some areas and have given rise to many other problems including violence and insecurity, substance abuse, ethnic tensions, and corruption. The distress and aggressiveness caused by poverty, unemployment and family breakdown make the efforts of the Government to address these difficulties all the more urgent. In this regard, I am encouraged to note the efforts being made to ensure the conditions necessary to attract international investment and to create greater opportunities for education and employment especially of your young people.

Your Excellency, in your address you speak of the great achievement of universal democratic rule as the basis for a better life for all. The people of South Africa have shown great moral courage and wisdom in facing past injustices. I am confident that in the current struggle against poverty and corruption, such courage and wisdom will again prevail. Your Government is rightly promoting the development of health and education services together with sustainable economic development, seeking to eradicate poverty and consolidate a climate of security. Families should be assisted in their needs and recognized as the indispensable agents in the building of a healthy society, while children and young people have the right to be granted their desire for quality schooling, extracurricular activities, and the chance to take their place in the workforce. Corruption has the effect of discouraging business initiative and investment, as well as leaving individuals disillusioned. The dynamism South Africa has introduced into the struggle against it, is therefore extremely important and must be recognized and embraced by every citizen. It falls to civic leaders in particular to ensure that the fight to eradicate corruption is sustained with impartiality, and accompanied by the respect for an independent judiciary and the ongoing development of a highly professional police force. I offer my encouragement for these challenging tasks, and trust that obstacles will continue to be overcome.

The Catholic Church is confident that the services she provides in the sectors of education, social programmes and health care have a positive impact on the life of the country. She contributes to the moral fibre of society by advocating integrity, justice and peace, and by teaching respect for life from conception until natural death. In particular, the Church takes seriously her part in the campaign against the spread of HIV/Aids by emphasizing fidelity within marriage and abstinence outside of it. At the same time she already offers much assistance on a practical level to people suffering from this affliction on your continent and throughout the world. I encourage individuals and institutions of your country to continue to give support both at home and in the region to all who seek to alleviate human suffering through research, practical assistance and spiritual support.

Mr Ambassador, I wish you every success in your mission and assure you of the willing cooperation of the Departments of the Roman Curia. May Almighty God bestow upon Your Excellency, your family and the nation you represent, abundant blessings of well-being and peace!

S.E. il Sig. George JohannesAmbasciatore del Sud Africa presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 24 novembre 1945.

Ha frequentato il College dell'Università di Cork (Irlanda), ove ha poi ottenuto una laurea in Filosofia e Storia.

Ha successivamente conseguito un diploma in *Careers Guidance* (Reading Università, Berkshire, UK), un dottorato in Filosofia ed un *master* in Scienze dell'insegnamento (Università di Leicester, UK).

Eletto dal Comitato esecutivo della Sezione Giovani dell'*African National Congress* (ANC) durante la Conferenza annuale tenutasi in Tanzania nel 1986, è stato Rappresentante di detto Comitato alla "Federazione internazionale della gioventù democratica" in Ungheria (1987-88).

Lettore di Economia politica al Birbeck College (Università di Londra, 1990-1993), è rientrato in patria per collaborare nella campagna elettorale dell'ANC (1994).

Successivamente è stato nominato Direttore per le Relazioni internazionali del Dipartimento *of Labour* (1995-1997).

Intrapresa la carriera diplomatica nell'aprile 1997, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1997); Consigliere e Vice-Alto Commissario dell'Ambasciata sudafricana a Londra (1997-2002); Direttore di Dipartimento presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2002-2005); Ministro Consigliere di Ambasciata a Berlino (2005-2008).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Svizzera, ove risiede.

[00861-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL BURKINA FASO PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. BEYON LUC ADOLPHE TIAO

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

C'est avec plaisir que je vous accueille alors que vous présentez les Lettres qui vous accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire du Burkina Faso près le Saint-Siège. Je vous remercie des paroles courtoises que vous m'avez adressées, ainsi que des vœux déferents que vous m'avez transmis de la part de Son Excellence Monsieur Blaise Compaoré, Président de la République. En retour vous voudrez bien vous faire l'interprète de ma haute considération pour sa personne et pour le peuple Burkinabè, à qui je souhaite de vivre dans la paix et dans la fraternité.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la crise économique que connaît actuellement le monde fragilise encore plus les

économies africaines et les familles voient augmenter leurs difficultés, notamment en raison du développement de la pauvreté, du chômage, des maladies. Dans ce contexte des jeunes sont aussi conduits à partir loin de leur pays pour chercher un avenir meilleur et pour aider leurs familles. Je souhaite vivement qu'une authentique solidarité se manifeste entre les pays développés et les pays les plus pauvres. Il est particulièrement indispensable en des moments de crise que l'aide au développement ne diminue pas, mais que les promesses faites à bien des reprises soient effectivement concrétisées. Toutefois, comme j'ai eu l'occasion de le dire lors de mon récent voyage apostolique en Afrique, « les Africains eux-mêmes, œuvrant ensemble pour le bien de leurs communautés, doivent être les premiers acteurs de leur développement » (*Luanda*, 20 mars 2009). Ainsi pourront être prises en considération les authentiques valeurs des peuples africains et pourra être évité que ceux-ci ne soient que de simples destinataires de schémas élaborés par d'autres. Dans cette perspective, je me réjouis du service important accompli par la *Fondation Jean-Paul II pour le Sahel*, qui vient de célébrer à Ouagadougou le vingt-cinquième anniversaire de son existence. Elle est un signe éloquent de la solidarité de l'Église catholique avec les pays du Sahel particulièrement touchés par la sécheresse, la faim et la désertification, et de sa participation effective à la lutte contre ces maux qui portent atteinte à une vie digne des populations.

Pour qu'un véritable développement de la société puisse se réaliser, le rétablissement de la concorde et de la sécurité dans la région, auquel votre pays est particulièrement attaché, est d'une importance essentielle. Les résultats déjà obtenus montrent que c'est seulement par un dialogue patient que les différends peuvent se résoudre et que la paix et la justice peuvent s'établir. Je voudrais encourager les hommes et les femmes épris de paix et particulièrement les personnes qui ont des responsabilités dans la société à poursuivre avec courage leurs efforts pour que la stabilité et la tranquillité retrouvées permettent d'affermir des relations de fraternité et de solidarité entre les peuples de la région, dans une profonde confiance mutuelle.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, comme vous l'avez souligné, à travers ses œuvres dans les domaines de la santé, de l'éducation ou de l'action sociale, l'Église catholique est profondément engagée dans la société burkinabè. Par son service de la population, elle souhaite contribuer, à la place qui est la sienne, à répondre aux nombreux et importants défis auxquels les familles sont confrontées. Ainsi, la sauvegarde des valeurs familiales doit-elle être pour tous une préoccupation importante, car la famille représente le premier pilier de l'édifice social. Dès lors, les manifestations d'une destructuration du tissu familial ne peuvent que conduire à des situations dont les enfants et les jeunes seront souvent les victimes. L'éducation et la formation des jeunes générations sont aussi d'une importance primordiale pour l'avenir de la Nation. Devant les difficultés de la vie, il est nécessaire que la société donne aux plus jeunes des raisons de vivre et d'espérer.

Pour contribuer à l'édification de la nation, la consolidation des liens d'amitié entre tous les croyants est une tâche qui doit se poursuivre sans relâche. Je me réjouis particulièrement des bonnes relations et des collaborations qui, dans votre pays, se sont développées depuis bien des années entre chrétiens et musulmans. En recherchant une compréhension toujours meilleure, dans le respect mutuel, et en rejetant toute forme de violence et d'intolérance, les croyants rendent à Dieu un témoignage éloquent et font progresser le bien commun.

Au terme de cette rencontre, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, je voudrais aussi saluer par votre intermédiaire les Évêques du Burkina Faso ainsi que tous les membres de la communauté catholique, dont je connais le dynamisme. Alors que nous nous préparons à célébrer la deuxième Assemblée spéciale pour l'Afrique du Synode des Évêques, je les invite particulièrement à porter dans la prière la préparation et le déroulement de ce grand événement ecclésial et à être, en collaboration avec tous leurs compatriotes, des artisans de réconciliation, de justice et de paix.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, au moment où vous inaugurez votre mission auprès du Saint-Siège, mes vœux cordiaux vous accompagnent pour son heureux accomplissement. Souhaitant que les relations harmonieuses qui existent entre le Burkina Faso et le Saint-Siège se poursuivent et se développent – l'ouverture récente d'une Nonciature apostolique à Ouagadougou en est un heureux signe –, je vous assure de la disponibilité de mes collaborateurs, auprès desquels vous trouverez toujours un accueil attentif et une compréhension cordiale.

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille et sur ses collaborateurs de l'Ambassade, ainsi que sur les Responsables

et sur tous les habitants du Burkina Faso, je demande au Tout-Puissant de répandre l'abondance de ses Bienfaits.

S.E. il Sig. Beyon Luc Adolphe TiaoAmbasciatore di Burkina Faso presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Tenkodogo il 4 giugno 1954.

È sposato ed ha quattro figli.

Laureato in Giornalismo (Università di Dakar, 1980), ha ottenuto un master in Scienze della Comunicazione (Università di Montreal, 1987) e si è specializzato in Diplomazia (Centro di Studi diplomatici e strategici, Parigi, 1993) e in Scienze dell'informazione e della comunicazione (Università di Paris II, 1996).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Direttore dei giornali presso la Direzione generale della stampa scritta (1984-1985); Direttore generale delle Edizioni Sidwaya (1987-1990); Segretario generale del Ministero delle Comunicazioni e della Cultura (1990-1992); Addetto di Ambasciata a Parigi (1992-1996); Consigliere di Dipartimento presso il Ministero delle Comunicazioni (1996-2001); Presidente del Consiglio superiore delle Comunicazioni (2001-2008).

Dal mese di maggio 2008 è Ambasciatore a Parigi, ove risiede.

Parla il francese e conosce l'inglese.

[00862-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NAMIBIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. NEVILLE MELVIN GERTZE

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Vatican and to receive the Letters of Credence by which you are accredited as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Namibia to the Holy See. I thank you for the courteous greetings which you have expressed on behalf of the President of the Republic, Mr Hifikepunye Pohamba. Please convey to him my gratitude and my good wishes. I would also ask you kindly to transmit my greetings to the members of the Government, to the civil authorities and to all your fellow citizens.

Diplomatic relations between the Holy See and individual countries serve to create a framework in which mutual interests are provided for and safeguarded, while at the same time giving opportunities to both parties to promote common values at the national and international levels. I am satisfied with the cooperation that in such a short time has produced many positive results for the Holy See and Namibia.

Mr Ambassador, as you are well aware, Africa presents a varied panorama of political, social and economic realities. Some of these are success stories, other have not met the expectations of the peoples that such initiatives were meant to serve. Namibia has a relatively short history as a member of the family of independent nations. Your citizens and their elected officials have benefited from observing examples of other countries. This in time has led to recognize the need to protect the nation's resources, mineral and agricultural, and to oversee their rational exploitation and use for the common good. Efforts to bring the uranium extraction and diamond industry processes under responsible vigilance are positive initiatives. Indeed transparency, honest business practices and good governance are essential to sustainable economic development. I am pleased to see that the Constitution of your country incorporates a clear awareness of the State's ecological responsibilities. As you continue to strive towards a balanced distribution of wealth that will offer greater possibilities of improvement for those who are less fortunate, I encourage the nation to continue along the path of strengthening the common good by consolidating democratic institutions and practices and seeking justice for all.

The Holy See is confident, Mr Ambassador, that your country can contribute to positive developments in Africa and in the international community. Because of its history of peaceful independence and integration, its unity in diversity, and its responsible management of natural resources, Namibia can offer an example for the development of other countries. It is important furthermore that the voice of Namibia be expressed in international meetings since the present needs and aspirations of the people of your continent must be presented objectively and from an African perspective, and not solely in accordance with the interests of others.

The Catholic Church is pleased to exercise her mission in a climate of religious freedom. The Church's contribution to civic life can be seen not only in the achievements of individual Christians or institutions but also in the impact of its message. By preaching the Gospel and encouraging attitudes of faith, hope and love, the Church invites people to a life of virtue supported by that spiritual and moral strength which comes with faith and is expressed in integrity and the responsible use of freedom, respect and tolerance of others. People, especially political, economic and cultural leaders, who are inspired in one way or another by these or similar moral and spiritual perspectives, contribute positively to the good of society in its social, economic and political dimensions.

The Church's mission of evangelization includes a strong witness to generous initiatives in favour of those in need. As you mentioned in your address Mr Ambassador, the Church in your homeland has developed over the years an extensive presence of communities and institutions of good will, dedicated to pastoral attention, education, professional instruction and concern for those in difficult situations. Through schools and centres of specialized formation, through hospitals and charitable institutions, the Church exercises that love of neighbour expressed clearly in the supreme commandment. I pray that the Catholic institutions of the country will continue to offer their expertise for the promotion and development of the people of Namibia in accordance with present and future needs.

I am aware that one of the priorities on the Government's agenda is to provide for greater attention to the health of the population and especially the need to care for the number of people afflicted with HIV/Aids. In this area the Church will continue to offer its assistance willingly. She is convinced that only a strategy based on education to individual responsibility in the framework of a moral view of human sexuality, especially through conjugal fidelity, can have a real impact on the prevention of this disease. The Church is pleased to cooperate in this task especially in the field of education where new generations of young people are formed as active and responsible members of society.

Mr Ambassador, I have expressed freely some thoughts inspired by the present situation of your nation, seen with love of your people and confidence in the future of Namibia. I wish you every success in your mission and I invite you to avail yourself of the willing cooperation of the Departments of the Roman Curia. May Almighty God bestow upon Your Excellency, your family and the nation you represent, abundant and lasting blessings of well-being and peace!

S.E. il Sig. Neville Melvin Gertze Ambasciatore di Namibia presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 5 agosto 1966.

È sposato ed ha due figlie.

Laureato in Amministrazione Pubblica e Scienze Politiche (Università di Cape Town, 1988), è anche in possesso di un *master in Business Administration*.

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: *Desk Officer* presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1990); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a Washington DC, USA (1991-1995); Assistente personale del Ministro degli Affari Esteri (1995-1997); Consulente commerciale per il Sud Africa, Mozambico, Lesotho, Swaziland e Botswana (1997-2003); *High Commissioner* della Namibia in Malaysia (2003-2008).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore a Berlino, ove risiede.

[00863-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NORVEGIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIG. ROLF TROLLE ANDERSEN

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Norway to the Holy See. I would like to express my gratitude for the good wishes that you bring from King Harald V. Please convey to His Majesty my cordial greetings and assure him of my continued prayers for all the people of your nation. It seems particularly fitting that today's ceremony, an important landmark in our diplomatic relations, should occur at a time when the twentieth anniversary of the historic visit of Pope John Paul II to the Scandinavian countries is almost upon us.

Not only is your country blessed with a notable degree of prosperity, but it has a most distinguished record in coming to the aid of others less fortunate than itself. In the wake of the financial turmoil of recent months, Norway was swift in offering expert assistance to other countries to help them weather the storm, despite suffering its own share of economic difficulties in consequence of the crisis. In opening its doors to significant numbers of refugees and immigrants, Norway has for many years shown itself to be a generous and welcoming nation. As Your Excellency has observed, the effect of this influx on Norwegian society, and especially on the small Catholic community, has been to introduce far greater cultural and ethnic variety. This in turn has stimulated deeper reflection on the presuppositions and values that govern life in Norway today and its place in the modern world.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." These words of Jesus (*Mt 5:9*) have been taken very much to heart by Norwegians, whose culture has been strongly shaped by its thousand-year Christian history. Norway's commitment to peace-keeping is clearly illustrated by its high-level involvement in the United Nations Organization, whose first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, came from Norway, as do a number of current senior office-holders. The Holy See very much appreciates your country's contribution to conflict resolution in some of the world's most troubled areas. From Sri Lanka to Afghanistan, from Sudan to Somalia, from Chad to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Norway has played its part, whether it be in peace negotiations, in calling upon the parties to observe international law, in humanitarian assistance, in helping with reconstruction and peace-keeping, or in promoting democracy and providing expert advice on building up the social infrastructure. Having just returned from my Apostolic Visit to the Holy Land, I am particularly conscious of the crucial work that your country has done in brokering peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. I hope and pray that the spirit of reconciliation and the search for justice which gave rise to the Oslo Accords will eventually prevail and bring lasting peace to the peoples of that tormented region.

In addition to such humanitarian concerns, Norwegians have taken very much to heart the needs of the natural environment, placing particular emphasis on developing renewable sources of energy and attending to the causes and the consequences of climate change. Characteristic of your country's long-term vision for the good of the planet and the welfare of its inhabitants is the initiative of the Global Seed Vault, designed to guarantee the survival of countless varieties of plant life, so that vital food sources in particular can be insured against the possibility of extinction.

In all these activities, your country is motivated by the fundamental ethical values of which Your Excellency has spoken, values that are rooted in Norway's Christian culture, and which, therefore, are central to the perspectives and the goals which it shares with the Holy See. In less than thirty years of diplomatic relations between us, much has been achieved. The close cooperation between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Norway – alongside other nations – in drawing up and ratifying the recent convention banning cluster munitions is a good example. I too look forward to further developing and strengthening our excellent relations in many different fields, with a view to promoting the ethical vision that we share for the sake of building a more humane and just world.

On a domestic level, the Catholic community in Norway, small though it is, is eager to play its part in national life

and to make its voice heard in public debate. I mentioned earlier the deeper reflection that is currently taking place on the presuppositions and values governing Norwegian society, and here the Catholic community, with its substantial patrimony of social teaching, has a valuable contribution to offer. Like many European countries today, Norway is increasingly called upon to examine the implications of the right to religious freedom in the context of a liberal and pluralist society. I am confident that the high ethical principles and the generosity so characteristic of Norway's activity on the international scene will also prevail at home, so that all the citizens of your country will be free to practise their religion, and all the different religious communities will be free to order their affairs in accordance with their beliefs and juridical systems, in this way making their particular contribution to the common good

Your Excellency, in offering my best wishes for the success of your mission, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon Your Excellency, your family and all the people of the Kingdom of Norway, I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

S.E. il Sig. Rolf Trolle Andersen **Ambasciatore di Norvegia presso la Santa Sede**

È nato ad Oslo il 14 marzo 1945.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Laureato in Legge (Università di Oslo, 1970), ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1971, ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1971-1973); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata in Canada (1973-1976); *Executive Officer* presso il Ministro degli Affari Esteri (1976-1979); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata in Grecia (1979-1982); Capo Divisione presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1983-1984); Ministro Plenipotenziario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1985-1987); Vice Direttore Generale del Dipartimento Legale presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1987-1988); *Special Adviser*, con rango di Ambasciatore, presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1988-1990); Ambasciatore in Romania (1990-1994); Ambasciatore e Coordinatore Speciale per il Medio Oriente presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1994-1997); Ambasciatore in Grecia (1997-1998); Rappresentante Permanente presso l'UNESCO a Parigi (1998-2003); Ambasciatore in Austria nonché presso l'ONU a Vienna (2003-2004); *Lord Chamberlain* del Re di Norvegia (2004-2008).

Dal dicembre 2008 è Ambasciatore in Svizzera, ove risiede.

[00864-02.01] [Original text: English]

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

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha rivolto agli Ecc.mi nuovi Ambasciatori presso la Santa Sede, al termine dello scambio delle Lettere Credenziali con ciascun Ambasciatore:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Excellences,

Ce matin, je vous reçois avec joie pour la présentation des Lettres qui vous accréditent comme Ambassadeurs extraordinaires et plénipotentiaires de vos pays près le Saint-Siège : la Mongolie, l'Inde, la République du Bénin, la Nouvelle Zélande, la République Sud-africaine, le Burkina Faso, la Namibie et la Norvège. Je vous remercie de m'avoir transmis les paroles courtoises de vos Chefs d'Etat respectifs. Veuillez, je vous prie, leur faire parvenir en retour mes salutations cordiales et mes vœux déferents pour leurs personnes et pour leur haute

mission au service de leurs pays et de leurs peuples. Je me permets également de saluer par votre entremise toutes les Autorités civiles et religieuses de vos nations, ainsi que vos compatriotes. Mes prières et mes pensées vont particulièrement aux communautés catholiques présentes dans vos pays. Soyez assurés qu'elles désirent collaborer fraternellement à l'édification nationale en apportant, au mieux de leurs possibilités, leur contribution propre fondée sur l'Evangile.

Madame et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, l'engagement au service de la paix et l'affermissement des relations fraternelles entre les nations est au cœur de votre mission de diplomates. Aujourd'hui, dans la crise sociale et économique que connaît le monde, il est urgent de prendre une conscience renouvelée qu'un combat doit être mené, de manière efficace, pour établir une paix authentique en vue de la construction d'un monde plus juste et plus prospère pour tous. En effet, les injustices souvent criantes entre les nations, ou en leur sein, ainsi que tous les processus qui contribuent à susciter des divisions entre les peuples ou à les marginaliser, sont de dangereuses atteintes à la paix et créent de sérieux risques de conflits. Dès lors, nous sommes tous appelés à apporter notre contribution au bien commun et à la paix, chacun selon ses propres responsabilités. Comme je l'ai écrit dans mon *Message pour la Journée mondiale de la paix*, le premier janvier dernier, « l'une des voies maîtresses pour construire la paix est une mondialisation ayant pour objectif les intérêts de la grande famille humaine. Cependant, pour gérer ainsi la mondialisation, il faut une forte solidarité globale entre pays riches et pays pauvres, de même qu'au sein de chaque pays, même s'il est riche » (n. 8). La paix ne peut se construire qu'en cherchant avec courage à éliminer les disparités engendrées par des systèmes injustes afin d'assurer à tous un niveau de vie qui permette une existence digne et prospère.

Ces disparités sont devenues encore plus criantes à cause de la crise financière et économique actuelle qui se répand à travers différents canaux dans les pays à faible revenu. Je me contente d'en mentionner quelques-uns : le reflux des investissements étrangers, la chute de la demande des matières premières et la tendance à la baisse de l'aide internationale. A cela s'ajoute la régression des envois de fonds à leurs familles restées au pays de la part des travailleurs émigrés, victimes de la récession qui afflige également les pays qui les accueillent. Cette crise peut se transformer en catastrophe humaine pour les habitants de nombreux pays fragiles. Ceux qui vivaient déjà dans une extrême pauvreté, en sont les premiers touchés car ils sont les plus vulnérables. Cette crise fait également basculer dans la pauvreté des personnes qui vivaient jusque-là de manière décente, sans être toutefois aisées. La pauvreté augmente et elle a des conséquences graves et parfois irréversibles. Ainsi, la récession engendrée par la crise économique peut devenir une menace pour l'existence même d'innombrables individus. Les enfants en sont les premières victimes innocentes qu'il faut protéger prioritairement. La crise économique a également un autre effet. Le désespoir qu'elle provoque, conduit certaines personnes à la recherche angoissée d'une solution qui leur permette de survivre quotidiennement. Cette recherche s'accompagne, parfois hélas, d'actes individuels ou collectifs de violence qui peuvent mener à des conflits internes qui risquent de déstabiliser encore davantage des sociétés affaiblies. Pour affronter l'actuelle situation de crise et lui trouver une solution, certains pays ont décidé de ne pas diminuer leur aide aux pays les plus menacés, se proposant au contraire de l'augmenter. Il conviendrait que leur exemple soit suivi par d'autres pays développés afin de permettre aux pays dans le besoin de soutenir leur économie et de consolider les mesures sociales destinées à protéger les populations les plus nécessiteuses. J'appelle à un supplément de fraternité et de solidarité, et à une générosité globale réellement vécue. Ce partage demande aux pays développés de retrouver le sens de la mesure et de la sobriété dans l'économie et dans le mode de vie.

Madame et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, vous n'êtes pas sans ignorer que de nouvelles formes de violence se sont manifestées ces dernières années, et qu'elles s'appuient, malheureusement, sur le Nom de Dieu pour justifier des pratiques dangereuses. Connaissant la faiblesse de l'homme, Dieu ne lui a-t-il pas révélé au Sinaï ces paroles : « Tu n'invoqueras pas le nom du Seigneur ton Dieu pour le mal, car le Seigneur ne laissera pas impuni celui qui invoque son nom pour le mal » (*Ex 20, 7*) ? De tels débordements ont parfois conduit à voir dans les religions une menace pour les sociétés. Elles sont alors attaquées et discréditées, en soutenant qu'elles ne sont pas des facteurs de paix. Les responsables religieux ont le devoir d'accompagner les croyants et de les éclairer pour qu'ils puissent progresser en sainteté et interpréter les paroles divines dans la vérité. Il convient donc de favoriser l'émergence d'un monde où religions et sociétés peuvent s'ouvrir les unes aux autres, et cela grâce à l'ouverture qu'elles pratiquent en leur sein et entre elles. Ce serait donner là un authentique témoignage de vie. Ce serait créer un espace qui rendrait le dialogue positif et nécessaire. En apportant au monde sa contribution propre, l'Eglise catholique désire témoigner d'une vision positive de l'avenir

de l'humanité. Je suis convaincu « de la fonction irremplaçable de la religion pour la formation des consciences et de la contribution qu'elle peut apporter, avec d'autres instances, à la création d'un consensus éthique fondamental dans la société » (*Discours à l'Elysée*, Paris, 12 septembre 2008).

Votre mission auprès du Saint-Siège, Madame et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, vient de commencer. Vous trouverez auprès de mes collaborateurs l'appui nécessaire pour bien l'accomplir. Je vous présente à nouveau mes vœux les plus cordiaux pour la bonne réussite de votre délicate fonction. Puisse le Tout-Puissant vous soutenir et vous accompagner, vous-mêmes, vos proches, vos collaborateurs et tous vos compatriotes ! Que Dieu vous comble de l'abondance de ses bénédictions !

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