



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR
OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE HOLY SEE**

Thursday, 6 December 2001

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 unending 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.

**L'Osservatore Romano* 7.12.2001 p. 6.

Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, vol. XXIV, 2 p.1036-1038.

L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n. 51/52 p.7.

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana