

## Pope's Address to Envoys of Nepal, Zambia, Andorra, Seychelles and Mali

### "Fraternity Finds a Concrete Expression in Gratitude and Respect"

VATICAN CITY, DEC. 16, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI gave on Thursday to the new ambassadors of Nepal, Zambia, Andorra, the Seychelles and Mali to the Holy See, whom he received in the Vatican on the occasion of the presentation of their Letters of Credence.

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Lady and Gentlemen Ambassadors,

I am very happy to receive you this morning in the Apostolic Palace for the presentation of the Letters that accredit you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your respective countries to the Holy See: Nepal, Zambia, the Principality of Andorra, the Republic of the Seychelles and Mali. You have addressed courteous words to me, on behalf of your Heads of State, for which I thank you. I would like to transmit in turn my deferent greetings and my respectful wishes for your persons and for the high mission you fulfill in the service of your country and your people. Through you, I also wish to greet all the civil and religious authorities of your nations, as well as all your compatriots. My prayers and thoughts go, of course, also to the Catholic communities present in your countries. Living the Gospel, they are concerned to give witness of a spirit of fraternal collaboration.

Excellencies, I would like to speak of human fraternity. A heartfelt appeal has been made all this year to alleviate Haiti, first devastated by an earthquake and then by cholera. Other tragedies unfortunately have stricken other countries during this year. Your countries, the international community and the associative world have responded to the especially urgent appeals for help, aid which it would be appropriate to continue and to intensify. For her part, and through her different institutions, the Church makes a manifold contribution which she prolongs in the course of time.

The beautiful ideal of fraternity, which is found in the national emblem of many countries, has found in the development of philosophical and political thought less resonance compared with other ideals such as liberty, equality, progress and unity. It is a principle that to a large extent has remained a dead letter in modern and contemporary political societies, above all because of the influence exercised by individualist or collectivist ideologies (cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 390). As you know, fraternity has a particular meaning for Christians due to God's design of fraternal love, of fraternity, hence, revealed by Christ. In my last encyclical, "Caritas in Veritate," I certainly addressed extensively this indispensable topic for harmonious human coexistence.

To live worthily, every human being needs respect: he also needs justice to be done, and his rights recognized in a concrete way. However, this is not enough to lead a fully human life: in fact, a person also has need of fraternity. This is true not only in close relations but also on a global scale. However, although the process of

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globalization under way brings human beings closer to one another, it does not, because of this, make them brothers. It is an important problem because, as my predecessor Pope Paul VI revealed, "underdevelopment has as its profound cause the lack of fraternity" (cf. "Populorum Progressio," No. 66).

Human reason is capable of recognizing the equality of all men and the need to limit the excessive disparities among them, but it is incapable of instituting fraternity. This is a supernatural gift. For her part, the Church sees the realization of human fraternity on earth as a vocation contained in God's creative plan, who wishes that she be ever more faithfully the maker of that fraternity, both in the universal ambit and well as the local ambits as it is in the countries that you represent to the Holy See.

If, supporting the specifically spiritual mission that Christ has entrusted to her, the Church arouses among her disciples a particular proximity, she does not lessen her desire to make a sincere and strong contribution to the formation of a more fraternal community among all human beings. Because of this, she prohibits herself from acting as a lobby, concerned only with her interests, and yet she works under the gaze of Him who is the Creator of all men, wishing to honor the dignity of each one. Thus, she makes an effort to put love and peace at the base of the many human bonds that relate persons among themselves, as God has willed in his creative wisdom.

In daily life, fraternity finds a concrete expression in gratitude and respect. These are called to be manifested in all areas of human activity, including economic activity. Man's profound identity, his being-in-relation, is also expressed in his economic activity, which is one of the areas of greatest cooperation between men. Through my last Encyclical, I wished to make evident the fact that the economy is a place where the gift is also possible and even necessary (cf. "Caritas in Veritate," No. 34-39).

Every form of gift is, in a word, a sign of the presence of God, because it leads to the fundamental discovery that, at the origin, everything is given. Such an awareness does not make man's conquests less beautiful, but liberates him from the first of all slaveries, that of wishing to create himself. On the contrary, in acknowledging what he is given, man can open himself to the action of grace and understand that he is called to develop himself, not against others or at their expense, but with them and in communion with them.

However, if fraternity lived among men can find a positive echo in terms of "social effectiveness," it must not be forgotten that it does not constitute a means, but is an end in itself (cf. "Caritas in Veritate," No. 20). The Church believes in Christ who reveals to us that God is love (cf. John 4:8). She is also convinced that to all those who believe in divine charity, God gives the certainty that "the way of love is open to all men and that the effort directed to establishing a universal fraternity is not in vain" ("Gaudium et Spes," No. 38).

As diplomats, you are interested without a doubt in a particular way, in the different aspects of socio-political life that I have just developed. During your mission to the Apostolic See, you will have the possibility, Excellencies, to discover more directly the actions and concerns of the Church in all the continents. You will find in my collaborators kind attention. On you, your families, the members of your diplomatic Missions and all the nations you represent, I invoke abundant Divine Blessings.

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