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LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: SIERRA LEONE, GIAMAICA, INDIA, GHANA, NORVEGIA, RWANDA E MADAGASCAR

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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: Sierra Leone, Giamaica, India, Ghana, Norvegia, Rwanda e Madagascar.

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 DI SIERRA LEONE PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR FODE MACLEAN DABOR**

Your Excellency,

I extend a warm welcome to you as I accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the Holy See. Grateful for the greetings which you bring from President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the Government, I gladly offer my own good wishes to the authorities and people of your country and - mindful of the great hardships which the population is enduring due to years of conflict - I ask you to assure the nation of my prayers.

In the past century, tremendous progress has been made in the social, economic and scientific spheres. During this same period, however, humanity has also witnessed the violence, destruction and death that ensue when peoples and nations have recourse to arms rather than to dialogue, when war is chosen over the often more difficult path of mutual understanding and respect. And more sadly still, the beginning of this new millennium has been scarred by further terrible violence in the form of international terrorism. Thus, despite the many cultural and technological advances that have been made in the past hundred years, there remain important areas which have seen little improvement or which have even grown worse.

In situations where tensions and conflict arise within a country or between nations, the proper response is never violence and bloodshed but dialogue, with a view to the peaceful resolution of the crisis. Authentic dialogue presupposes an honest search for what is true, good and just for every person, every group and every society; it is a sincere effort to identify what people have in common despite tension, opposition and conflict: this in fact is the only sure path leading to true peace and genuine progress. Furthermore, authentic dialogue helps the peoples and nations of the earth to recognize their mutual interdependence in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Precisely in our modern day, which is all too familiar with the latest technologies of death and destruction, there is an urgent need to build a consistent culture of peace that will help to forestall and counter the seemingly inevitable outbreaks of armed violence. This includes taking concrete steps to put an end to trafficking in arms.

Here, the duty of governments and of the international community remains essential, for it belongs to them to contribute to the establishment of peace through solid structures that, despite the uncertainties of politics, will guarantee freedom and security to all people in every circumstance. The United Nations itself has been taking on a role of ever greater responsibility for maintaining or restoring peace in areas besieged by war and conflict. In your own country the U.N. has just extended the mandate of its peace-keeping mission: thus, the international community is itself a partner with your Government in its efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants, to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons, to ensure the full respect of human rights and the rule of law, with special protection afforded to women and children. In this context I cannot fail to express my immense satisfaction that after years of armed conflict, suffering and death, civil stability is returning to Sierra Leone, bringing positive prospects for the normalization of national life: may your country continue along this path with courage and perseverance.

The Catholic Church too lends her full support to activities aimed at restoring peace and bringing about reconciliation. Indeed, her Divine Founder has entrusted to her a religious and humanitarian mission, different than that of the political community, but open nonetheless to many forms of cooperation and mutual support. It is this mission which underlies the Holy See's presence in the international community, a presence directed solely to the good of the human family: promoting peace, defending human dignity and human rights, working for the integral development of peoples. This is a duty which derives necessarily from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and is a responsibility shared by all Christians. For this reason, the Church will continue to be a committed partner with your country as Sierra Leone continues along the path of political, social and economic development.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your mission to the Holy See will strengthen the bonds of understanding and friendship between us. You can be assured that the various offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you in the discharge of your high duties. Upon yourself and the beloved people of Sierra Leone I

cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**S.E. il Signor Fode Maclean Dabor,
Ambasciatore di Sierra Leone presso la Santa Sede**

È nato il 13 settembre 1948.

È sposato ed ha quattro figli.

Ha compiuto studi universitari in Diritto, conseguendo il diploma in Legge (1979) ed il grado di praticante penalista (1980). Nel 1980 ha ottenuto l'ammissione a Membro dell'Ordine degli Avvocati d'Inghilterra e del Galles.

Ha ricoperto inoltre i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Dipartimento legale del Consiglio di Stato (1981-1986); Primo Consigliere del Dipartimento legale del Consiglio di Stato (1986-1998); Titolare di studio legale per questioni civili e penali (1988-1996); Membro del Parlamento (1996); Rappresentante Permanente delle Nazioni Unite a New York (1996-2000); Ambasciatore in Etiopia e Rappresentante Permanente presso l'Organizzazione dell'Unità africana (OAU) e la Commissione economica delle Nazioni Unite per l'Africa (UNECA) (2000-2001); Ambasciatore in Belgio e presso la Comunità Europea (2001-2002).

[01974-02.02] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI GIAMAICA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. LA SIGNORA MARCIA GILBERT-ROBERTS

Your Excellency,

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 Jamaica to the Holy See. I gratefully recall the warm hospitality which I received from the Government and people of your country during my Apostolic Visit in 1993, and I would ask you kindly to convey my greetings and best wishes to the Governor General, the Prime Minister and your fellow citizens. Please assure them of my prayers for the peace and well-being of the Nation.

You are well aware that the mission of the Church in the world is eminently spiritual and therefore distinct from the political order. The Church nonetheless offers civil society the contribution of her teaching, her two-thousand-year experience of humanity's journey through history, and her many different forms of service to the human family. She knows that society will develop peacefully and prosper only to the extent that it reflects the moral order established by God, the Creator, who from the fullness of his love seeks to draw all men and women into the wholeness of his life. It is for this reason that the Holy See speaks so insistently to the international community about the duty to respect human dignity and about the fundamental importance of supporting the family as the primary cell of society.

The scourge of destructive social ills, present in many societies and which undermine moral values and threaten family life, is a great tragedy of our time. Drug trafficking, gang violence, attacks on law and order, oppression of women and children are all part of the 'culture of death' which social institutions must assiduously work together to overcome. I note with appreciation Your Excellency's reference to your Government's principal priority of achieving reconciliation and national unity through the promotion of wholesome values and attitudes. Such objectives depend upon the ability of all members of society to feel that they have a stake in their national community and that they are able to contribute to its progress. For her part, the Catholic Church, in proclaiming the Gospel of life received from her Lord, ardently desires to promote among all people, and especially among the young, the culture of truth and love which leads to authentic freedom and happiness.

During my visit to Kingston I encouraged the Jamaican people to let the Gospel transform their lives and society. The future of society, I observed, is essentially linked to the strength of its families, and it is indispensable that every person of good will should be committed to saving and promoting the family as the most effective means for humanizing and personalizing society. The God-given dignity of every person is first realized and experienced within the family. When this dignity is expressed in principles of equality, justice and respect for the common good, the renewal of society is assured. Since the family is the most influential institution in the education of the young, the State must appropriately support and encourage the family's role as the primary

teacher of moral and civic values.

As Your Excellency has graciously remarked, the Catholic Church in Jamaica is actively involved in the spiritual and intellectual development of the young, especially through her educational centres at various levels. This is an area in which there is ample room for cooperation between the State and other religious and social bodies striving to support parents in their role as principal educators of their children. The State has, as a matter of distributive justice, a supportive role, and should recognize the education of the young as one of its chief objectives and a matter of vital importance for the future of the nation. The Church in Jamaica will continue to do all she can to ensure excellence in her educational work, which is not limited to imparting knowledge but extends to everything that helps a young person grow into a mature and responsible human being, a capable and upright citizen.

Your Excellency, during your term as your country's representative to the Holy See the various departments of the Roman Curia will do all they can to assist you in the discharge of your duties. I offer my best wishes for the success of your endeavours to strengthen further the cordial relations already existing between Jamaica and the Holy See. Upon you and your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**S.E. la Sig.ra Marcia Gilbert-Roberts,
Ambasciatore di Giamaica presso la Santa Sede**

È nata a Kingston il 31 ottobre 1950.

Ha conseguito la laurea in Educazione presso l'Università delle Indie Occidentali a Mona, Kingston (1973) ed il master in Psico-linguistica presso l'Università di Besançon (1975).

Entrato nella carriera diplomatica nel 1976, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario (1976-1986) e Vice-Direttore (1986-1991) del Ministero degli Affari Esteri; Ministro Consigliere dell'Alto Commissariato di Giamaica a Londra (1991-1996); Direttore del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1996-1998).

Dal 1998 ad oggi è stato Sotto-Segretario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri.

[01975-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DELL'INDIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR PRAVEEN LAL GOYAL

Mr Ambassador,

It is my pleasure to accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to the Holy See. I am most grateful for the greetings you bring from His Excellency Dr. Abdul Kalam, the newly-elected President of India, and I would ask you to convey my good wishes to him and to the Government and People of your beloved country.

As Your Excellency has noted, there has been a strong Christian presence in India almost since the beginning of Christianity itself, a presence which has contributed its share to the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the sub-continent. In recent history, contact between independent India and the Holy See led to the establishment of the diplomatic relations which your presence here today confirms and strengthens. These relations are an expression of the wide areas of shared outlook on important issues of international life which unite us in the service of the universal common good. Today, when serious threats to cohesion and peace are straining international relations, there is ample room for us to work together in the international arena to foster a thoughtful and principled approach to the matters which continue to cause tensions between peoples and nations.

I continue to treasure vivid memories of my pastoral visits to India in 1985 and 1999, when I was able to witness at first hand the harmony and cooperation existing between people of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. This harmony is one of the pillars on which the unity of the Nation has been built and clearly it needs to be reaffirmed today if great harm and injustice are to be avoided. On many occasions I have spoken of ancient India's role in cradling and nurturing cultures and traditions which have left a profound mark on the human spirit, and which still now are essential sources of wisdom and creative impulses which can help in no small way to counteract some of the negative consequences of the processes of globalization now taking place.

I refer to the danger of the commercialization of almost every aspect of life, to the point that the profit motive and not the value of the human person dictates policies and modes of behaviour.

One of the recurring themes of my pontificate has been the affirmation of the conviction that true human progress can only be secured when there is effective and guaranteed respect for the inalienable dignity and rights of every human person. The world is still far from achieving this goal, as can be easily seen in the many forms of injustice and discrimination still inflicted on the weak in too many parts of the world. It is the solemn duty of every democratic system to promote and protect basic human rights and every category of these rights. This means not only those that refer to material survival but also those that relate to the human spirit in its unending quest for truth and freedom. Today the international community stands very much in need of a renewed and more effective commitment to meeting the needs of so many people seeking relief from their sufferings and aspiring to a proper education that will enable them to take an active part in the life of the community and nation to which they belong.

An integral part of a development which truly serves the good of individuals and peoples is respect for religious freedom, for this is the right which touches upon the individual's most private and sovereign interior freedom. Nothing can be more damaging to social harmony and peace than the denial of this touchstone of human rights. India has strong traditions of respect for religious differences. It is my hope, Mr Ambassador, that for the good of the Nation contrary tendencies will not be allowed to develop and that the rule of law will ensure that violations of this principle will not go unchecked.

The last few years have been difficult ones for India and her neighbours as regional tensions and violence have resulted in loss of life and home for many people. Peace is a gift born of trust and must be steadfastly built up. In my address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations in 1995 I said: "We must learn not to be afraid, we must rediscover a spirit of hope and a spirit of trust. Hope is not empty optimism springing from a naive confidence that the future will necessarily be better than the past. Hope and trust are the premise of responsible activity and are nurtured in that inner sanctuary where man is alone with God". I can assure Your Excellency that the Catholic Church in India will continue to pray and work for these goals. Together with their fellow citizens of other traditions, Catholics share a deep desire for enduring peace and harmony in a society which values and fosters the dignity and rights of all its members.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that as you undertake your mission the longstanding bonds of friendship and cooperation between India and the Holy See will continue to be strengthened and enriched. I offer you my good wishes and assure you that the offices of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you. Upon Your Excellency and your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**S.E. il Signor Praveen Lal Goyal,
Ambasciatore dell'India presso la Santa Sede**

È nato il 5 ottobre 1945.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Ha conseguito un dottorato in Economia e una specializzazione in Storia.

Entrato in carriera diplomatica nel 1969, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1969-1971); Segretario di Ambasciata a Tokyo (1971-1973); Sotto-Segretario del Ministero degli Esteri (1973-1976); Segretario di Ambasciata a Dhaka (1976-1978) ed a Roma (1978-1981); Console Generale a Dubai (1981-1984); Direttore e Segretario aggiunto presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1984-1988); Ambasciatore in Panama (1988-1992); Alto Commissario a Georgetown (1993-1994) e a Malta (1994-1995); Console generale a Glasgow (1995-1999); Segretario aggiunto presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1999-2002).

[01976-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL GHANA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ALBERT OWUSU-SARPONG

Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to offer you a cordial welcome as you come to the Vatican to present the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Ghana to the Holy See. I appreciate the good wishes which you have brought from His Excellency President John Agyekum Kufuor and the Government, and I gladly reciprocate with the assurance of my prayers for the prosperity and spiritual well-being of the people of your nation.

Speaking of your country's clear commitment to work for the cause of peace, you have mentioned the Holy See's efforts in this same area. Indeed, it is precisely the task of fostering understanding and advancing development and peace among peoples and nations which motivates the Holy See's diplomatic activity. An important aspect of this mission of promoting peace is the task of fostering ever greater awareness of the prime value of solidarity. As the modern phenomenon of globalization makes ever clearer, human society — whether at the national, regional or international levels — is more and more dependent on the basic relationships that people cultivate with one another in ever widening circles. These relationships move from the family to intermediary social groups and on to civil society as a whole, embracing the entire national community of a given country. States in turn enter into relationships with one another, and networks of global interdependence are created, both regional and worldwide.

At the same time, this growing reality of human interaction and interdependence brings to light many inequalities existing between peoples and nations: there is a wide gap between rich and poor countries; within nations there is social imbalance between those living in wealth and those offended in their dignity by a lack of the basic necessities of life. And then there is the damage that is done to the human and natural environment by the irresponsible use of resources. We are confronted by the sad fact that in certain areas these negative factors have become so acute that some of the poorest countries appear to have reached a point of irreversible decline. For this reason, and compellingly so, the promotion of justice must be at the very heart of the international community's efforts to address these problems.

Here it is a question of actively helping individuals and groups currently suffering exclusion and marginalization to become part of the process of economic and human development. For affluent regions of the world, this means that changes in lifestyles are called for, a change in the models of production and consumption; in developing areas, a change in the established structures of power-sharing, both political and economic, is often required. For the entire human family, it means meeting the many serious challenges posed by armed aggression and violent conflict, realities that involve not only peoples and states but also non-institutional organizations, such as paramilitary and terrorist groups. In the face of such threats, no one can fail to feel the urgent moral duty to work actively towards promoting peace and understanding among peoples, a task which depends in no small part on the establishment — in justice — of a genuine and effective solidarity.

In this same context, we note the tragic consequences that ethnic conflict continues to bring to many regions of the world, including various parts of Africa and even your own country, which unfortunately has not been spared episodes of violence prompted by tribal rivalries. Here too the principle of solidarity can help the different parties to recognize the values that they hold in common, values rooted in our very nature as human persons. Awareness of these shared values provides an intrinsically universal basis for fruitful and constructive dialogue and mutual understanding. This in turn sets the stage for the further democratization of society, and helps to increase the participation of all groups in a representative and juridically safeguarded ordering of public life.

Of course, the Catholic Church will always be a willing partner in the pursuit of the common good, and she will continue to make her specific contribution to the building up of Ghanaian society. In this regard, I am grateful for Your Excellency's words about the Church's positive presence in your country. I would further observe that it is the guarantee of the right to religious freedom — the cornerstone of harmony and stability in any democratic system of government — that in no small part enables Ghana's Catholics to work for the spiritual and material progress of their fellow citizens, promoting unity and fostering effective human brotherhood and solidarity.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your mission will serve to strengthen the ties of friendship and cooperation existing between the Republic of Ghana and the Holy See. As you take up your new responsibilities I offer you my prayerful good wishes, and I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist

you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and the beloved people of Ghana I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**S.E. il Sig Albert Owusu-Sarpong,
Ambasciatore del Ghana presso la Santa Sede**

È nato il 31 gennaio 1949.

È sposato ed ha tre figli.

È laureato in Lettere all'Università di Strasburgo (1975).

Si è dedicato alla docenza ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Professore di Letteratura francese (1975-1987), Capo del Dipartimento di Lingue (1983-2000); Decano della Facoltà di Scienze Umane (1983-2002); Ambasciatore di Francia (2002).

Ha partecipato a molte conferenze internazionali ed è autore di numerosi articoli e pubblicazioni.

Parla lingue africane (asante twi e fanti), francese, inglese e tedesco. È conoscitore della cultura greco-latina.

[01977-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI NORVEGIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. LA SIGNORA HELGA HERNES

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican as you present the Letters of Credence by which His Majesty King Harald V has appointed you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Norway to the Holy See. I recall with joy the recent visit of Their Majesties King Harald and Queen Sonja, and I ask you to convey my gratitude to His Majesty for his kind greetings and assure him of my prayers for the Royal Family and for all the people of Norway.

As Your Excellency has mentioned, Christianity has for more than one thousand years played a vital role in shaping the values of Norwegian society. Indeed, throughout the continent of Europe the truths and values of Christianity have long been the foundation of the very fabric of society, giving form to its institutions and sustaining its peoples in their march through time, in that never-ending human quest for truth, justice and freedom. However, one cannot help but notice that today a certain eclipse of the sense of God has resulted in an eclipse of the sense of the transcendence of man and of the intrinsic dignity of human life. Caught within the narrow confines of a materialistic outlook on reality, which easily leads to absorption with self and a utilitarian approach to living, people sometimes fail to recognize the nature of life as a gift, a gift which finds its genuine meaning and purpose in openness to the truth of its origin in God and in the exercise of wholehearted solidarity with other human beings. Limited by a self-centred understanding of themselves, people find it hard to accept the reality of a higher and objective law written on their hearts and accessible to conscience, that inner sanctuary of the soul where each one is challenged to reach the full measure of human maturity.

Christianity must continue to exercise the role it has always had in Europe, as the "soul" of its peoples, shedding light on and encouraging not only their religious but also their cultural and social development. Since the beginning of my Pontificate I have insisted on the importance which the Church attaches to the cultural life of peoples and nations, for a community's culture is the response it gives to the fundamental questions of life, a response which is a crucial part of social attitudes and behaviour. I repeat what I said on my arrival in Oslo on 1 June 1989: "To remember the events and influences which have shaped a nation is to understand better the sources of its present historical direction". That is why I have encouraged Christians to apply their faith, in a spirit of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation, to the shaping of their own communities and of the wider international community.

The challenges are considerable. A society faithful to its Christian roots cannot but be a society intensely concerned to meet the needs of others in less fortunate circumstances. It is a society which feels a deep-seated responsibility in the face of the prospect of an ecological crisis or the problems of peace or the lack of guarantees for the fundamental human rights of people. That is why I express once more my personal appreciation of Norway's active solidarity with developing nations in far-flung parts of the world. I am confident

that the aid which you generously give will always aim at serving the genuine interests of the peoples involved. In particular I have followed closely the efforts led by Norway to bring peace to the troubled Island of Sri Lanka, and I am glad to note the progress made in that difficult negotiation.

The exercise of solidarity within each society is the expression of a firm and persevering determination to promote the common good. In your own country such solidarity has a special place in the treatment given to the growing immigrant communities. Openness, respect and a sincere readiness for dialogue make it possible for immigrants, while they struggle to meet their own needs and those of their families, to make a specific and positive contribution to the country that receives them.

The Catholic Church in Norway, prompted by the belief that in the Church no one is a stranger, has found its experience of welcoming migrant peoples enriching and fruitful. Parish communities in many instances have become training grounds of hospitality and places where people can grow in knowledge and respect for one another as brothers and sisters in God's family.

Your Excellency, I am confident that your presence as your country's diplomatic representative will serve to strengthen further the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Norway and the Holy See. As you begin your mission I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia will be ready to assist you in every way possible in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and upon your fellow citizens I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

**S.E. la Sig.ra Helga Hernes,
Ambasciatore di Norvegia presso la Santa Sede**

È nata il 16 gennaio 1938.

Laureata alla *Johns Hopkins University di Baltimore* (Maryland - 1970), si è specializzata presso la *Stanford University* (California - 1975).

Entrata nella carriera diplomatica nel 1988, ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Segretario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1988-1993); Direttore esecutivo di CICERO, Centro Internazionale per la Ricerca sul Clima e sullo Sviluppo (1993-1996); Funzionario con incarichi speciali presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1996-1998); Ambasciatore in Austria (1998-2002).

Ha rappresentato il suo Paese in molte Conferenze internazionali ed è autrice di varie pubblicazioni.

[01978-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL RWANDA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE. S.E. IL SIGNOR EMMANUEL KAYITANA IMANZI

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. C'est avec plaisir que je souhaite la bienvenue à Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République du Rwanda auprès du Saint-Siège.

J'ai été sensible aux paroles courtoises que vous m'avez adressées et je vous saurais gré de transmettre mes remerciements à son Excellence Monsieur Paul Kagame, Président de la République, pour les vœux qu'il m'a fait parvenir par votre intermédiaire. Je salue aussi avec affection le peuple rwandais tout entier, priant Dieu de l'aider à sortir des épreuves qu'il a traversées. Alors que le pays a été livré pendant de longues années à l'arbitraire de la haine et de la violence, il revient à toutes les composantes de la Nation de se mobiliser toujours davantage pour envisager et pour mettre en œuvre de manière responsable les solutions politiques, économiques et sociales opportunes; en favorisant l'unité nationale dans le respect des sensibilités et des opinions, elles permettront aux générations présentes et futures de réapprendre à vivre en frères, dans un pays réconcilié et prospère.

2. Vous rappelez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, que l'exigence d'une justice équitable est sans aucun doute pour

tout État le socle sur lequel peuvent se bâtir la paix véritable et une vie démocratique forte, au service du développement intégral de tous les citoyens sans exception. On ne peut qu'apprécier les efforts entrepris dans votre pays pour promouvoir la justice: il faut souhaiter qu'ils portent du fruit. Cela contribuera à renforcer l'unité nationale et à éradiquer la culture de l'impunité, qui ne peut qu'attiser la haine en exacerbant les inégalités entre les personnes et entre les communautés ethniques. Il s'agit de permettre aux Rwandais de s'engager avec confiance et détermination sur la voie de la réconciliation effective et du partage, tout en s'attachant à rechercher et à manifester avec courage la vérité sur les circonstances qui ont provoqué le génocide. Cela suppose notamment de renoncer à l'ethnocentrisme, qui engendre la domination des uns sur les autres, et de porter un regard d'espérance sur la voie qui reste encore à parcourir pour parvenir ensemble à la paix.

3. Le chemin de la reconstruction nationale et de la concorde entre tous les habitants, sur lequel s'est engagé le Rwanda, est aussi un chemin de démocratisation. Il passe par une attention toujours plus grande portée à certains aspects de la démocratie: défense des libertés publiques, souci du pluralisme politique, respect de la dignité et des droits fondamentaux des personnes et des communautés humaines. La nouvelle Constitution de votre pays est en cours d'élaboration. Puisse ce texte, fruit de la collaboration de tous les citoyens, renforcer l'unité nationale, en promouvant et en garantissant les valeurs humaines, morales et spirituelles qui permettront à tous les Rwandais de participer toujours plus activement à la vie et à la croissance de la Nation ! Ces valeurs universelles, tout comme le respect de la vie humaine, le sens du bien commun, l'accueil des rapatriés, le soutien à la famille, sont un patrimoine précieux qui constitue une source d'espérance non seulement pour le Rwanda, mais aussi pour toute la région des Grands Lacs, appelée à trouver la force d'âme et le courage politique nécessaires à l'établissement d'un développement durable et solidaire.

4. L'Église catholique s'est mobilisée au long des années pour formuler des propositions pastorales qui puissent aider le peuple à se réconcilier et favoriser la guérison intérieure des personnes. Je me réjouis de savoir que les Autorités de votre pays souhaitent lui assurer une plus ferme possibilité d'exercer librement sa mission. Soyez assuré qu'elle désire se mettre inlassablement au service de la paix et de la fraternité entre les hommes, en éduquant leurs consciences et leurs cœurs pour qu'ils puissent mieux affronter la situation présente; elle accomplit ainsi sa mission d'évangélisation, faisant partager son espérance en l'avenir et participant à l'édification sociale et spirituelle de la société rwandaise, dans le respect des traditions locale.

5. Par votre intermédiaire, permettez-moi, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de saluer affectueusement les Évêques et la communauté catholique de votre pays. Je connais les dures épreuves qu'ils ont affrontées avec tous leurs compatriotes et je remercie le Seigneur de leur ténacité et de leur fidélité dans l'annonce de l'Évangile de la vie et du pardon. En ces jours porteurs d'avenir pour la vie de la Nation, je les invite à ne pas relâcher leurs efforts pour manifester à leurs frères et sœurs que Dieu ne les a ni abandonnés ni oubliés. Sur les paumes des mains du Christ, percées par les clous de la crucifixion, le nom de chaque Rwandais est gravé (cf. Exhortation apostolique *Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 143). J'encourage donc les catholiques du Rwanda, en particulier les jeunes générations, à être des artisans de paix audacieux et généreux, travaillant à faire disparaître les causes de division et à faire grandir une société toujours plus prospère et plus unie !

6. Alors que débute votre mission auprès du Saint-Siège, je suis heureux de vous offrir mes vœux les meilleurs. Soyez assuré que vous trouverez toujours ici, auprès de mes collaborateurs, l'accueil attentif et compréhensif dont vous pourrez avoir besoin.

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille, ainsi que sur tout le peuple rwandais et sur ses dirigeants, j'invoque de grand cœur l'abondance des Bénédiction divines.

S.E. il Sig. Emmanuel Kaytania Imanzi,
Ambasciatore del Rwanda presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 28 luglio 1937.

È sposato ed ha cinque figli.

Dopo aver seguito gli studi universitari a Kinshasa ed a Lovanio, ha ottenuto la laurea in Ingegneria (1969). In seguito ha svolto la libera professione in Rwanda e nella Repubblica Democratica del Congo.

Ambasciatore nella Repubblica Democratica del Congo (1998-2002).

Ambasciatore in Belgio (2002).

[01979-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL MADAGASCAR PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR JEAN-PIERRE RAZAFY-ANDRIAMIHAINGO

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

1. C'est avec un grand plaisir que j'accueille aujourd'hui Votre Excellence, au moment où Elle présente les Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de Madagascar près le Saint-Siège, en évoquant la mémoire de son père qui avait eu cette même mission.

J'ai été sensible aux paroles courtoises que vous m'avez adressées. Elles témoignent de l'estime de votre pays à l'égard de la mission de l'Église catholique. Je vous remercie également pour le salut cordial que vous m'avez transmis de la part de Son Excellence Monsieur Marc Ravalomanana, Président de la République de Madagascar. Vous voudrez bien lui faire part en retour de mes vœux déferents pour sa haute mission au service de ses concitoyens. Je salue aussi avec affection le peuple malgache qui, au milieu des vicissitudes de l'histoire de la Nation, a su demeurer courageux dans les épreuves et patient dans l'adversité.

2. Vous rappelez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la ligne de conduite que les plus hautes Autorités de l'État entendent suivre pour guider les destinées de la Nation, s'appliquant à resserrer toujours plus les liens de son unité. Le *Fahamasinana*, qui vise à associer tous les Malgaches à l'édification d'une société érigée sur la justice et sur la paix, portera du fruit s'il s'appuie sur les valeurs morales et spirituelles qui font la richesse de la culture malgache. Bâtir résolument la démocratie suppose des choix courageux, notamment en ce qui concerne la moralisation de la vie politique, la défense des libertés publiques et la participation de tous les citoyens à l'exercice de la *res publica*. D'autre part, la transparence et la vérité dans la gestion des affaires nationales sont des conditions indispensables au développement durable d'une société. Cela nécessite aussi des orientations économiques et sociales qui placent l'homme au cœur du développement de la société et qui protègent les intérêts des plus pauvres, favorisant l'équité entre les personnes et entre les différentes composantes nationales. Au moment où votre pays vit une page nouvelle de son histoire et à la veille d'échéances électorales, je demande à Dieu de soutenir les efforts de ceux qui, dans le souci du bien de tous, travaillent à ouvrir les chemins du dialogue et de la réconciliation nationale, pour que le pays s'engage toujours davantage sur la voie de la bonne gouvernance et du respect des droits de l'homme.

3. Pour parvenir à réaliser ces nobles objectifs, toute Nation est appelée à développer une culture de la paix. Cela nécessite en particulier de combattre l'égoïsme sous toutes ses formes, dont les effets dévastateurs se font sentir dans les déséquilibres socio-économiques et dans le développement de la pauvreté. La recherche de la paix suppose aussi d'être attentif au principe d'équité dans la vie sociale, bannissant avec une extrême fermeté ce qui relève de la corruption, qui, en faussant les relations de confiance, mine les liens de coopération loyale entre les personnes, les institutions et les communautés humaines. À tous les échelons de la vie publique, comme les évêques du pays l'ont récemment rappelé, il convient de purifier les cœurs et les consciences, en s'attachant à faire disparaître des comportements constituant une violence sournoise qui ne fait qu'accroître les disparités entre les riches et les pauvres, et qui déstabilise la société tout entière. C'est alors que pourra se développer une authentique culture de la justice et de la paix, soutenue par une coopération internationale qui «ne peut se réduire à l'aide et à l'assistance [...] mais qui exprime au contraire un engagement concret de solidarité visant à faire des plus pauvres les acteurs de leur développement» (*Message pour la célébration de la Journée mondiale de la Paix 2000*, n. 17).

4. Votre pays doit aujourd'hui relever de nombreux défis. L'Église catholique, en relation avec les autres instances religieuses présentes sur le territoire, entend apporter une contribution spécifique à la promotion du bien de la communauté nationale, en discernant et en encourageant ce qui permet à l'homme de vivre et de grandir en conformité avec sa vocation. Elle souhaite participer à la vie de la société, n'étant jamais indifférente au sort des personnes et des communautés humaines, ni aux dangers qui les menacent.

L'amour du Christ, Sauveur de tout homme et de tout l'homme, la presse à proposer aux jeunes générations, en particulier à travers ses œuvres d'éducation et dans la fidélité aux nobles valeurs traditionnelles malgaches, les moyens humains et spirituels qui leur permettront de prendre toute leur place dans la construction d'une société forte, pacifique et solidaire. Il importe en effet de sensibiliser la jeunesse au sens de l'effort et de la probité, à l'esprit de conciliation et de partage, au juste respect des biens et des personnes, à l'équitable répartition des richesses et des responsabilités, ainsi qu'au souci permanent de préserver l'environnement et les ressources naturelles. Je souhaite que lui soient donnés les moyens de garder espoir et de poursuivre avec ardeur cette noble mission; de même, il importe de défendre la cause de la famille, dans laquelle les jeunes font le premier apprentissage des vertus morales et sociales, et «qui est pour la société l'âme de sa vie et de son développement» (Exhortation apostolique *Familiaris consortio*, n. 42).

5. Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, je voudrais saluer par votre intermédiaire les évêques, qui se sont récemment engagés avec vigueur pour lutter contre la corruption et pour la justice, ainsi que tous les membres de l'Église catholique à Madagascar. En ce temps de préparation à la fête de Noël, où l'humanité tout entière est invitée à accueillir le Christ, Prince de la Paix, je les encourage à être pour tous leurs compatriotes, par leur présence active à tous les niveaux de la société, des témoins vivants de la vérité et du partage, contribuant à répandre l'esprit du *fihavanana*, valeur si chère à la culture traditionnelle malgache.

6. Alors que commence officiellement votre mission auprès du Siège apostolique, je vous offre, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, mes vœux cordiaux pour la noble tâche qui vous attend. Soyez assuré que vous trouverez toujours ici, auprès de mes collaborateurs, la disponibilité et l'accueil attentif dont vous pourrez avoir besoin.

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille, sur les responsables de la Nation et sur le peuple malgache tout entier, j'invoque de grand cœur les Bénédictions de Dieu.

**S.E. il Sig. Jean-Pierre Razafy-Andriamihango,
Ambasciatore del Madagascar presso la Santa Sede**

È nato nel 1950.

È sposato ed ha due figlie.

Laureato in Diritto Internazionale all'Università di Parigi I, ha ottenuto una specializzazione presso l'Istituto di Studi Giuridici dell'Università di Parigi II ed ha superato gli esami di abilitazione alla Professione di Avvocato.

- Dal 1976 al 1978 è stato legale d'impresa nel settore della costruzione e dei lavori pubblici.

- Nel 1978 è stato nominato Avvocato presso la Corte di Parigi.

- Dal 1997 al 1999 è stato Incaricato di Conferenze all'Istituto di Studi Superiori di Francofonia a Parigi e Docente in diverse Scuole Superiori.

- Dal 1997 è Consulente ed Esperto giuridico e giudiziario dell'UNESCO, dell'Agenzia intergovernativa della "francofonia", del Consiglio regionale dell' "Ile de France" e, dal 2001, del Presidente del Madagascar.

- È autore di pubblicazioni sulla Storia del Madagascar.

- Parla francese, inglese, malgascio e cinese ed ha conoscenza del giapponese.

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