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LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: TANZANIA, NEPAL, FINLANDIA, SANTA LUCIA, EL SALVADOR, DANIMARCA, SUD AFRICA, ALGERIA, ERITREA, TOGO, ANDORRA

LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DEGLI AMBASCIATORI DI: TANZANIA, NEPAL, FINLANDIA, SANTA LUCIA, EL SALVADOR, DANIMARCA, SUD AFRICA, ALGERIA, ERITREA, TOGO, ANDORRA

- DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI TANZANIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ALI ABEID A. KARUME
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Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali, le Loro Eccellenze i Signori Ambasciatori di: Tanzania, Nepal, Finlandia, Santa Lucia, El Salvador, Danimarca, Sud Africa, Algeria, Eritrea, Togo e Andorra.

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 TANZANIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ALI ABEID A. KARUME

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you today as you present the Letters appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Holy See. I offer the assurance of my prayers for the well-being and prosperity of your nation and I ask that you thank President Benjamin Mkapa for his warm greetings.

Tanzania, like so much of Africa, is known for its natural beauty and has been blessed with a rich variety of cultures and traditions. These are customs which emphasize the importance of community, mutual respect and human dignity and can offer much to humanity as a whole. Diplomatic relations between Tanzania and the Holy See express our shared conviction that these qualities are essential for fostering understanding between peoples and peace in the world. At the same time, the Holy See's diplomatic role is distinguished from others in the international community in that it is marked by its dedication to serving the advancement of individuals and society through the affirmation of the values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty (cf. Pope John Paul II, *Address to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations*, New York, 5 October 1995, 18).

These central values, founded on the intrinsic dignity of every human being, are also the keys to developing and sustaining vibrant and successful democracies. In this regard, I wish to encourage your Government in its efforts to ensure that the country remains open to the richness that political diversity offers. Genuine democracies require that self-interest and efforts to reinforce positions of dominance be resisted, so that every citizen will enjoy the right to choose leaders through free and transparent multiparty elections. Respect for human dignity demands that "public administration at any level - national, regional, community - is oriented toward the service of its citizens" who, in turn, make a valuable contribution to the nation as true partners in governance (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 412).

Along these same lines, I am pleased to note that your nation, as a founding member of the East Africa Community, is committed to working with other nations in the area for the creation of a common market. The adoption of a single customs union for the member nations is indeed a positive sign of the progress being made in this important undertaking. Communal solidarity at this level not only assists in the integral development of the region, but also develops a level of rapport and mutual concern which can be most helpful in addressing any differences which may arise. Moreover, the generosity that your country has shown by taking in nearly a million refugees fleeing the violence and bloodshed of wars in their homelands is most praiseworthy. The nation can certainly be proud of these instances of concern for the greater good of all; they represent significant gestures that make Tanzania an example for Africa and the world. I am also aware of the great material burden which this generosity has placed on your country, and I encourage the international community to continue to support you

in your efforts to assist marginalized and displaced peoples.

Mr Ambassador, I wish to assure you that the Catholic Church will continue to help your country address its many needs. Indeed, she has much to offer in her social teaching which seeks to increase moral awareness of the demands of justice and solidarity, demands which are predicated on the incomparable worth and centrality of the human person. This is the motivation behind her attempts to comfort the poor and the suffering and to promote solidarity and cooperation among the people of Tanzania. In fact, initiatives sponsored by the Catholic Bishops have focused attention on the mobilization of the poor themselves in the fight to eradicate poverty and to foster development. The Bishops' endeavours are more than an eloquent expression of the Church's concern for the poor. They are an example of her keen desire to work with governmental authorities for the spiritual and material well-being of every citizen, regardless of race, religion or social affiliation.

Your Excellency, during your term as Tanzania'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 good wishes for the success of your efforts to build further on the positive relations already existing between us, and I pray that Almighty God will bestow abundant blessings upon yourself and the beloved people of Tanzania.

S.E. il Signor Ali Abeid A. Karume
Ambasciatore di Tanzania presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 24 maggio 1950 a Zanzibar.

È sposato ed ha quattro figli.

Ha conseguito la Laurea in Economia ed un Master in *Business Administration* (Columbia University – New York).

Tra il 1972 ed il 1978 è stato Vice Ministro del Commercio.

In seguito ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica, ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Ministro di Ambasciata in Belgio e presso le Comunità Europee (1985-1989); Ministro di Ambasciata negli Stati Uniti (1989-1993); Direttore di Dipartimento presso il Ministero degli Esteri, col rango di Ambasciatore (1993-1995); Ambasciatore in Belgio e presso l'Unione Europea (1995-2002).

Dal 2002 è Ambasciatore presso la Repubblica Federale di Germania, ove risiede.

[01548-02.02] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL NEPAL PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR MADAN KUMAR BHATTARAI

Mr Ambassador,

I extend a warm welcome to you as I accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Nepal to the Holy See. Most grateful for the greetings and good wishes which you bring from His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, I gladly reciprocate his kind sentiments, and I ask you to convey to him and to the Government and people of Nepal the expression of my esteem and the assurance of my prayers for the well-being and prosperity of your nation.

Your country and the Holy See enjoy bonds of friendship and cooperation which are made ever stronger by a shared commitment to working for peace and security among peoples at every level of society. This joint task involves all men and women of good will, and is intended to foster and promote international solidarity. In fact, without such there can be no true peace. Both the poor and the rich have a right to share in the material goods of the earth and to exercise their God-given capacity to work. My illustrious predecessor, Pope John Paul II, taught that we have a solemn duty to create a world that is more just and prosperous for all, stating in his Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* that "the advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural and even economic growth of all humanity" (No. 28).

While this appeal for greater solidarity is made to the international community as a whole, it has particular relevance for the countries of Asia. As you are well aware, the nations of your continent will need to continue to

work closely together if they are to resolve the difficulties brought about by conflict and poverty. Undeniably, your region is blessed with many men and women who have the human and intellectual skills necessary to meet the challenges of our time. Every attempt to mobilize such talent in a constructive way helps to foster the cooperation needed to support countries in difficulty. I urge you, therefore, to continue to work with your neighbours to ensure that problems on the continent are effectively addressed. Further international cooperation in the analysis and evaluation of political and social options and the promotion of peace and reconciliation will enhance your region's influence in the eyes of the rest of the world. It will also lead to increased assistance to poorer nations and greater respect for their sovereignty.

I wish to express my concern over the violent acts which have taken a devastating toll on your country. I pray that all parties will end the bloodshed which continues to cause so much suffering for the nation and instead embrace the path of dialogue and negotiation. This alone can enable all the people of Nepal to enjoy justice, tranquility and harmony. Indeed, it is only through dialogue that we can overcome the forms of conflict and tension which impede our efforts to build a firm groundwork for peace and fraternity (cf. *Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 12 May 2005). The use of violence as a tool for political change must always be avoided, while the building of mutual understanding and the constructive exchange of ideas is at all times to be upheld. Opposing factions must let the blessing of forgiveness bring about the hope of future peace thereby taking away the pain and wiping away the tears of the past. By insisting on the greatness and dignity of the human person and by spreading a clearer sense of the oneness of the human family, we can together eradicate the causes of violence and injustice.

For her part, the Catholic Church also draws inspiration from the lofty principle of solidarity in her own commitment to serving the integral good of the human person. Although few in number, the Catholics of Nepal have focused attention on the need to support the poor in the fight against poverty. The Church's endeavours are not just an expression of her concern for the less-fortunate but illustrate her keen desire to work with government authorities for the spiritual and material well-being of every citizen.

The Church is actively involved in advancing human development in Nepal through her presence in schools, orphanages, clinics and hospitals. I am confident that ongoing support for the legal guarantee of religious freedom will enable Christians to continue to fulfil their mission to preach the Good News of salvation and to bear witness to it through practical deeds of love and compassion. The Catholic community remains committed to the principles of inter-religious dialogue and promises her continued cooperation with civil authorities in their attempts to promote this essential exchange of ideas.

Mr Ambassador, I am sure that your mission will further strengthen the bonds of understanding and friendship between us. You can be assured that the Holy See will continue to be a committed partner with Nepal as it seeks to promote its own development and to be a force for stability and peace in Asia and within the wider community of nations. Upon yourself and the beloved people of Nepal I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of peace and harmony.

S.E. il Signor Madan Kumar Bhattarai
Ambasciatore del Nepal presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 1° dicembre 1954.

È sposato ed ha due figli.

Laureato in Legge, ha successivamente conseguito un Dottorato in Relazioni Internazionali ed un Master in Scienze Politiche e Pubblica Amministrazione.

Ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1978 ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero degli Esteri (1978-1981); Console a Calcutta (1982-1988); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata in India (1989-1994); Ministro Consigliere di Ambasciata in Bangladesh (1995-1996); Segretario Aggiunto di Dipartimento presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1997); Ministro di Ambasciata in India (1998-2002); Segretario Aggiunto e Portavoce del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (2003).

Dal 2004 è Ambasciatore in Germania, ove risiede.

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI FINLANDIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR PEKKA OJANEN

Sehr geehrter Herr Botschafter!

Mit Freude heiÙe ich Sie zu diesem feierlichen AnlaÙ der Übergabe Ihres Beglaubigungsschreibens als auÙerordentlicher und bevollmächtigter Botschafter der Republik Finnland beim Heiligen Stuhl willkommen und danke Ihnen für Ihre freundlichen Worte. Gleichzeitig darf ich Sie bitten, der Staatspräsidentin der Republik Finnland, Frau Tarja Halonen, meinen Dank für den Gruß zu übermitteln, den Sie an mich gerichtet hat. Auch ich entbiete ihr und dem finnischen Volk meine besten SegensgrüÙe.

Ich freue mich, sehr geehrter Herr Botschafter, über die guten Beziehungen, die seit langem zwischen Ihrem Land und dem Heiligen Stuhl bestehen. Sie haben eine sicher noch ausbaufähige Zusammenarbeit auf internationaler Ebene ermöglicht, die vielfältige Ziele wie den Schutz und die Verteidigung der Menschenrechte, die Förderung einer gerechten und nachhaltigen Entwicklung und das Bemühen um den Frieden verfolgt. Ihr geschätztes Land, das auf seine Unabhängigkeit stolz ist, hat sich in der Vergangenheit der Europäischen Union angenähert und gehört ihr nun schon seit zehn Jahren als Vollmitglied an. So konnte es auch eine aktive und wertvolle Rolle bei der Erweiterung der Union einnehmen, besonders im Blick auf die Aufnahme der baltischen Staaten. Wie Sie wissen, hat der Heilige Stuhl diese Öffnung der Europäischen Union in Richtung der osteuropäischen Staaten wohlwollend begleitet, da sie die im vergangenen Jahrhundert willkürlich auferlegte Teilung Europas, die der wahren Identität des Kontinents zuwiderlief, überwinden half. Heute gilt es diese wiedergefundene Einheit sorgfältig zu bewahren und zu vertiefen. Sie darf sich nicht auf die Erschließung eines großen gemeinsamen Wirtschaftsraums beschränken, sondern muß besonders darauf ausgerichtet sein, daß das Projekt Europa aus seiner jahrtausendlangen Geschichte und aus seinen kulturellen, philosophischen und religiösen Wurzeln beständig Kraft und Elan für seine eigene Zukunft und für seinen Auftrag in der Welt schöpft.

Europa stellt in unserer brüchigen und mit Gefahren belasteten Welt einen Lebensraum des Wohlstands und der Sicherheit dar. Ebenso handelt es sich in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht um einen reichen Kontinent, der auch in Zukunft vor allem aus den benachteiligten Regionen der südlichen Halbkugel viele ärmere Menschen anziehen wird. Die Europäische Union kann zu Recht den Anspruch erheben, eine Vereinigung von demokratischen Staaten zu sein, die sich in einer neuartigen Form miteinander verbunden haben. Das stellt für andere Staatengruppen ein möglicherweise nachzuahmendes Modell dar, da es immer notwendiger erscheint, die konstruktiven Kräfte zu vereinen, um den Anforderungen der Globalisierung gerecht werden zu können. Finnland, das immer auf multilaterale internationale Beziehungen bedacht war, kann in der Europäischen Union dazu beitragen, daß diese ihrer Verantwortung in der weltweiten Familie der Nationen gerecht wird. Der Heilige Stuhl wird sich seinerseits bei den Internationalen Organisationen und wo immer in der Welt Spannungen unter Völkern und Staaten auftreten, für einen Weg des Dialogs einsetzen, um auf diese Weise an der Lösung der Probleme mitzuarbeiten, die zwischen menschlichen Gruppen oder Staaten auftreten. Ebenso kann nur eine echte Entwicklungspolitik, die auf gerechteren Beziehungen zwischen den reichen und armen Ländern gründet, den zahlreichen allarmierenden Ungerechtigkeiten Abhilfe schaffen, unter denen viele unserer Mitmenschen leiden und die sehr leicht zum Nährboden für Gewalt und Terrorismus werden können.

Der interreligiöse Dialog ist, wie ich zu Beginn meines Pontifikats entschieden in Erinnerung gerufen habe, ein unumkehrbares Unterfangen für die Katholische Kirche, die „auf der Suche nach dem wahren Gut jedes Menschen und der Gesellschaft fortfahren will, Brücken der Freundschaft mit den Anhängern aller Religionen zu bauen" (Ansprache an die Delegierten der Kirchen und kirchlichen Gemeinschaften und Vertreter verschiedener religiöser Traditionen, vgl. *OR* vom 26. IV. 2005). Im Rahmen der Apostolischen Reise zum XX. Weltjugendtag 2005 in Köln habe ich diesen Gedanken vor Vertretern des Islam erneut aufgegriffen und vertieft: „Der interreligiöse und interkulturelle Dialog zwischen Christen und Muslimen darf nicht auf eine Saisonentscheidung reduziert werden. Tatsächlich ist er eine vitale Notwendigkeit, von der zu einem großen Teil unsere Zukunft abhängt" (Begegnung mit Vertretern muslimischer Gemeinden, *OR dt.* vom 2. IX. 2005). Es ist von größter Wichtigkeit, daß sich alle Gläubigen bestimmt und klar dagegen aussprechen, daß die Religion zu einem Vorwand für ein nicht zu rechtfertigendes gewalttätiges Verhalten wird, das die Würde des Menschen verletzt und sich damit auch gegen den Schöpfer allen Lebens richtet. Ich versichere Ihnen, sehr geehrter Herr Botschafter, daß die Katholische Kirche ihrerseits keine Anstrengungen scheuen wird, um sich auf allen Ebenen für den Frieden und für die Würde eines jeden Menschen einzusetzen, der nach dem Abbild Gottes geschaffen

wurde.

Es freut mich, daß ich meinen Gruß durch Sie auch an die katholischen Gläubigen in Finnland richten kann, die kürzlich die 850-Jahr-Feier der Ankunft des Christentums in Ihrem Land durch die Evangelisierungstätigkeit des heiligen Heinrich sowie auch den 50. Jahrestag der Gründung der katholischen Diözese Helsinki begangen haben. Die wenig zahlreiche aber gut in die finnische Gesellschaft integrierte katholische Gemeinschaft wird den ökumenischen Dialog zur Einheit mit den Christen anderer Konfessionen fortsetzen und sich gleichfalls dem interreligiösen Dialog zuwenden, der ein wichtiger Faktor für den Frieden in unseren modernen Gesellschaften darstellt. Der Heilige Stuhl hat diesbezüglich mit Wohlgefallen die Promulgation eines neuen Gesetzes zur Religionsfreiheit in Finnland zur Kenntnis genommen, das eine wahre Religionsfreiheit garantiert, die den Religionen eine größere Autonomie und eine weiterreichende rechtliche Gleichbehandlung, besonders im Bereich der Bildung, gewährt. Dadurch wird der Beitrag gefördert, den jede von ihnen zum Gemeinwohl des gesamten Volkes leisten kann. Darüber hinaus bin ich sicher, daß die Katholiken gemeinsam mit vielen anderen Menschen guten Willens auch weiterhin Zeugnis ablegen für die Würde und Größe des menschlichen Lebens, das von der Empfängnis bis zum natürlichen Tod geschützt werden muß. Durch ihr Verhalten und ihr Engagement wollen die Christen in Finnland auch den Wert der Ehe und der Familie bezeugen, damit die ganze Gesellschaft darin die Grundzelle jeder menschlichen Gemeinschaft erkennt, die bewahrt und unterstützt werden muß, um auf diese Weise auch in Zukunft allen einen Weg zu einem glücklichen und erfüllenden Leben zu eröffnen!

Sehr geehrter Herr Botschafter, zu Beginn Ihres ehrenvollen Amtes wünsche ich Ihnen eine erfolgreiche Mission und versichere Ihnen zugleich das Entgegenkommen und die Unterstützung meiner Mitarbeiter.

Ihnen, Herr Botschafter, Ihrer Familie, Ihren Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern in der Botschaft und dem gesamten finnischen Volk erbitte ich von Herzen Gottes beständigen Schutz und seinen reichen Segen.

S.E. il Signor Pekka Ojanen
Ambasciatore di Finlandia presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 18 luglio 1946 a Pori.

È sposato ed ha tre figli.

Laureato in Storia (Università di Helsinki, 1971), ha intrapreso la carriera diplomatica nel 1971 ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario del Ministero degli Esteri (1971); Membro della Segreteria Esecutiva per le riunioni ad Helsinki ed a Ginevra della Conferenza per la Sicurezza e la Cooperazione in Europa - O.S.C.E. (1972-1974); Secondo Segretario di Ambasciata a Vienna (1975-1977); Primo Segretario in servizio presso il Ministero degli Esteri (1978-1979); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a Stoccolma (1980) e successivamente a Tel Aviv (1981-1982); Consigliere della Rappresentanza permanente presso l'O.N.U. a Ginevra (1983-1986); Incaricato, col grado di Ambasciatore, di preparare la riunione di Helsinki dell'O.S.C.E. (1990-1991) ed in seguito Segretario Esecutivo della medesima Conferenza (1992);-Direttore Generale aggiunto del Ministero degli Esteri (1993-1994);-Rappresentante permanente presso l'O.S.C.E., Vienna (1995-1997);-Direttore Generale aggiunto del Ministero degli Esteri (1993-1994);-Ambasciatore a Copenaghen (1998-2000).

Dall'inizio del 2005 è Ambasciatore in Svizzera, ove risiede.

[01550-05.02] [Originalsprache: Deutsch]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI SANTA LUCIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR GILBERT RAMEZ CHAGOURY

Your Excellency,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican today and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Saint Lucia to the Holy See. I ask you kindly to convey to the Governor-General, Dame Pearlette Louisy, and the Prime Minister, Mr Kenny Anthony, my appreciation of their good wishes. I warmly reciprocate them and offer the Government and people of Saint Lucia the assurance of my prayers for the prosperity of the nation.

The Church's diplomatic relations, fruitfully exercised with your country for over twenty years, form part of her mission of service to the international community. They are specifically intended to promote the dignity of the human person and to encourage peace and harmony among the world's peoples. These essential conditions for progress in attaining the integral development of individuals and nations find their deepest meaning in the moral order established by God the Creator who seeks to draw all men and women into the fullness of his life. For this reason the Holy See speaks so insistently and fervently about respect for human dignity and about the fundamental importance of supporting the family as "the primary vital cell of society" (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11).

Mr Ambassador, the sacred institution of marriage is vital to the well-being of every nation, including Saint Lucia. It is the indispensable foundation of family life and the primary source of cohesion within communities. In the face of traditions and trends which can devalue and even undermine marriage, a determined effort is required on the part of both civic and religious authorities, working together, to ensure that stable and faithful domestic life is upheld and supported wholeheartedly. Indeed, any hope for renewal of society which does not adhere to God's plan for matrimony and the family is destined to founder, for it is there that the God-given dignity of every person is first realized and the self-esteem necessary for mature adult relationships is first experienced and nurtured (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, 3).

Your Government's commitment to economic diversification and development of social infrastructure offers, particularly to the young generation, a future of confidence and optimism. Crucial to this vision is the creation of educational opportunities. Where schools function in a professional manner and are staffed by people of personal integrity, hope is offered to all and most especially to youth. Integral to such formation is religious instruction. Knowledge enlightened by faith, far from dividing communities, binds peoples together in the common search for truth which defines every human being as one who lives by belief (cf. Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, 31). In this regard, the principle of religious freedom, when applied to the syllabus of religious instruction in schools, must include the right to teach the content of the Catholic faith and to facilitate participation in its various practices (cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis humanae*, 4).

The moral aspect of authentic economic development is also of fundamental importance to the well-being and peaceful progress of a nation. It is here that the demand for justice is satisfied (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 10). The right to meaningful work and an acceptable standard of living, the assurance of a fair distribution of goods and wealth, and the responsible use of natural resources all depend upon a concept of development which is not limited merely to satisfying material necessities. Instead, such a concept must also highlight the dignity of the human person – who is the proper subject of all progress – and thereby enhance the common good of all humanity. While such a goal certainly demands the support of the entire international community, it is also the case that much can be achieved at the level of regional initiatives. This requires that excessive nationalism be laid to rest so that the profound value of communal solidarity be permitted to find expression in local agreements conducive to regional economic and social cooperation.

As Your Excellency has kindly observed, the Church in Santa Lucia serves the nation considerably through her extensive educational and social apostolate. Faithful to her spiritual and humanitarian mission, she actively seeks to contribute to the advancement of the people. Among the many initiatives in which she is engaged is the battle against the trade and use of drugs. The will to foil this pernicious threat to the fabric of society, which fuels crime and violence and contributes to the physical and emotional destruction of many individuals and families, demands great political resolve, international cooperation, and the support of the whole community. I encourage your government in the efforts it is making to address this scourge and assure you that they have the full support of the Catholic faithful.

Mr Ambassador, I am confident that your mission which you begin today will help to strengthen the bonds of understanding and cooperation between Santa Lucia and the Holy See. As you take up your new responsibilities I assure you that the various offices of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you and your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. il Signor Gilbert Ramez Chagoury

Ambasciatore di Santa Lucia presso la Santa Sede

È nato l'8 gennaio 1946.

È sposato ed ha quattro figli.

Ha svolto una intensa attività in imprese che fanno capo alla sua famiglia, presenti in diverse nazioni.

Dal 1995 è Ambasciatore di Santa Lucia presso l'UNESCO, con residenza a Parigi.

[01551-02.02] [Texto original: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI EL SALVADOR PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR FRANCISCO A. SOLER

Señor Embajador:

1. Me es grato darle la bienvenida a este acto en que me hace entrega de las Cartas Credenciales como Embajador Extraordinario y Plenipotenciario de la República de El Salvador ante la Santa Sede. Agradezco las amables palabras que me ha dirigido, así como el cordial saludo del Señor Presidente de la República, Lic. Elías Antonio Saca, del que se ha hecho portador. Le ruego que le transmita mis mejores deseos de paz y bienestar personal, así como mis votos por la prosperidad y desarrollo de su querida Nación.

2. Vuestra Excelencia se ha referido a los Acuerdos de Paz, firmados en 1992 después de una larga lucha fratricida, y ha puesto también de relieve que en estos años se ha ido avanzando en el proceso de pacificación y democratización. Es consolador ver el esfuerzo de su Gobierno en la construcción de una sociedad más justa que proteja los sectores más débiles y empobrecidos. En este sentido, la Iglesia en El Salvador es consciente de que la construcción y mejora de la patria es un deber de cada ciudadano, y ella sigue colaborando para que todos puedan vivir en un clima de esperanza y de paz. La Iglesia, con la experiencia que tiene de humanidad, sin querer inmiscuirse en la política de los Estados, "sólo pretende una cosa: continuar, bajo la guía del Espíritu Paráclito, la obra del mismo Cristo, que vino al mundo para dar testimonio de la verdad, para salvar y no para juzgar, para servir y no para ser servido" (*Gaudium et spes*, 3).

3. El Salvador tiene una fuerte impronta religiosa, que pone de manifiesto la fe de su pueblo después de más de cinco siglos de su evangelización. A este respecto, la Iglesia católica pone todo su empeño en favorecer el desarrollo integral del ser humano y la defensa de su dignidad, ayudando en la consolidación de los valores y bases fundamentales para que la sociedad pueda gozar de estabilidad y armonía. Así mismo, continúa colaborando en campos tan importantes como la enseñanza, la asistencia a los más desfavorecidos, los servicios sanitarios y la promoción de la persona como ciudadano e hijo de Dios.

Por ello, los Pastores de El Salvador no dejan de ofrecer su palabra que brota de un profundo conocimiento de la realidad humana leída a la luz de la Buena Nueva. Pues su misión de orden religioso no les exime de fomentar un diálogo nacional entre los responsables de la vida social. Por otra parte, y como Su Excelencia ha puesto de relieve, dicho diálogo debe ayudar a construir un futuro más humano con la colaboración de todos, evitando el empobrecimiento de la sociedad. A este respecto, es oportuno recordar que las mejoras sociales no se alcanzan aplicando sólo las medidas técnicas necesarias, sino promoviendo también reformas con una base humana y moral que tengan presente una consideración ética de la persona, de la familia y de la sociedad.

4. La propuesta constante de los valores morales fundamentales, como son la honestidad, la austeridad, la responsabilidad por el bien común, la solidaridad, el espíritu de sacrificio y la cultura del trabajo, puede facilitar un mejor desarrollo para los miembros de la comunidad nacional, pues la violencia, el egoísmo personal y colectivo nunca han sido fuentes de progreso ni de bienestar.

Sobre esta base, los salvadoreños, con las ricas cualidades que les distinguen, han de ser los principales protagonistas y artífices del progreso del País, fomentando una estabilidad política que permita la participación de todos en la vida pública. Por eso, cada uno, según sus cualidades y posibilidades, está llamado a cooperar al bien de la Patria. A este respecto, me complace saber que es firme propósito de las Autoridades trabajar por un orden social cada vez más justo y participativo, y formulo mis mejores votos para que este propósito se

logre, superando las graves dificultades que afectan principalmente a las capas más débiles de la sociedad.

5. Por otra parte, el doloroso y vasto problema de la pobreza, que induce a muchos salvadoreños a emprender la vía arriesgada de la emigración con todas sus secuelas en el ámbito familiar y social, tiene graves consecuencias en el campo de la educación, de la salud y de la vivienda, y constituye un apremiante desafío para los gobernantes y responsables de las instancias públicas para que todos dispongan de los bienes primarios y encuentran los medios indispensables que permitan su promoción y desarrollo integral.

La Iglesia, con su doctrina social, trata de impulsar y favorecer oportunas iniciativas encaminadas a superar situaciones de marginación que afectan a tantos hermanos necesitados, tratando de eliminar las causas de la pobreza y cumpliendo así su misión, pues la preocupación por lo social forma parte de su acción evangelizadora (cf. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 41).

6. Señor Embajador, antes de concluir este encuentro deseo expresarle mis mejores deseos para que la misión que hoy inicia sea fecunda en copiosos frutos. Le ruego, de nuevo, que se haga intérprete de mis sentimientos y esperanzas ante el Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la República y demás Autoridades de su País, a la vez que invoco la bendición de Dios sobre su distinguida familia y sus colaboradores, y sobre todos los amadísimos hijos e hijas de El Salvador.

S.E. il Signor Francisco A. Soler
Ambasciatore di El Salvador presso la Santa Sede

È nato a San Salvador il 23 novembre 1945.

È sposato ed ha quattro figli.

Laureato in Economia (1967), è specializzato in *Business Administration* (1970).

In campo diplomatico è stato: Ambasciatore presso la Comunità Economica Europea (1980-1989);

Ambasciatore a Giamaica (1991-1998).

Ha ricoperto inoltre incarichi direttivi nei settori industriali e bancari. Tra essi si menzionano: Vicepresidente della *Ultramar Banking Corporation* (Città del Messico e Londra, 1970-1974); Presidente e Direttore esecutivo della *H.B.S. Finance Corporation* (Miami e Londra, 1974-1998); Direttore della *First Palm Beach International Bank* (Palm Beach, 1981-1985);

Direttore (dal 1983) della *United States Can Company* (Oak Brook, Illinois); Presidente del Consiglio d'Amministrazione (dal 1986) della *International Bancorp of Miami*; Presidente del Consiglio d'Amministrazione della *Harbour Club Ltd.* (Londra, 1991-1998); Vice-Presidente della *All American Bottling Corporation* (Oklahoma, 1992-1997); Presidente del Consiglio d'Amministrazione della *Harbour Club Milano S.p.a.* (dal 1994).

Risiede a Londra.

[01152-04.02] [Texto original: Español]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI DANIMARCA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR STEN ERIK MALMBORG LILHOLT

Mr Ambassador,

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 Denmark to the Holy See. I thank you for your gracious words and for the greetings you bring from Queen Margrethe II. Please convey to Her Majesty my respectful good wishes and assurance of prayers for the well-being of your nation.

Since 1982 the Holy See and Denmark have enjoyed the benefits of formally established diplomatic relations. This has resulted in an encouraging level of contact and cooperation in the service of peace and justice, especially in the developing world. In this regard, I am pleased to note that your country continues to be most generous in its dedication to reduce world poverty and foster international development. The Holy See appreciates the importance attached by the Danish Government to achieving the *Millennium Development*

Goals, particularly with regard to the contribution by richer countries of 0.7% of their gross national product to the international aid budget. I offer you every encouragement to continue resolutely along this path towards a more just distribution of global resources and I pray that many other nations will be inspired by the leadership your country has shown in this regard.

Besides the material poverty experienced by our brothers and sisters in the developing world, there are other forms of deprivation that give cause for concern in modern society. In Denmark, as in many European countries, there is currently much discussion of the issues associated with immigration. I urge the Danish people to offer a welcome to the newcomers in their midst and I trust also that those who have found a home in Denmark will respect the values and sensibilities of their host nation. The integration of peoples requires each group to achieve a just balance between asserting its own identity and accommodating that of others (cf. *Message for the 2005 World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 2) and I know that your Government appreciates the importance of reconciling these different elements. I pray that the various groups represented in Danish society will continue to live together peacefully, giving an example to other nations of the mutual enrichment that host countries and immigrants can offer one another.

This cooperation is especially important in the fields of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. Even though the Catholic community in Denmark represents only a small percentage of the population, I can assure you that it is eager to play its part in contributing to these significant endeavours. It is my fervent hope that ecumenical dialogue with the established Lutheran Church will start to make significant progress and I trust that you will do all in your power to encourage this. Moreover, in view of the phenomenon of immigration, inter-religious dialogue is also taking on increasing significance. The Catholic Church is keen to contribute her considerable experience and expertise in this area so as to promote mutual respect and understanding between the followers of different religious traditions in your country.

As in much of Europe today, Danish society is becoming increasingly secular in outlook. The Church has a right and a duty to point out the dangers that ensue when man's divine origin and destiny are ignored or denied. The tradition of Christian faith in your country, stretching back over a thousand years, has made it what it is today. Indeed, the principles that have shaped Western civilization flow from the underlying vision of the world that the Christian faith proclaims. It is essential to remember that their binding nature is predicated not on mere consensus but on divine revelation.

For this reason it is necessary to examine carefully any new social developments that emerge, even if they enjoy widespread support or appear to promise significant rewards. The defence of life from conception to natural death, for example, and the stability of marriage and family life are goods that must be safeguarded in every society, however vocal the forces that may seek to undermine them. They form part of the objective moral order, and can never be discarded without gravely endangering the common good. Likewise, scientific and technological advances should always be evaluated according to sound ethical criteria, and nothing that threatens the inherent dignity of the human person should ever be tolerated. Only by faithful adherence to these unchanging truths can society create the conditions in which human beings may flourish and prosper.

Your Excellency, I am confident that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will further strengthen the already fruitful relations existing between the Holy See and your country. I assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are always ready to offer help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. With my sincere good wishes, I invoke upon you, your family, and all the people of Denmark, God's abundant blessings.

S.E. il Sig. Sten Erik Malmberg Lilholt
Ambasciatore di Danimarca presso la Santa Sede

È nato a Copenhagen il 22 dicembre 1943.

È sposato.

Ha conseguito una laurea in Legge presso l'Università di Copenhagen (1968).

Entrato in carriera diplomatica nel 1968, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1968-1972); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata a New Delhi (1972-1973); Distaccato presso la

Commissione Europea a Bruxelles (1973-1975); Capo Sezione del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1975-1979); Consigliere di Ambasciata a Vienna (1979-1984); Capo Sezione del Ministero degli Esteri (1984-1986); Capo Dipartimento del Ministero degli Esteri (1986-1992); Ambasciatore in Egitto (1992-1996); Ispettore itinerante del Ministero degli Esteri (1996-2000); Ambasciatore in Norvegia (2001-2004).
Dal 2004 è Ambasciatore in Svizzera, con residenza a Berna.

[01553-02.01] [Original text: English]

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL SUD AFRICA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. LA SIG.RA DR. KONJI SEBATI

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and accept the Letters of Credence by which you are appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings which you bring on behalf of His Excellency Mr Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic, and I gladly reciprocate with good wishes and the assurance of my prayers for him and the people of South Africa.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1994, the Holy See has followed closely your country's transformation and its successful efforts to bring about an integrated, stable and pluralistic society. While challenges still remain, the reality of a new South Africa has deservedly received acclaim and admiration. The same political good will and administrative maturity that produced the peaceful transition to a full democracy must likewise be brought to bear on other areas of present concern. Many of these questions are also shared by other countries in the region and are the result of globalisation or internal social transformation. Intensive urbanization, for example, has resulted in the lack of proper housing, unemployment, criminality and an exaggerated social stratification. These challenges can only be effectively addressed by promoting both social cohesion and economic growth, while offering, especially to the poor and marginalized, opportunities for education and employment. My prayers are raised to Almighty God that, as your nation continues to address these matters, her political vision will remain open to love of truth, peace and justice.

The high proportion of young people in your population, the traditional African values of deep respect for human life, family, community and social solidarity will certainly contribute to the process of long-term development. This balanced approach to change has indeed helped to raise the moral prestige of the new South Africa and has made her one of the most influential countries on the continent. I am hopeful that her example will enable her to maintain a strong voice in the international community, especially regarding the elimination or reduction of foreign debt, regional peace-building and the assistance to other nations in the consolidation of proven economic and social programs.

Mr Ambassador, in recent years the social stability and economic success of South Africa have attracted increasing numbers of refugees from countries sadly troubled by poverty, political unrest and violence. Your nation's policy of acceptance of others has been exemplary for the entire region. It is not easy for local and national governments, already strapped by economic and social problems, to accommodate those who are searching for a new and better life. The attention given to them, however, is a characteristic sign of an authentically civil society, moved by a just compassion for the less fortunate. History has clearly demonstrated that "immigration can be a resource for development rather than an obstacle to it" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 297). I have no doubt that your nation by drawing on the talents and hopes of these newcomers, and treating them always with the dignity and respect they deserve, will reap many benefits.

The great majority of the South African population is Christian and therefore capable of offering the country the important religious values of solidarity, tolerance and reconciliation. For her part, the Catholic Church remains committed to giving her full support to the promotion of modern society by furthering dialogue and mutual understanding (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, 79). She is well respected for her efforts to work with civil governments in addressing the many social and human problems affecting Africa. One notable example of this is the struggle against HIV/Aids where statistics taken in several regions of Africa confirm the results of policies based on continence, the promotion of faithfulness in marriage and the importance of family life. Education, health-care

and assistance to the poor also indicate sectors where collaboration has been most advantageous and rewarding. In this context, I would assure you that the Catholic Church will continue to offer her cooperation wherever she may be of assistance, and I would encourage your government to promote an ever-greater awareness of the dignity of human life from conception to natural death.

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your duties as your country's Representative to the Holy See I assure you of my prayers for the success of your mission. You may be certain that the various departments of the Roman Curia will be willing to assist you in this task. I ask Almighty God's abundant blessings upon you and upon the beloved people of South Africa.

S.E. la Sig.ra Dr. Konji Sebati
Ambasciatore del Sud Africa presso la Santa Sede

È nata a Soweto, Johannesburg, il 24 settembre 1951.

Ha conseguito una laurea in Medicina e Chirurgia (Università di Nairobi, 1981) e si è specializzata in Pediatria (Collegio di Medicina del Sud Africa, 1985) ed in Management dei Servizi Sanitari (Università del Witwatersrand, 1990).

Dal 1981 ha esercitato la professione medica ricoprendo i seguenti incarichi: Ufficiale Medico nell'Ospedale di Nairobi (1981-1983); Pediatra nell'Ospedale Bophelong di Mafikeng (1983-1987); Direttore regionale per la Sanità nel distretto di Pretoria (1987-1990); Sovrintendente dell'Ospedale ODI di Pretoria (1990-1993); Direttore del progetto "Pfizer" del Sud Africa (1994-2000); Direttore della sede centrale del progetto "Pfizer", a New York (2000-2005). Da maggio 2005 è Ambasciatore in Svizzera, ove risiede.

Ha partecipato, in qualità di relatore, a numerose conferenze internazionali ed a progetti per la cura della Sindrome di Immunodeficienza acquisita (HIV).

[01554-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI ALGERIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR IDRIS JAZAÏRY

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Je suis heureux de souhaiter la bienvenue à Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire auprès du Saint-Siège.

Je vous remercie vivement, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, pour les salutations cordiales que vous venez de m'adresser en votre nom et au nom du Président de la République, ainsi qu'au nom du gouvernement et du peuple algériens. J'ai été très sensible aux marques de sympathie parvenues d'Algérie à l'occasion du décès du Pape Jean-Paul II, notamment, lors de la célébration des obsèques, à la présence de Son Excellence Monsieur Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Je vous saurais gré en retour de lui transmettre les vœux que je forme pour sa personne, particulièrement pour sa santé, et pour l'accomplissement de sa haute mission au service de ses concitoyens. Je prie le Très-Haut de bénir les efforts du peuple algérien dans l'œuvre d'édification d'une nation toujours plus fraternelle et plus solidaire.

Vous avez évoqué, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, les graves violences que votre pays a dû affronter au cours de ces dernières années. Seule une authentique réconciliation peut permettre aux hommes de vivre en harmonie et en paix entre eux. Le renoncement à la vengeance et l'engagement résolu sur le chemin du pardon sont les moyens dignes de l'homme pour renforcer les liens de fraternité et de solidarité. Ainsi que l'affirmait mon vénéré prédécesseur le Pape Jean-Paul II, «la capacité de pardonner est à la base de tout projet d'une société à venir plus juste et plus solidaire» (*Message pour la Journée mondiale de la paix 2002*, n. 9). Le pardon conduit la personne vers une humanité plus profonde et plus riche, éveillant en chacun le meilleur de lui-même. Mais une telle attitude, qui grandit l'homme, est nécessairement associée aux exigences de la justice. Le pardon n'est pas une marque de faiblesse et il ne peut ignorer les revendications légitimes des victimes de l'injustice, qui demandent que leurs droits soient reconnus et que les dommages subis soient réparés. Le pardon est en quelque sorte le parachèvement de la justice humaine fragile et imparfaite, permettant de cicatrizer les

blesures qui ont marqué parfois durablement les personnes au plus profond d'elles-mêmes et de rétablir au mieux les relations humaines qui ont été déstabilisées.

Pour défendre la valeur sacrée de la personne humaine et favoriser le respect de l'autre et la liberté religieuse, il est donc nécessaire que l'esprit de réconciliation et de justice soit inculqué aux jeunes générations, notamment dans la famille et dans l'éducation. C'est ainsi que les sociétés pourront progresser dans la solidarité et dans la fraternité, de telle sorte que la violence ne soit pas encouragée comme solution aux problèmes auxquels elles sont confrontées et que la religion ne soit jamais utilisée pour justifier un tel choix ni pour créer des inégalités entre les personnes.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous avez rappelé les grandes figures de paix et de réconciliation entre les communautés qui ont marqué l'histoire ancienne et contemporaine de votre pays. Tout récemment encore, l'Église a honoré de manière particulière Charles de Foucauld, qui a vécu sur votre terre, voulant se faire proche de tous, comme le «frère universel». Ainsi que j'ai déjà eu l'occasion de le dire, l'Église catholique entend poursuivre avec les croyants des autres religions un dialogue ouvert et sincère, à la recherche du véritable bien de l'homme et de la société. Je me réjouis donc de connaître la qualité des relations entretenues dans votre pays entre la communauté catholique et la communauté musulmane. La rencontre en vérité entre les croyants des différentes religions est un défi exigeant pour l'avenir de la paix dans le monde, et cela demande beaucoup de persévérance. Pour dépasser l'ignorance et les préjugés réciproques, il est important de créer des liens de confiance entre les personnes, notamment à travers le partage de la vie quotidienne et le travail réalisé en commun, en sorte que la libre expression des différences confessionnelles ne soit pas un motif d'exclusion mutuelle mais plutôt une occasion pour apprendre à vivre en respectant chacun l'identité de l'autre.

Par votre entremise, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, je suis heureux de pouvoir saluer avec affection la communauté catholique d'Algérie unie autour de ses Évêques. Au cours des dernières années, elle a partagé courageusement les épreuves du peuple algérien, offrant un témoignage significatif de fraternité universelle et désirent poursuivre avec générosité sa mission pour le bien du pays tout entier.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous inaugurez aujourd'hui la noble mission de représenter votre pays auprès du Saint-Siège. Veuillez accepter les vœux très cordiaux que je forme pour son heureuse réussite et soyez sûr de toujours trouver auprès de mes collaborateurs la compréhension et le soutien nécessaires!

Sur Votre Excellence, sur sa famille, sur ses collaborateurs, sur tous ses compatriotes et sur leurs dirigeants, j'invoque de grand cœur l'abondance des Bénédiction divines.

S.E. il Sig. Idriss Jazaïry
Ambasciatore di Algeria presso la Santa Sede

È nato nel 1936.

È sposato.

Ha conseguito lauree presso le Università di Oxford e di Harvard ed ha superato i corsi presso l'*Ecole Nazionale d'Administration* a Parigi.

Entrato in carriera diplomatica nel 1963, ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Funzionario presso la Missione permanente all'ONU in New York (1963-1964); Capo Divisione e successivamente Direttore degli affari economici, sociali e culturali presso il Ministero degli Affari Esteri (1964-1972); Consigliere presidenziale per gli affari economici e la cooperazione internazionale (1972-1978); Segretario generale aggiunto del Ministero degli Esteri (1978-1979); Ambasciatore in Belgio (1979-1982); Ambasciatore itinerante per gli affari economici internazionali (1982-1984); Presidente del Fondo internazionale per lo sviluppo agricolo presso l'ONU (1984-1993); Direttore esecutivo dell'Associazione per la cooperazione e per le ricerche in favore dello sviluppo in Africa, con sede a Londra (1993-1999); Ambasciatore negli Stati Uniti d'America (1999-2004); Dal novembre 2004 è Rappresentante permanente presso l'ONU a Ginevra, ove risiede.

[01555-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

● **DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DI ERITREA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL**

SIGNOR PETROS TSEGGAI ASGHEDOM

Mr Ambassador,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Eritrea to the Holy See. I thank you for the greetings which you bring from your President, His Excellency Mr Isaias Afwerki, and I ask you to convey my respectful gratitude to him and to assure him of my continuing prayers for the well-being of your nation.

The Holy See greatly values its diplomatic links with your country, which enable it to cooperate with your Government in the interests of peace and stability among the beloved peoples of the Horn of Africa. The Church shares with all people of good will a responsibility "to achieve a peaceful society, to overcome the temptation of confrontation between cultures, races and worlds that are different" (*Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 12 May 2005). You know from sad experience the appalling human cost of war; let me assure you that the Holy See is eager to do all in its power to support the international community in its efforts to avoid further military escalation and to resolve the continuing conflicts in your part of Africa.

The principal victims of war are always the people whose lives are so badly disrupted by violence and destruction. Many are forced to flee from their homes, or to seek refuge in neighbouring states. The Church is close to refugees and displaced persons, "not only with her pastoral presence and material support, but also with her commitment to defend their human dignity" (cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 505). In your country, where the effects of war are compounded by the additional burdens of drought and famine, the poverty of the people has reached grave proportions; the Catholic Church is committed to show solidarity with them in their suffering and to offer practical assistance. As world leaders become increasingly aware of the need to provide effective aid to Africa, the Church is pleased to be associated with their fight against hunger, poverty and disease.

Even though they form a small proportion of the population of Eritrea, Catholics can make a significant contribution to national life, through their Christian witness and their commitment to promote the common good. True to her nature and mission, the Church always seeks to come to the aid of the poor and the sick, and to work tirelessly to promote the dignity of the human person, made in God's image. For this reason she welcomes the opportunity to cooperate with the Government of Eritrea and to place her considerable resources of personnel and expertise at the service of your people. I am confident that the Government in turn will wish to facilitate the Church's humanitarian endeavours, welcoming those missionaries who arrive from abroad and supporting the native clergy and religious who devote their whole lives to prayer and to the pastoral ministry. In particular I would ask that their right to exemption from military service be respected: Eritrea will be better served if they are free to pursue their Christian calling and respective vocations.

Indeed, I express my hope that concrete steps will be taken to implement as fully as possible your country's constitutional guarantee of religious liberty. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, this is a right based "on the very dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 2). The Catholic Church, accordingly, is deeply concerned that all citizens should be free to practise their faith and that no one should feel under threat or coercion of any kind in this regard. She also seeks to promote respectful dialogue and fraternity between different Christian traditions and between different religions, and in this way to contribute towards the peaceful coexistence of all the groups that make up Eritrean society. In seeking the freedom to carry out her mission of love among your people, the Church fervently wishes to hasten the day when all the citizens of your country will be able to live together in peace, prosperity and harmony.

Your Excellency, I am confident that the diplomatic mission which you begin today will consolidate the good relations that exist between the State of Eritrea and the Holy See. In offering you my best wishes for the years ahead, I would like to assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are always glad to provide help and support in the fulfilment of your duties. Upon you, your family and all the people of Eritrea I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings.

S.E. il Sig. Petros Tseggai Asghedom

Ambasciatore di Eritrea presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 7 agosto 1946 ad Asmara.

Laureato in Ingegneria Chimica (Istituto Politecnico di Odessa, 1974), ha successivamente conseguito specializzazioni in Diritti Umani (2001) ed in Cooperazione Economica (2004) presso la Libera Università S. Pio V di Roma.

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Presidente dell'Associazione degli Eritrei in Europa (1974-1980); Segretario dell'Unione Nazionale dei Lavoratori Eritrei (1980-1983); Rappresentante della Commissione dei Chimici (1983-1993); Capo della Sotto – Commissione per il Referendum (per i residenti in Germania e Austria) (1993); Primo Segretario di Ambasciata in Germania (1994-2000); Membro dell'Assemblea Costituente (1997); Membro dell'Assemblea Nazionale (1997); Consigliere di Ambasciata in Italia (2000-2004).

Dal mese di marzo 2005 è Ambasciatore in Germania, con residenza a Berlino.

Parla tigrigno, inglese, amharico, russo, italiano e tedesco.

[01556-02.01] [Original text: English]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL TOGO PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR FÉLIX KODJO SAGBO

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Il m'est agréable d'accueillir Votre Excellence à l'occasion de la présentation des Lettres qui L'accréditent comme Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire du Togo près le Saint-Siège.

Je vous remercie des aimables paroles que vous m'avez adressées, faisant mémoire de mon vénéré Prédécesseur le Pape Jean-Paul II, ainsi que des salutations que vous m'avez transmises de la part de Son Excellence Monsieur Faure Gnassingbé, Président de la République togolaise. Je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir lui exprimer en retour mes vœux les meilleurs. Je salue aussi très cordialement le peuple togolais tout entier, lui souhaitant bonheur et prospérité.

Dans votre discours, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous évoquez le processus démocratique engagé dans votre pays, en vue de l'instauration d'un état de droit. J'y suis particulièrement sensible. En effet, dès le début de mon Pontificat, j'ai voulu me faire proche des populations du Togo qui traversaient alors une situation douloureuse (cf. *Regina Caeli*, 1er mai 2005). Je souhaite vivement que les blessures ouvertes, notamment au cours des derniers mois, puissent être guéries grâce à une authentique réconciliation entre tous les fils de la nation. La violence ne peut être le moyen approprié pour construire une société juste et solidaire. Pour parvenir à une existence réconciliée où chacun pourra vivre dans la paix et dans la sécurité, où les personnes déplacées pourront revenir chez elles sans crainte, la mise en place d'instances de dialogue entre toutes les composantes de la nation est essentielle. Cela permet à toutes les sensibilités de s'exprimer, d'être entendues et d'être associées à l'édification du pays. C'est alors que progressivement la confiance reviendra entre tous, pour le bien de la nation.

Pour qu'un développement harmonieux de la société puisse se réaliser, il est nécessaire, en effet, que s'établissent entre tous des relations fondées sur le droit et la justice. La recherche du bien commun doit être une priorité qui engage de manière particulière les responsables, à tous les niveaux de la société, pour favoriser le plein épanouissement humain et spirituel de chacun, dans le respect et la promotion des personnes et de leurs droits fondamentaux, ainsi que des principes moraux essentiels. Car le bien commun n'est pas un simple bien-être socio-économique. Il revêt aussi une dimension transcendante, parce que Dieu est la fin ultime de ses créatures.

Le développement intégral des personnes et de la société, souvent entravé par des maux nombreux et profonds, dont les causes sont multiples et complexes, doit être résolument favorisé et soutenu par la solidarité internationale. Mais il est aussi vrai que c'est d'abord sur les citoyens et sur leurs dirigeants que repose la responsabilité première d'y œuvrer, ainsi que de faire régner la paix et la réconciliation.

Comme vous le savez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, l'Église catholique se veut pleinement engagée dans ce combat pour le développement intégral de l'homme, pour la promotion d'un avenir de justice et de paix au profit de toute la population, sans distinctions, en collaboration avec toutes les personnes de bonne volonté. Toutefois, pour accomplir cette mission, elle doit pouvoir librement s'exprimer, dans le respect de l'autonomie des responsables de la société civile. La mission que l'Église a reçue du Christ n'est pas d'ordre politique, économique ou social: la fin qui lui est assignée est d'ordre religieux. L'Église ne recherche aucun avantage particulier pour elle-même, mais, comme le souligne le Concile Vatican II, elle «n'a pas de souhait plus ardent que de pouvoir se développer librement, au service du bien de tous, sous n'importe quel régime qui reconnaît les droits fondamentaux de la personne et de la famille, ainsi que les exigences du bien commun» (Constitution pastorale *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 42)

Permettez-moi, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, de saluer par votre intermédiaire les catholiques de votre pays. Je souhaite qu'unis à leurs Évêques, à qui a été remise la charge de gouverner l'Église de Dieu, ils soient des témoins ardents du message évangélique, et qu'avec leurs concitoyens, ils travaillent généreusement à l'établissement d'une société fraternelle et solidaire.

Au moment où commence votre mission auprès du Siège apostolique, je vous offre mes vœux les meilleurs pour son heureux accomplissement. Soyez sûr que vous trouverez toujours auprès de mes collaborateurs l'accueil attentif et la compréhension cordiale dont vous pourrez avoir besoin.

J'invoque de grand cœur sur Votre Excellence, sur ses collaborateurs, sur sa famille, sur le peuple togolais et sur ses dirigeants, l'abondance des Bénédictiones divines.

S.E. il Signor Félix Kodjo Sagbo
Ambasciatore del Togo presso la Santa Sede

È nato il 20 novembre 1950 a Pagala.

È sposato ed ha sei figli.

È Diplomato in Fisica e Biologia (Scuola Nazionale Superiore del Togo) e in Amministrazione Scolastica e Universitaria (Istituto Nazionale di Amministrazione Scolastica, Parigi).

Ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Professore di Fisica e Biologia (1975-1988); Prefetto dei Laghi (1988-1991); Incaricato delle elezioni presso il Ministero dell'Interno (1991-1992); Direttore degli Affari Politici e Amministrativi presso il Ministero dell'Amministrazione Territoriale (1992-1993); Capo di Gabinetto del Ministro dell'Amministrazione Territoriale (1993-1994); Ministro dell'Interno, della Sicurezza e della Decentralizzazione (1994-1996); Consigliere del Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale (1996-1997); Consigliere del Primo Ministro, incaricato delle Relazioni Internazionali e degli Affari Politici (1997-2002); Ambasciatore in Nigeria e in Benin (2002-2004).

Attualmente è Ambasciatore in Belgio, ove risiede.

[01557-03.01] [Texte original: Français]

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE ALL'AMBASCIATORE DEL PRINCIPATO DI ANDORRA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, S.E. IL SIGNOR ANTONI MORELL MORA

Signor Ambasciatore,

sono lieto di accogliere le Lettere che La accreditano come Ambasciatore presso la Santa Sede. Sia il benvenuto! La sua gradita visita mi offre l'opportunità di inviare un saluto cordiale all'intero Popolo andorrano, da sempre parte viva della Chiesa universale ed in comunione con il Successore di Pietro.

Uno sguardo alle belle vallate del suo Paese rende testimonianza di come la fede cristiana abbia trovato stabile dimora anche visibilmente fra quanti vi abitano. Come non ricordare che per centinaia d'anni sono state le parrocchie ad essere la struttura stessa del vostro autogoverno? Si può dire che, lungo la storia, la vita ecclesiale dei cittadini di Andorra ne abbia preservato l'identità e l'indipendenza, favorendo uno sviluppo armonioso del Principato, sfociato, nel 1993, nella prima Costituzione.

La Chiesa, perciò, ha sempre camminato insieme con il Popolo andorrano, instillandovi i valori della difesa della propria autentica peculiarità, affinché potesse entrare in rapporto con i Popoli vicini in pace, fedele al proprio motto costituzionale "*virtus unita, fortior*", in uno spirito di libertà, di uguaglianza, di giustizia, nella difesa dei diritti umani e della dignità della persona, come Ella ha voluto sottolineare. Gli stretti vincoli fra la Chiesa e il popolo costituiscono un motivo di vanto e di identità per quanti abitano nel Principato di Andorra.

La ricca tradizione cristiana lo inserisce nell'insieme dei popoli, che hanno trovato nel Vangelo molte delle fonti della propria cultura, della propria legislazione e delle proprie conquiste umane e morali. Andorra, perciò, non può fare a meno di quelle radici che traggono dalla Buona Novella nutrimento e vigore morale e civile. È mio fervido auspicio che l'eredità cristiana continui ad essere motivo ispiratore dell'intera comunità andorrana, per la promozione di un ordine sociale basato sui valori della giustizia, della verità, della libertà e dell'amore.

Pur nella reciproca indipendenza e sovranità, è giusto che Chiesa e Stato debbano trovare un linguaggio comune, il quale, attraverso rapporti cordiali e sinceri, favorisca il benessere spirituale e materiale delle persone verso le quali entrambi hanno degli obblighi, nel rispetto dei distinti reciproci ambiti secondo il metodo proprio di ciascuno. Per parte sua, la Chiesa, non avendo privilegi da difendere o vantaggi da chiedere, vuole lavorare sempre per il bene comune dell'intera umana famiglia, cercando, attraverso un dialogo strutturato con le Autorità civili, di contribuire al progresso di ogni popolo e di tutta l'umanità nella giustizia e nella pace (cfr *Compendio della Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa*, 445). Le eventuali intese fra Chiesa e Stato, stipulate in piena libertà dalle parti contraenti, hanno lo scopo ultimo di favorire il concorde impegno nel servire il bene comune, senza altro intento se non quello di recare giovamento a tutti i cittadini.

Universale per sua natura, la Chiesa si situa al di sopra degli interessi particolaristici o regionali, per rivolgersi ad ogni popolo – piccolo o grande – affinché l'uomo, ogni uomo, sia riconosciuto nella sua dignità inviolabile. Nel dialogo con le autorità civili, la Chiesa "vuole semplicemente promuovere uno Stato umano: uno Stato che riconosca come suo primario dovere la difesa dei diritti fondamentali della persona umana, specialmente di quella più debole" (*Evangelium vitae*, 101). Una democrazia senza valori, infatti, si trasforma in tirannia del relativismo, in una perdita della propria identità e, a lungo andare, può degenerare in totalitarismo aperto o insidioso, come la storia ha più volte mostrato. In tale contesto, come non ricordare che il Popolo andorrano, fedele alle proprie tradizioni umane e spirituali, ha in grande considerazione il valore della famiglia, del matrimonio come l'ha voluto il Creatore, e la difesa della vita dal suo inizio sino al suo naturale compimento? Formulo l'auspicio che Andorra continui a preservare tale importante eredità, garanzia di autentico progresso.

Signor Ambasciatore, la sua presenza rende ancor più vicino al mio cuore un popolo per il quale la mia preghiera si eleva fervida e grata al Signore. Nel porgere il più cordiale augurio per l'alta missione affidataLe dal suo Paese, desidero assicurarLe la piena e leale collaborazione di quanti coadiuvano il Papa nell'espletare il ministero apostolico che Gli è proprio. In essi, Signor Ambasciatore, potrà trovare una valida controparte per quanto concerne le questioni bilaterali e, più in generale, una costante collaborazione per il perseguimento del bene comune nella Comunità internazionale. Mentre affido i Governanti e i concittadini di Andorra alla protezione della Virgen de Meritxell, celeste Patrona del Co-Principato, elevo la mia preghiera affinché assista Lei, le Autorità civili e quanti sono al servizio del Popolo di Andorra, sempre vicino al cuore del Papa, ed a tutti invio la mia Benedizione.

S.E. il Signor Antoni Morell Mora
Ambasciatore di Andorra presso la Santa Sede

È nato nel 1941 a Barcellona, è cittadino andorrano.

È in possesso di titoli universitari in Filosofia, Teologia, Storia e Diritto.

Ha ricoperto, tra gli altri, i seguenti incarichi: Professore presso il Collegio Sant Ermengol e l'Istituto Janer di Andorra (1968-1972); Consigliere Pedagogico del *Consell General* (1972- 1973); Segretario della *Sindacatura General* (1973-1981); Segretario Generale del Primo Governo Andorrano (1981-1984).

Dal 1984 esercita la professione di Avvocato, collabora stabilmente con diversi periodici ed è Presidente dell'Associazione Scrittori del Principato.

Ha scritto numerosi saggi di sociologia, geografia, storia e discipline giuridiche; ha ottenuto diversi riconoscimenti nazionali ed internazionali per la sua attività letteraria.

[01558-01.01] [Testo originale: Italiano]
