

Pope: Poor Nations Should Get Riches of Their Soil

Addresses 9 New Envoys to Holy See

VATICAN CITY, MAY 29, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Rich countries cannot appropriate the wealth of poor nations hidden in the soil or underground, Benedict XVI affirmed.

The Pope stated this today when he received the letters of credence of nine new ambassadors to the Holy See, many of them from African nations.

Addressing the diplomats as a group, the Holy Father said, "The primordial gauge in political matters is the search for justice, so as to ensure that the dignity and rights of human beings are always respected and that all the inhabitants of a country may share in the wealth of their nation. The same holds true for the international sphere."

"The international community," he continued, "is also called to act -- over and above simple justice -- by showing its solidarity with the poorest and ensuring a better distribution of wealth, enabling especially those countries whose wealth resides in the soil or under the soil to be the primary beneficiaries thereof. Rich countries cannot appropriate what comes from other lands."

"Justice and solidarity must mean that the international community oversees the distribution of resources," the Pontiff affirmed, stressing how "it is also necessary to develop [...] fraternal relations in order to create well-balanced societies where harmony and peace can reign, and to regulate any problems that may arise through dialogue and negotiation, without using any form of violence, which always affects the weakest and poorest people."

Benedict XVI explained how "solidarity and fraternity are a definitive expression of the fundamental love we must show our brothers and sisters, because all people with responsibility in public life are primarily called to make their mission one of service to their compatriots and, in a broader sense, to all the inhabitants of the planet."

The Holy Father concluded his remarks by indicating that, "for their part, the local Churches will not fail to do everything possible to make their contribution to the wellbeing of their compatriots, sometimes in difficult situations. Their desire is tirelessly to continue serving human beings, all human beings, without discrimination of any kind."

Tanzania and Uganda

In his speech, delivered in written form, to the ambassador of Tanzania, the Pope recalled how the country, "is also held in esteem for the important role undertaken by its political leaders in the process of pacification of the Great Lakes Region" and for its "generous hospitality to refugees fleeing from hostilities in neighboring countries."

The Holy Father also noted certain negative trends such as "an increase in the region al traffic of arms and interruptions in important initiatives of dialogue and reconciliation," and affirmed that the Holy See "continues to exhort all who hold responsibility in the region not to lose confidence in the value of dialogue, but to explore with an open mind and follow all possibilities that may lead to the conclusion of a lasting peace."

In his discourse to the Ugandan representative, Benedict XVI noted the country's achievements "in the fields of education, development and health care, especially in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, with dedicated attention to those affected and a successful policy of prevention based on continence and the promotion of faithfulness in marriage."

He also praised "the culmination of efforts to formalize peace agreements and to bring to a conclusion the long years of warfare marked by cruel and senseless violence." The Pontiff expressed his hopes that all displaced people may " ;return to their homes and resume a peaceful and productive existence."

Liberia, Chad and Bangladesh

Benedict XVI told the ambassador of Liberia of his satisfaction with "the decision by the International Monetary Fund [...] to take steps toward cancelling Liberia's debt."

He also underlined the importance of the "educational apostolate," noting how "many of your children and young people have been traumatized by the experience of war, some of them forced to become soldiers and to abandon their education, resulting in low levels of literacy across the population. The Church in such circumstances seeks to offer the people hope, to give them faith in the future."

The Pope noted to the ambassador of Chad that "the quality of relations between religious communities living in Chad, especially between Christians and Muslims, is an important element on the country's path to reconciliation."

"I am confident that your country's active participation in bodies such as the United

Nations will contribute to the 'culture of peace,' which Bangladesh desires to build at home and abroad," the Bishop of Rome wrote in his speech to the Bangladeshi ambassador.

Belarus and Guinea

Benedict XVI wrote to the ambassador of Belarus: "Considered as an integral part of the life and destiny of Belarus, the Catholic Church looks forward to continuing to exercise her role in society through her various structures and institutions," which "seek only to serve men and women and all of society through the transmission of universal values inspired by the Gospel."

"In this regard the Catholic Church in Belarus, from both the Latin and Byzantine traditions, does not ask for special privileges but only to contribute to the growth and development of the country," he said. "All she requests is the freedom to be able to fulfill serenely the mandate received from the divine founder in service of his creation. In this same spirit and with the same sense of mutual responsibility, the Catholics of Belarus are committed to moving forward in the area of ecumenical dialogue, especially with the Orthodox Church in your country."

To the ambassador of Guinea, the Pope expressed his hope that "following the painful trials the nation has been through, active cooperation may consolidate stability and encourage fraternity among the people." He also made clear his hope that the international community may support such efforts.

Sri Lanka and Nigeria

To the diplomat from Sri Lanka, Benedict XVI noted how "Catholics in Sri Lanka, together with other Christians, are united with many Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims in the ardent longing for lasting peace in the country and a definitive end to long-standing grievances. Sadly, violence continues to take its toll on the populace, causing grave concern to the Holy See and the international community."

He also mentioned the government's decision to set up a commission of inquiry to investigate cases of human rights violations, making particular reference to "Father Jim Brown and his assistant, whose whereabouts are still unknown, almost two years after their disappearance."

Finally, the Holy Father praised Nigeria for the dynamism it "has introduced into the struggle against corruption and crime and the strengthening of the rule of law. [...] I pray that politicians and social workers, professional people in the fields of economy, medicine and law, police officers and judges, and all involved in combating crime and corruption will work together diligently for the protection of life and property, supported by the loyal cooperation of all citizens.

"The Church will not fail to make her specific contribution by offering an integral education based on honesty, integrity and love of God and neighbor."

The ambassadors are Ahmada Rweyemamu Ngemera of Tanzania; Nyine Bitahwa of Uganda; Wesley Momo Johnson of Liberia, Hissein Brahim Taha of Chad; Debapriya Bhattacharya of Bangladesh; Sergei Aleinik of Belarus; Alexandre Cece Loua of Guinea, Tikiri Bandara Maduwegedera of Sri Lanka, and Obed Wadzani of Nigeria.