



## The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO H.E. Mr LUIS PARÍS CHAVERRI  
NEW AMBASSADOR OF COSTA RICA TO THE HOLY SEE\***  
*Saturday, 10 February 2007*

*Mr Ambassador,*

I am pleased to receive you at this Audience for the presentation of the Letters of Credence accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Costa Rica to the Holy See.

I am deeply grateful for your friendly words at this solemn ceremony which marks the beginning of the mission entrusted to you by your Government. Please express my respectful greeting to H.E. Mr Óscar Arias, President of the Republic, in reciprocation for his greeting which you conveyed to me, expressing the Costa Rican People's closeness to and affection for the Successor of Peter.

The faith of the People reflects the religious hallmark deeply impressed upon the Country more than five centuries after the first evangelization of Costa Rica. In this regard, true to her mission to bring the message of salvation to all and in line with her social doctrine, the Catholic Church endeavours to foster integral human development and the defence of human dignity, thereby helping to strengthen the fundamental values so that society may enjoy stability and harmony in keeping with its great aspiration to live in peace, freedom and democracy.

Motivated by their desire to keep the Gospel message alive, the various Ecclesial Communities cooperate in such important sectors as teaching, assistance to the most deprived, health-care services and promotion of the person in his condition as a citizen and child of God.

The Bishops of Costa Rica, therefore, are following with close attention and concern the social circumstances in the Country today such as the increase in poverty, public insecurity and family violence, as well as the great wave of immigrants from neighbouring countries.

In the face of situations that can at times be conflictual and in order to defend the common good, the Bishops offer to cooperate with projects that foster understanding and reconciliation, lead to the promotion of justice and solidarity and encourage the necessary national dialogue between Leaders responsible for the public well-being.

On the other hand, Your Excellency, as you pointed out, this dialogue must exclude all the different forms of violence and help in building a more human future with the collaboration of all.

In this regard, it is appropriate to recall that social improvements are not only achieved by applying the necessary technical means but also by promoting reforms that take into account an ethical consideration of the person, the family and society.

It is consequently necessary to cultivate moral values such as honesty, discipline and responsibility for the common good. In this way it will be possible to avoid personal and collective selfishness in every context, as well as corruption which hinders every form of progress.

It is well known that the future of a nation must be based on peace, the harvest of righteousness (cf. Jas 3: 18), building the kind of society which, starting with those in charge of politics, parliament, administration and the law, encourages concord, harmony and respect for individuals as well as the defence of their fundamental rights.

In this regard, the policies that the Government of Costa Rica has implemented in the international arena to promote peace and human rights in the world, and its traditional closeness to the positions maintained by the Holy See in various international forums on matters as important as the defence of human life and the promotion of marriage and the family, deserve praise.

All Costa Ricans with their distinguishing qualities must be the protagonists and architects of the Country's progress, cooperating in a political stability that enables all to take part in public life. Each one, according to his ability and personal possibilities, is required to make his own contribution to the good of the Homeland based on a fairer, more participatory social order.

With this in view, the Church's moral teachings offer some values and guidelines which, taken into consideration especially by those who work at the service of the nation, are of great help in dealing appropriately with the needs and aspirations of citizens.

The regrettable and widespread problem of poverty, which has serious consequences in the areas of education, health care and housing, is a pressing challenge to government Leaders and public Authorities in view of the Nation's future. A deeper awareness of the current situation is essential to make it possible to deal with all its dimensions in a true spirit of commitment to the common good.

The poor, as they do everywhere, lack the basic commodities and indispensable means for their advancement and integral development. This especially applies to immigrants in search of a better standard of living.

The Church, in the light of her social doctrine, responds by supporting initiatives aimed at overcoming the marginalization that affects so many needy brethren. Moreover, concern for social assistance is part of her evangelizing action (cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 41).

Mr Ambassador, before concluding this meeting, I would like to express my best wishes for the success of the mission you are beginning today. I ask you once again to express my sentiments and hopes to the President of the Republic and the other Authorities of your Country, as I invoke God's Blessing and the protection of Our Lady of the Angels, your Patroness, upon you, your distinguished family and your collaborators, and above all on the beloved sons and daughters of Costa Rica.

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