



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. MIQUEL ÀNGEL CANTURRI MONTANYA
AMBASSADOR OF ANDORRA TO THE HOLY SEE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 16 December 2010*

Mr Ambassador,

I am glad to receive you, Your Excellency, and to accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Principality of Andorra to the Holy See. I thank you for your kind words and in reciprocation I would like to convey through you my cordial greetings to the two Co-Princes, the Archbishop of Urgell and the President of the French Republic. Through you, I also greet the Government, the Authorities and the people of Andorra.

The Principality that dates back to Charlemagne is ruled by *paréage*. The Co-Lordship, approved by the Holy See at the time, became a Co-Sovereignty, as you mentioned in your speech, which is the felicitous result of a historical development that has taken into account the legitimate interests of the Andorran people and guarantees them sovereignty. This original system, unique of its kind, enables the population to live in peace, far from conflicts. It is certain that the institutional solution found by your country cannot be transposed elsewhere, but it is nevertheless right to draw a lesson from it.

Harmony is possible within nations and between peoples. Juridical inventiveness and good will very often make it possible to solve numerous problems that unfortunately arise between peoples, and encourage the much desired international harmony.

In this context, I wish to emphasize the excellence of the relations between the Principality and the Holy See. These relations, which belong within a historical continuity of understanding and support — indeed, you have noted that the Holy See has always supported Andorra when its sovereignty

was imperilled — were consolidated first by the establishment of diplomatic relations, then, two years ago, by the signing of a bilateral agreement. This agreement is the result and the expression of a healthy and loyal collaboration between the Church and the State, which both, in their different capacities, are at the service of the personal and social vocations of human beings.

Today, as yesterday, the cordial relations between the Church and Andorra serve these same people more effectively for the benefit of all. Such an agreement is yet one more stone contributed to the consolidation of relations between the Principality and the Church.

In the words that you addressed to me, Mr Ambassador, you mentioned the recent demographical development of your country. This shows the attraction that your country exerts on the young generations. It is above all a case of young Andorrans returning to their country.

Furthermore, your nation also welcomes new peoples. This openness brings with it the need for awareness and an increased sense of responsibility on the part of the institutions and of each individual. Indeed, the social harmony that could well be thrown off balance is linked not only to a correct and adapted legislative framework but also to the moral quality of each citizen, for “solidarity is seen therefore under two complementary aspects: that of a social principle and that of a moral virtue (*[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n. 193](#)*).

Solidarity attains the rank of a social virtue when it can rely at the same time on structures of solidarity and also on the firm and persevering determination of each person to work for the common good, because we are all responsible for all. Moral virtue, in turn, is expressed through decisions and laws that are in conformity with ethical principles. These principles consolidate democracy and permit Andorrans to live according to positive values, thousands of years old and steeped in Christianity, and to cultivate and preserve their identity which is so marked.

The education of young people is certainly the best way of awakening a permanent sense of the solidarity that I have just mentioned. Whatever his degree of responsibility, I encourage each person to show creativity in this sphere, to invest in it the necessary means and to sow generously for the future, mindful of giving it the necessary ethical foundations.

Along with education, it is also right to give the family the support which it deserves. As the basic cell of society, the family carries out its mission when it is encouraged and promoted by the public authorities as the first place where an apprenticeship in social life takes place. Granting to all the members of the family the aid they need will effectively facilitate harmony and social cohesion. The Church can make a positive contribution to the consolidation of the family, weakened by the contemporary culture.

At the time of [my recent Apostolic Visit to Barcelona](#), I was happy to see the presence of a fine delegation from your country. These faithful of all ages, but particularly young people, came to

demonstrate their attachment to the Successor of Peter. Without wishing to take undue advantage of your mediation, I would like to thank them for this warm presence and to make an appointment with them for the World Youth Day, now approaching.

I take the opportunity of this meeting, Mr Ambassador to greet cordially, though you, your Archbishop and his collaborators, as well as all the Catholic faithful who live in your country. May they preserve their desire to witness to Christ, and, in concert with all Andorrans, to build a social life where each one can find the ways to personal and collective fulfilment!

Thus they will also witness to the ever timely fruitfulness of the Word of God.

At the time when you are inaugurating your noble mission of representation to the Holy See, Mr Ambassador, I address to you my very best wishes for the success of your mission. Rest assured that you will always find with my collaborators the welcome and understanding you may need.

The Andorran people has a special veneration of the Virgin Mary, the Virgen de Meritxell, Patroness of the Co-Principality whose national feast is celebrated on 8 September, a Marian Solemnity. I entrust the Authorities of your country and its population as a whole to her maternal protection. Upon you, Your Excellency, upon your family and upon your collaborators, as well as upon the whole Andorran people and its leaders, I wholeheartedly invoke an abundance of divine Blessings.

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