



The Holy See

*Discurso al Embajador de CABO VERDE,
Excmo. Sr. Don Alfredo GONCALVES TEIXEIRA**

28 de noviembre de 1992

1. I am very pleased to accept the Letters which accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cape Verde to the Holy See. As I cordially welcome you to this presentation ceremony, I first want to thank you for expressing the noble sentiments that motivate you, and to assure you immediately of my esteem for the lofty mission which your government has entrusted to you, as well as to state again, in Your Excellency's presence, the deep affection I have for all the beloved children of your country.

My thoughts turn first of all to His Excellency President Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro; I would be very grateful, Mr Ambassador, if you convey my thanks to him for the respectful greeting which Your Excellency expressed. I send my best wishes to him and to all those who work with him in service to the nation.

2. During my Pastoral Visit in January 1990, the memory of which (as you kindly mentioned, Mr Ambassador) extended to and remains vivid even in the most distant villages, I was able to admire the genuine values which distinguish the Cape Verdean people, the majority of whom are sons and daughters of the Catholic Church: their generous spirit of solidarity and welcome, their tenacity and ability to withstand adversity, their refined Christian roots, their filial devotion to the Successor of Peter. At the same time, however, I was able to note the serious problems that have tried and continue to try the mettle of those people, making it difficult for them to realize their aspirations: prosperity for all, shared in the familiar comfort of their beloved land.

3. Your country certainly does not lack the resources of moral strength for all your citizens to share together in building a peaceful future, as was later shown moreover, in the process of transition to a pluralist democracy, which I followed with particular interest. Your Excellency rightly recalled the civic maturity demonstrated by the people together with their authorities in successfully achieving

such a large-scale endeavor of political renewal in an atmosphere of social stability and respect for democratic principles. In the current historical phase of asserting democratic values in Africa, Cape Verde was one of the first countries to make the transition to an effective multiparty democracy, and because of the peaceful way it was done, it represents a very important example for other African countries.

These noble goals - I am certain - prepare the ground for the nation's true growth and development, to which your government shows it is committed. In pursuing a happier and more prosperous future for their people, which materializes through the harmonious cooperation of all the citizens, Your Excellency and the government can count on the Church's encouragement and support especially that of the Holy See, as well as - I sincerely hope - on the understanding and help of the international community.

4. I appreciate the reference Your Excellency made to the role played by the Church in your country in promoting the welfare of your people and in fostering respect for the deepest identity of the Cape Verdean soul. In fact, she has shared loyalty in the process of building up the nation and has been involved in respectful dialogue concerning important issues of national life, working directly in critical areas of social progress, such as education and health care. Therefore, one can gauge how much the Catholic Church takes to heart the stability and integral development of Cape Verdean society: in this regard she has emphasized the importance of a policy which promotes the life, unity and stability of the family, and which offers young people educational opportunities so that they are trained both for the responsibilities awaiting them and in higher values, namely ethical principles and the religious dimension.

As I said when I was leaving Praia the Church is a foreigner nowhere, wherever she finds herself incarnated, she promotes the integral development of the whole human person and of all human beings; ... She claims no privileges in exchange she asks only that her space to live freely be respected, a space which she has a right to and which is also an inalienable right of those whom she tries to help (Arrival Speech, 25 January 1990, n. 6; cf. l'ORé, 5 February 1990). In truth, as Your Excellency knows well, the greatest and finest work to be constructed is the human person himself. To this undertaking the Church wants to offer, today as in the past, the exciting contribution that comes to her from Revelation about human dignity and the true meaning of life and history.

Mr Ambassador, as you begin your new responsibilities within the diplomatic community accredited to the Holy See, I wish Your Excellency the greatest success in your noble mission, assuring you that the various departments of the Roman Curia are ready to assist you in fulfilling your duties. From my heart I invoke upon Your Excellency and your distinguished family, upon the President of the Republic, the government and all the beloved people of Cape Verde, in their homeland or spread to the four corners of the world, the abundant blessings of almighty God.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English n.51/52 p.8.*

© Copyright 1992 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana