



## The Holy See

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*Discurso al Embajador de BENIN,  
Excmo. Sr. Don Edmond CAKPO-TOZO\**

*25 de noviembre de 1991*

Mr. Ambassador,

I bid you welcome here, where I have the joy to greet Your Excellency on the occasion of the presentation of the Letters that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Benin.

I thank you warmly for the friendly words you addressed to me, which I felt keenly. At this moment, my thoughts go first and foremost to His Excellency President Nicéphore Soglo. I would be obliged if you could convey my respectful greetings and express my gratitude to him for the courteous message that you have passed on to me. I send my very best wishes to him as well as to all those who work with him in the service of the nation of Benin.

Finally, I greet wholeheartedly the men and women of your country, involved in the long and exalting construction of a society that corresponds to their aspirations. I most willingly pray to God to bless the efforts of all in the construction of a Benin ever more worthy and prosperous. You may also be assured of the Holy See's commitment to encourage the drafting of a new international economic order, inspired by true solidarity, and necessary to support the development of countries seeking to solve problems resulting from the unfavourable conditions of these past decades.

I am happy to note in your address, Mr Ambassador, the respect of the people of Benin for the Constitutional State, in which sovereignty belongs to the law and does not depend on the judgement of individuals. As I recalled in the Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, an «authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the 'subjectivity' of society

through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility» (n. 46).

Your country, as it were, spurring other members of the family of nations of the African continent, has undertaken a vast effort of renewal: however, you do not fail to observe that the greatest of the work sites «most delicate to rebuild is the individual himself». For this undertaking, the Catholic Church hopes, today as in the past, to offer you the stimulating contribution of the Gospel message. She received from divine revelation the «meaning of humanity» and when she announces salvation to every human being, when she directs her life in accordance with the commandments to love God and one's neighbour, she is contributing to the enrichment of the dignity of human beings. In Benin, the faithful of the Catholic Church have shown themselves ready to contribute to the nation's development under the guidance of their pastors, and in fraternal collaboration with the members of other religious creeds and with respect for the beliefs of each. They will do so in the fields where they are already present, such as education and health care; they will do so more specifically by putting into practice the Church's social doctrine, as their baptismal commitment demands.

Mr. Ambassador, may I convey my cordial greetings to them through you and ask you to tell them that I keep them in prayer. May they continue to share competently in the progress of Benin's society, striving to promote in the spirit of the Gospel the great values of justice, brotherhood and peace!

At the beginning of your mission, I offer you my best wishes. Rest assured that you will always find an attentive welcome and cordial understanding here.

I invoke abundant divine blessings upon Your Excellency, the President of the Republic and the Government and people of Benin.

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