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POPE URGES CHURCH-STATE COLLABORATION

Says Good of Society Is Only Interest

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 7, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- There should be "loyal and respectful collaboration" between the Church and state, Benedict XVI affirmed today in speaking with Chile's new ambassador to the Holy See.

Fernando Zegers Santa Cruz presented his letters of credence to the Pope in the Vatican today, giving the Holy Father an opportunity to speak about the spiritual and human richness of Chile.

The Pontiff also emphasized an appropriate relationship for Church and state, "independent and autonomous each in its own field," but both called "to develop a loyal and respectful collaboration to serve the personal and social vocation of persons themselves."

"In fulfilling her specific mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Church seeks to respond to the expectations and questions of men, leaning also on the ethical and anthropological values and principles that are inscribed in human nature," the Holy Father explained.

He continued: "When the Church raises her voice in face of today's great challenges and problems, such as wars, hunger, the extreme poverty of so many, the defense of human life from its conception until its natural end, or the promotion of the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman and the first [entity] responsible for the education of children, it does not act out of individual interests or for principles that can only be perceived by those who profess a specific religious faith.

"Respecting the rules of democratic coexistence, it does so for the good of the whole society and in the name of values that every person can share with his right reasoning."

Closeness to Chile

The Pope expressed his own affection for Chile, saying that despite the geographical distance, he carries the nation "very deep in my heart, and very especially after the terrible earthquake it suffered recently."

"I also do not forget the miners of the Atacama region and their loved ones, for whom I pray fervently," he said.

In this light, the Pontiff lauded the "unity of the Chilean people in face of tragedies, and their very generous and solidary response when suffering intensifies."

He also stressed "the immense effort of the Catholic Church in Chile -- many of whose communities have also been sorely tested by the quake -- which it is carrying out to try to help those most in need."

Fruitful Church

Noting that Zegers Santa Cruz begins his mission to the Holy See in the year in which Chile celebrates the bicentenary of its independence, Benedict XVI also emphasized the role of the Church in the most important events of the country, "as well as in the consolidation of its own national identity, profoundly marked by the Catholic sentiment."

The Gospel, he observed, has produced in the country "abundant fruits of sanctity, of charity, of human promotion, of constant search for peace and coexistence."

In this connection, he also recalled last year's celebration of the 25th anniversary of the signing "of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the sister nation Argentina that, with papal mediation, put an end to the southern disagreement."

This "historic agreement" will remain "for future generations as a luminous example of the immense good that peace brings with it, as well as the importance of preserving and nourishing those moral and religious values that constitute the most intimate fabric of the

soul of a people."

Above all in the present circumstances, in which "so many challenges must be faced that threaten cultural identity itself," it is important "to favor especially among the youngest a healthy pride, a renewed appreciation and new valuing of their faith, of their history, their culture, their traditions and their artistic wealth, and of that which constitutes the best and richest spiritual and human patrimony of Chile," said the Pope.

"The Chilean people well know," he concluded, "that the Church in that nation collaborates sincerely and effectively, and wishes to continue doing so, in all that contributes to the promotion of the common good, of just progress, and of the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of all those who live in that beautiful land."