



ZE11102202 - 2011-10-21

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-33715?l=english>

Pope Explains Basis for Vatican Dialogue

And Notes the Choices That Should Be Discouraged

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 21, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI says Vatican diplomatic dialogue is based on principles "as real as the physical elements of the natural environment."

The Pope said this today when he welcomed the Netherlands' new ambassador to the Holy See, Joseph Weterings.

In addressing the representative of the nation where more than 40% of people claim no religion, the Holy Father stressed the universal nature of the principles used in Vatican diplomacy.

He noted that "bilateral relations between a nation-state and the Holy See are clearly of a different character from those between nation-states."

Though the Holy See is not an economic or military power, it still has considerable moral influence, he continued. "Among the reasons for this is precisely the fact that the Holy See's moral stance is unaffected by the political or economic interests of a nation-state or the electoral concerns of a political party. Its contribution to international diplomacy consists largely in articulating the ethical principles that ought to underpin the social and political order, and in drawing attention to the need for action to remedy violations of such principles."

While it does this from the standpoint of the Christian faith, the Pope remarked, "Christianity has always pointed to reason and nature as the sources of the norms on which a state of law should be built."

"Hence the diplomatic dialogue in which the Holy See engages is conducted neither on confessional nor on pragmatic grounds but on the basis of universally applicable principles that are as real as the physical elements of the natural environment."

Harmful decisions

The Bishop of Rome also made an observation on freedom.

He welcomed news of steps that the Dutch government has taken to discourage drug abuse and prostitution.

"While your nation has long championed the freedom of individuals to make their own choices, nevertheless, those choices by which people inflict harm on themselves or others must be discouraged, for the good of individuals and society as a whole," the Pope reminded. "Catholic social teaching, as you know, places great emphasis on the common good, as well as the integral good of individuals, and care is always needed to discern whether perceived rights are truly in accordance with those natural principles of which I spoke earlier."

On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: www.zenit.org/article-33707?l=english

| [More](#)

© Innovative Media, Inc.

Reprinting ZENIT's articles requires written permission from the [editor](#).