

BENEDICT XVI RECEIVES EMIR OF KUWAIT

Addresses Topics of Peace, Dialogue

VATICAN CITY, MAY 6, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI spoke of peace in the Middle East and interreligious dialogue upon receiving in audience Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the emir of Kuwait.

A Vatican communiqué issued after today's meeting reported that the "cordial discussions" turned to themes of mutual interest, such as "the promotion of peace in the Middle East, and of interreligious dialogue."

"The positive contribution that the significant Christian minority makes to Kuwaiti society was also highlighted, and consideration given to the particular needs of that minority," the note added.

Sheikh Sabah subsequently went on to meet with the Pope's secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who was accompanied by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, secretary for relations with states.

This was the first meeting between an emir of that nation and a Pope since Kuwait and the Holy See established diplomatic relations in October 1968.

According to numbers released last year, Kuwait has more than 3.5 million inhabitants, including approximately 1.06 million Kuwaiti citizens, 2.36 million non-Kuwaiti nationals, and 100,000 stateless persons.

More than 85% of Kuwaitis are Muslim. According to the Apostolic Vicariate of Kuwait, there are 300,000 Catholics in the country belonging to various rites. Many Catholics come from other nations such as India, the Philippines, other Arab States, and a small number from Europe, Africa, America, other Asian countries and the Far East.

Additionally, there are 300,000 Hindus, 100,000 Buddhists and some 10,000 Sikhs.