



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Address of the Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State on the occasion of the reopening of the Pontifical Representation in Honduras

The following is the address delivered yesterday, 12 July 2024, by Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State, on the occasion of the reopening of the Pontifical Representation in Honduras:

Address of Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra

Your Excellency Doris Gutiérrez, Presidential Designate of Honduras;

Distinguished members of the Government and the Diplomatic Corps;

Your Excellency, Apostolic Nuncio and collaborators;

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning, I would like to begin by conveying to all present the cordial greetings and spiritual closeness of Pope Francis.

To do so is appropriate, since this Apostolic Nunciature is a clear sign of the solicitude and concern of the Holy Father for the Church, the people and all the Authorities of this noble Country.

I am pleased to be here with all of you for the reopening of this Pontifical Representation, recalling a long history of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Honduras. Looking at your flag, we could say that these relations are born from the heart of God and His love for His people. Many say that its blue, common

to other American flags, is inspired by the light blue of the Immaculate Virgin, but this one has a deeper tone, because being the same Heaven that is seen in its waters, the depth of the heart of its people reflects it with greater intensity than in other regions. It seems that even Christopher Columbus himself acknowledged this when he approached its coasts.

A note in the Archives of the Secretariat of State confirms the beginning of diplomatic relations with Honduras as early as 1861. However, these relations had to be interrupted, soon to be resumed at the beginning of the last century, with a Pontifical Representative to several countries in the Central American area, residing in Guatemala.

It was in 1933 when Honduras hosted the first Nunciature established in the capital. Since then, there has always been a Pontifical Representative in this blessed land.

The Pontifical Representatives, besides the diplomatic work they have carried out, have also been prelates, people who have loved this land dearly. Federico Lunardi, who would become one of the most illustrious historians of Honduras, and so many other illustrious prelates who loved and served here in Honduras. I myself held the position of counsellor in this Apostolic Nunciature from 2002 to 2006, with Their Excellencies the Apostolic Nuncios Archbishop George Panikulam and Archbishop Antonio Arcari. Those were beautiful and intense years, in which I carried out gratifying diplomatic and priestly work, thanks to the welcome offered to me by the Honduran Church.

The reopening of this Apostolic Nunciature attests to the sound bilateral relations that have existed for years between the Republic of Honduras and the Holy See. These are based on the priority interest of the Church, to be - as Pope Francis affirmed - "an attentive listener, sensitive to issues involving humanity, out of a sincere and humble desire to be at the service of every man and woman", and of their integral and global development (cf. *Address of Pope Francis to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, January 7, 2019*).

For the Church, every man, every woman, is a beloved child of God and creation itself is seen as a gift that the Lord has left as a responsibility to all humanity.

We affectionately call this See the Pope's house in Honduras, because the work of the Apostolic Nuncio is also to take care of the relationship of the local Church with the Holy Father and the Holy See. In this way, the Apostolic Nuncio embodies the solicitude of the successor of Peter and of the universal Church, for this fraction of the People of God that is on pilgrimage in Honduras, as a sign of communion of all its members with the Mystical Body of Christ.

To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Gábor Pintér, Msgr. Giacomo Antonicelli, secretary, to the Sisters of Martha and Mary and their collaborators, in particular all those who have made this task possible with great effort and dedication. I gratefully remember Archbishop Novatus Rugambwa, who in his time initiated the remodeling of the Sisters' house.

To all of you, thank you very much for the time and effort dedicated to make this desire to renovate the house of the Holy Father a reality. Thank you for your kind attention, and please receive once again the spiritual closeness of Pope Francis as we inaugurate his house in Honduras.

Thank you very much.
