SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO
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LE UDIENZE

Il Santo Padre ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza:

S.E. la Signora Leonida L. Vera, Ambasciatore delle Filippine presso la Santa Sede, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali;

Em.mo Card. José Saraiva Martins, Prefetto della Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi;

S.E. Mons. Rino Passigato, Arcivescovo tit. di Nova di Cesare, Nunzio Apostolico in Perù;

S.E. Mons. Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo, Arcivescovo di Mérida (Venezuela), Presidente della Conferenza Episcopale Venezuelana.

[00582-01.01]

LE LETTERE CREDENZIALI DELL'AMBASCIATORE DELLE FILIPPINE PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE

Alle ore 11 di questa mattina, il Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto in Udienza S.E. la Signora Leonida L. Vera, Ambasciatore delle Filippine presso la Santa Sede, in occasione della presentazione delle Lettere Credenziali.

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che il Papa ha rivolto al nuovo Ambasciatore, nonché i cenni biografici essenziali di S.E. la Signora Leonida R. Vera:

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Your Excellency,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters of Credence appointing you Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Holy See. I thank you for the kind greetings which you bring from President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and I ask you to convey to her the assurance of my prayers for your country and its people.

During my pastoral visits to the Philippines, I have always been moved by the warmth and affection shown to me. The words of my first visit in 1981 still ring true: "Due homage must be paid to the achievement of the Filipino people, but what you are also creates an obligation, and it confers upon the nation a specific mission" (Address to the People of the Philippines, 17 February 1981). Being a country which has kept the Christian faith strong even when faced with extreme obstacles offers you the honorable task not only of preserving the values of this heritage but also of helping to spread the ideals of Christian culture to the whole world. The experience of World Youth Day in Manila in 1995 was an example of your Nation's desire to exercise this responsibility, and it will always stand out as a moment of particular joy in my ministry to the universal Church. Those days together with your people, joined by young persons from throughout the world, confirmed my belief that, as Your Excellency has noted, the Philippines is truly a "light" for the evangelization of the Asian continent.

One of the obligations of cultures based on authentic human values must be a deep and abiding concern for the poor. Unfortunately, the Philippines and much of the Asian region continue to be plagued by the blight of extreme poverty. This fact can at times tempt governments to adopt shortsighted solutions which in reality often lead to policies which bring no real benefit to the people. To deal with poverty effectively every sector of society must work together in search of solutions. An enduring freedom for those bound by poverty demands that governments not only recognize and assist the poor but that they also actively involve them in finding long-lasting solutions to their problems. The seemingly futile struggle with poverty is one of the main sources of disaffection and marginalization among the young. Tempted to look for quick material gain, they are often led into lives of crime, or as is currently being experienced throughout the world, they associate themselves with radical movements which promise social change through violence and bloodshed. Combating these trends requires a concerted effort to welcome, listen to and engage the talents and gifts of the less fortunate by helping them to realize that they are an integral part of society.

I pray that Filipinos will continue to uphold the precepts of their Constitution which explicitly recognizes the sanctity of family life and the protection of the unborn from the moment of conception (cf. *Constitution of the Philippines*, Article II, Section 12). Aware that the issue of capital punishment and its use has again become an important topic in your national debate, I would reiterate that the ends of justice in today's world seem better served by not resorting to the death penalty. "Modern society in fact has the means of effectively suppressing crime by rendering criminals harmless without definitively denying them the chance to reform" (Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, 27). While civil societies have a duty to be just, they also have an obligation to be merciful.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my ongoing concern for the spate of violence that has for so long taken a devastating toll on your country. I again appeal to all parties to end the terrorism which continues to cause so much suffering to the civilian population, and to embrace the path of dialogue which alone will enable the people of the region to create a society that guarantees justice, peace and harmony for all. Accordingly, it is essential

that the State continue to promote dialogue in society, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation among the various religions. This process is most effective when all levels of public education include curricular components that help people to recognize the value of tolerance and encourage them to strive towards a culture based on authentic peace and justice. We can together eliminate the social and cultural causes of terrorism "by teaching the greatness and dignity of the human person, and by spreading a clearer sense of the oneness of the human family" (Message for the 2002 World Day of Peace, 12).

Building a society based on human dignity can only be achieved when those in authority espouse the principles of right governance and honesty in their personal and public lives and offer unconditional service to their fellow citizens for the common good. Public servants, therefore, have an especially grave obligation to ensure that they are role models of moral behavior and do their best to help others form a correct conscience which at all times shuns any type of graft or corruption. These qualities of genuine leadership are of special concern as your country prepares for the coming elections. A criterion for judging the success of a democracy can, in fact, be found in the quality of its elections, which must be fair, honest and free, while always upholding the constitutional process and the rule of law (cf. Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Pastoral Statement on the Coming 2004 Elections). In this regard, I am confident that the good will of those involved in the elections will lead to a stronger nation, truly based on equity and justice for all.

Your Excellency, I am certain that as you carry out the tasks of your mission the bonds of friendship between the Republic of the Philippines and the Holy See will be further strengthened. I offer you my good wishes and assure you that the various departments of the Roman Curia will always be ready to assist you in the discharge of your duties. Upon yourself and your fellow citizens I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

S.E. la Sig.ra Leonida L. Vera
Ambasciatore delle Filippine presso la Santa Sede

E' nata a Guagua (Pampanga) il 4 ottobre 1935.

Laureata in Scienze Economiche (Manila, Università di San Tommaso, 1956), ha ricoperto i seguenti incarichi: Tesoriere della Vernida Realty Dev't. Corp. (1974-1990); Presidente della Multimedia Marketing Corp. (1974-1990); Presidente (1973-1990) e successivamente Presidente del Consiglio di Amministrazione di F.B.S. Radio Network, Inc. (1990-2004); Presidente del Consiglio di Amministrazione di Lever Properties, Corp. (1990-2004).

Inoltre, è stata Presidente della Lega delle Donne Cattoliche del Santuario di S.Antonio (1998-1999); co-Presidente della Commissione per i Finanziamenti del 5° Congresso Eucaristico Nazionale (1997) e del 4° Incontro Mondiale delle Famiglie (2003).

E' tuttora Membro del Collegio di Presidenza di *Caritas* Manila, Direttrice delle Fondazioni filippine per la Riabilitazione dei Disabili e San Vincenzo de' Paoli.

[00586-02.03] [Original text: English]

RINUNCE E NOMINE• NOMINA DI AUSILIARE DI BOGOTÁ (COLOMBIA)

Il Santo Padre ha nominato Ausiliare dell'arcidiocesi di Bogotá (Colombia) il Rev.do Mons. José Roberto Ospina Leongómez, del clero della stessa arcidiocesi, finora Rettore del Seminario Maggiore *San José*, assegnandogli la sede titolare vescovile di Gissaria.

Rev.do Mons. José Roberto Ospina Leongómez

Il Rev.do Mons. José Roberto Ospina Leongómez è nato a San Miguel de Sema, diocesi di Chiquinquirá, il 20 marzo 1947. Ha ricevuto l'ordinazione sacerdotale il 29 novembre 1972, per l'arcidiocesi di Bogotá.

Ha compiuto gli studi ecclesiastici di Filosofia, ottenendo la Licenza presso la Pontificia Università *Javeriana* di Bogotá, e gli studi teologici presso il Seminario Maggiore *San José* a Bogotá. Ha ottenuto inoltre la Licenza in Sacra Scrittura presso il Pontificio Istituto Biblico di Roma. Mons. Ospina Leongómez è membro dell'Istituto sacerdotale "*Jesús Adolescente*".

Ha svolto i seguenti incarichi: Vicario Parrocchiale di Fómeque, Vicario Parrocchiale di *Nuestra Señora de Lourdes* a Bogotá, Formatore del Seminario Minore di Bogotá, Delegato per la Pastorale Educativa per la zona nord di Bogotá, Direttore dell'Istituto "*Jesús Adolescente*", Professore di Sacra Scrittura nel Seminario Maggiore di Bogotá, Vicario Episcopale per la zona pastorale "*San Pablo*" dell'arcidiocesi, Vicario Episcopale per la formazione sacerdotale. Dal 2001 è Rettore del Seminario Maggiore *San José*, dell'arcidiocesi di Bogotá.

[00585-01.01]

[B0188-XX.01]