



3339 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008-3687

APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Prot. No. -4567

8 February 2007

Your Excellency:

As many children throughout the world will be participating in the fifth annual *Children's Holy Hour*, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and via satellite and radio by the *Eternal Word Television Network*, it is my privilege and joy, as the Apostolic Nuncio in the United States, to tell you that His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI sends his prayerful, best wishes to all who will share in this Holy Hour. The Holy Father holds these devoted sons and daughters close to his heart and he prays that through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima they will always remain close to the Lord Jesus and His holy Church.

During His life on earth, children were very special to Our Lord. People brought their children to Jesus and he asked that they gather around him, remarking, "let the little children come to me. Do not shut them off. The reign of God belongs to such as these." (Lk. 18:16) You will also recall that when the disciples of the Lord discussed who among them is the greatest, it was a child that the Lord placed beside him and declared, "whoever welcomes this little child on my account welcomes me...for the least among you is the greatest" (Lk. 9:48)

I am deeply grateful for the many good efforts of the *World Apostolate of Fatima* and, in particular, I think of the many graces that come to so many young people through the *Children's Programs*. Let us always be mindful of the great trust that Our Lady placed in young children; she chose the three children of Fatima to lead the multitudes in the prayer for the conversion of the world. It is my hope and my prayer that each of the children who participate in this Holy Hour will be ambassadors of Jesus Christ to other young people and to the world. To all who are in the Basilica and to all who participate through EWTN, I am pleased to impart the Apostolic Blessing of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI.

With an assurance of my prayers and warm, good wishes, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Archbishop Pietro Sambì
Apostolic Nuncio

The Most Reverend Paul G. Bootkoski
Bishop of Metuchen
P.O. Box 191
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840