



The Work of the Holy See at the United Nations

Fr. Roger J. Landry • Schuyler Hall Study Center • July 7, 2018

Brief History of Holy See Diplomacy

- The Holy See has international juridical personality as a sovereign state and participates formally in bilateral and multilateral diplomatic work.
- Biblical Ground
 - Salt of the Earth (Mt 5:13)
 - Light of the World (Mt 5:14)
 - Leaven that makes the whole dough rise (Mt 13:33)
 - Caesar and God (Mt 22:21)
- Edict of Milan
- Definition of *Sancta Sedes* or “Holy See”
 - Distinction from Vatican City State
 - Distinction from Catholic Church
- Apocrisarii, Legati, Nuntii

Brief History of Holy See Diplomacy

- Development of the civil authority of the Pope
- Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085)
- Modern diplomacy begins in 13th C in Northern Italy
- The papacy as arbiter in the age of global exploration and colonization.
- The Protestant Reformation, The Peace of Augsburg in 1555, the Edict of Nantes in 1598, and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648
- Rupture of the French Revolution and the 1815 Council of Vienna
- The Period between 1870-1929. Growth of bilateral relations.
- Growth of multilateral diplomacy. League of Nations. World War I and World War II. Cold War.

Survey of the Holy See's Diplomatic Profile

- The Holy See has diplomatic relations with 183 countries: (A-F)
 - **Albania** (7 September 1991), **Algeria** (6 March 1972), **Andorra** (16 June 1995), **Angola** (8 July 1997), **Antigua and Barbuda** (15 December 1986), **Argentina** (1877), **Armenia** (23 May 1992), **Australia** (24 March 1973), **Austria** (9 August 1946), **Azerbaijan** (23 May 1992), **Bahamas** (27 July 1979), **Bahrain** (12 January 2000), **Bangladesh** (25 September 1972), **Barbados** (19 April 1979), **Belarus** (11 November 1992), **Belgium** (1835), **Belize** (9 March 1983), **Benin** (29 June 1971), **Bolivia** (1877), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (18 August 1992), **Botswana** (4 November 2008), **Brazil** (1829), **Bulgaria** (6 December 1990), **Burkina Faso** (14 June 1973), **Burundi** (11 February 1963), **Cambodia** (25 March 1994), **Cameroon** (27 August 1966), **Canada** (16 October 1969), **Cape Verde** (12 May 1976), **Central African Republic** (13 May 1967), **Chad** (28 November 1988), **Chile** (1877), **China** (23 October 1942), **Colombia** (26 November 1835), **Congo (Democratic Republic of the)** (31 January 1977), **Congo (Republic of the)** (16 February 1963), **Cook Islands** (29 April 1999), **Costa Rica** (1908), **Croatia** (8 February 1992), **Cuba** (2 September 1935), **Cyprus** (31 January 1973), **Czech Republic** (19 April 1990), **Denmark** (2 August 1982), **Djibouti** (20 May 2000), **Dominica** (1 September 1981), **Dominican Republic** (1881), **East Timor** (20 May 2002), **Ecuador** (1877), **Egypt** (23 August 1947), **El Salvador** (1922), **Equatorial Guinea** (24 December 1981), **Eritrea** (15 July 1995), **Estonia** (3 October 1991), **Ethiopia** (20 March 1957), **Fiji** (12 September 1978), **Finland** (1942), **France** (16th Century)

Survey of the Holy See's Diplomatic Profile

- The Holy See has diplomatic relations with 183 countries: (G-M)
 - **Gabon** (31 October 1967), **Gambia** (7 June 1978), **Georgia** (23 May 1992), **Germany** (1920), **Ghana** (20 November 1975), **Great Britain** (16 January 1982), **Greece** (17 July 1979), **Grenada** (17 February 1979), **Guatemala** (16 March 1936), **Guinea** (21 June 1986), **Guinea Bissau** (12 July 1986), **Guyana** (9 June 1997), **Haiti** (1881), **Honduras** (1908), **Hungary** (9 February 1990), **Iceland** (October 1976), **India** (12 June 1948), **Indonesia** (13 March 1950), **Iran** (2 May 1953), **Iraq** (26 August 1966), **Ireland** (27 November 1929), **Israel** (15 June 1994), **Italy** (24 June 1929), **Ivory Coast** (26 October 1970), **Jamaica** (20 July 1979), **Japan** (March 1942), **Jordan** (3 March 1994), **Kazakhstan** (17 October 1992), **Kenya** (19 June 1965), **Kiribati** (10 April 1995), **Korea** (Republic of (11 December 1963), **Kuwait** (21 October 1968), **Kyrgyzstan** (27 August 1992), **Latvia** (1 October 1991), **Lebanon** (November 1946), **Lesotho** (11 March 1967), **Liberia** (15 December 1927), **Libya** (10 March 1997), **Liechtenstein** (28 August 1985), **Lithuania** (30 September 1991), **Luxembourg** (1891), **Macedonia** (Former Yugoslav Republic of) (21 December 1994), **Madagascar** (24 December 1966), **Malawi** (5 February 1966), **Mali** (29 October 1979), **Malta** (15 December 1965), **Marshall Islands** (30 December 1993), **Mauritania** (Islamic Republic of (9 December 2016), **Mauritius** (9 March 1970), **Mexico** (21 September 1992), **Micronesia** (26 January 1994), **Moldova** (23 May 1992), **Monaco** (1875), **Mongolia** (4 April 1992), **Montenegro** (16 December 2006), **Morocco** (15 January 1976), **Mozambique** (14 December 1995), **Myanmar** (5 April 2017)

Survey of the Holy See's Diplomatic Profile

- The Holy See has diplomatic relations with 183 countries: (N-S)
 - **Namibia** (12 September 1995), **Nauru** (1 June 1992), **Nepal** (10 September 1983), **Netherlands** (1829), **New Zealand** (20 June 1973), **Nicaragua** (1908), **Niger** (20 July 1971), **Nigeria** (20 November 1975), **Norway** (2 August 1982), **Pakistan** (6 October 1951), **Palau** (17 December 1998), **Panama** (1923), **Papua New Guinea** (7 March 1977), **Paraguay** (1877), **Peru** (1877), **Philippines** (8 April 1951), **Poland** (17 July 1989), **Portugal** (16th Century), **Qatar** (18 November 2002), **Romania** (15 May 1990), **Russian Federation** (9 December 2009), **Rwanda** (6 June 1964), **Saint Kitts and Nevis** (19 July 1999), **Saint Lucia** (1 September 1984), **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** (16 April 1990), **Samoa** (10 June 1994), **San Marino** (April 1926), **São Tomé and Príncipe** (21 December 1984), **Senegal** (17 November 1961), **Serbia** (14 August 1970), **Seychelles** (27 July 1984), **Sierra Leone** (30 July 1996), **Singapore** (24 June 1981), **Slovakia** (1 January 1993), **Slovenia** (8 February 1992), **Solomon Islands** (9 May 1984), **South Africa** (5 March 1994), **Spain** (15th Century), **Sri Lanka** (6 September 1975), **Sudan** (29 April 1972), **Suriname** (16 February 1994), **Swaziland** (11 March 1992), **Sweden** (2 August 1982), **Switzerland** (16th Century), **Syria** (21 February 1953)

Survey of the Holy See's Diplomatic Profile

- The Holy See has diplomatic relations with 183 countries:
 - **Tajikistan** (15 June 1996), **Tanzania** (19 April 1968), **Thailand** (28 April 1968), **Togo** (21 April 1981), **Tonga** (24 August 1994), **Trinidad and Tobago** (23 July 1978), **Tunisia** (22 March 1972), **Turkey** (25 January 1960), **Turkmenistan** (10 July 1996), **Uganda** (1 September 1966), **Ukraine** (8 February 1992), **United Arab Emirates** (31 May 2007), **United States of America** (10 January 1984), **Uruguay** (1877), **Uzbekistan** (17 October 1992), **Vanuatu** (20 July 1994), **Venezuela** (1881), **Yemen** (13 October 1998), **Zambia** (15 May 1965), **Zimbabwe** (26 June 1980)
- The Holy See also has diplomatic relations with the **European Union** (10 November 1970), **The Sovereign Military Order of Malta** (February 1930), and relations of a special nature with **Palestine** (25 October 1994).

Survey of the Holy See's Diplomatic Profile

- The Holy See participates in various Intergovernmental Organizations and Bodies and International Programs, including:

United Nations Organization, New York, *Observer*; **UNOG**, **United Nations Office in Geneva**, Geneva, *Observer*; **UNOV**, **United Nations Office in Vienna**, Vienna, *Observer*; **UNHCR**, **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**, Geneva, *Member of the Executive Committee*; **UNCTAD**, **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**, Geneva, *Member*; **WIPO**, **World Intellectual Property Organization**, Geneva, *Member*; **IAEA**, **International Atomic Energy Agency**, Vienna, *Member*; **OPCW**, **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**, The Hague, *Member*; **CTBTO**, **Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization**, Vienna, *Member*; **ICMM**, **International Committee of Military Medicine**, Brussels, *Member*; **FAO**, **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization**, Rome, *Observer*; **ILO**, **International Labour Organization**, Geneva, *Observer*; **WHO**, **World Health Organization**, Geneva, *Observer*; **UNESCO**, **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization**, Paris, *Observer*; **UNIDO**, **United Nations Industrial Development Organization**, Vienna, *Observer*; **IFAD**, **International Fund for Agricultural Development**, Rome, *Observer*; **UNWTO**, **World Tourist Organization**, Madrid, *Observer*; **WMO**, **World Meteorological Organization**, Geneva, *Observer*; **WTO**, **World Trade Organization**, Geneva, *Observer*; **UNDP**, **United Nations Development Program**, New York, *Observer*; **UN-HABITAT**, **United Nations Centre for Human Settlements**, Nairobi, *Observer*; **UNEP**, **United Nations Environment Programme**, Nairobi, *Observer*; **WFP**, **World Food Programme**, Rome, *Observer*; **INTOSAI**, **International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions**, Vienna, *Member*; **CIEC**, **International Commission on Civil Status**, Strasbourg, *Observer*; **UL**, **Latin Union**, Paris, *Permanent Guest*; **OSCE**, **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**, Vienna, *Member*; **CE**, **Council of Europe**, Strasbourg, *Observer*; **AU**, **African Union**, Addis Abeba, *Non-Member Accredited state*; **OAS**, **Organization of American States**, Washington, *Observer*; **LAS**, **League of Arab States**, Cairo, *Member of a bilateral agreement of cooperation*; **AALCO**, **Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization**, New Delhi, *Guest*; **UNIDROIT**, **International Institute for the Unification of Private Law**, Rome, *Member*

Survey of the Holy See's Diplomatic Profile

- The Vatican City State participates in various International and Intergovernmental Organizations, including :
 - UPU, Universal Postal Union, Bern, *Member*
 - ITU, International Telecommunication Union, Geneva, *Member*
 - IGC, International Grains Council, London, *Member*
 - ITSO, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization, Washington D.C., *Member*
 - EUTELSAT IGO, European Telecommunication Satellite Organization, Paris, *Member*
 - CEPTE, European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications, Copenhagen, *Member*
 - IISA, International Institute of Administrative Sciences, Brussels, *Member*

The Holy See's Goals of Engagement

- Not concerned principally with what most States are, e.g., borders, economic benefits, military security.
- Articulating the ethical principles that ought to underpin the social and political order on the basis of universally applicable principles that are as real as the physical elements of the natural environment.

The Holy See at the United Nations

- Initial Concerns of Pope Pius XII
- Overlap of four UN Pillars with Catholic Social Teaching
- Early Involvement of Holy See (1945-1964)
 - In 1951, ECOSOC invited the Holy See to serve as members of an **Advisory Committee on Refugees** and the Holy See participated in the **1951 Geneva Conference of Plenipotentiaries** on a Convention on the status of refugees. The Holy See signed the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* in 1952 and became a party to it in 1956.
 - The Apostolic Nuncio in Paris was unofficial delegate-observer of the Holy See to **UNESCO** from 1945-1952, and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to UNESCO from 1952.
 - In 1955, the UN Secretary General invited the Holy See to participate in the first **UN Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy**, eventually leading to the Holy See's becoming a charter member of the International Atomic Energy Agency.
 - In 1958, The Holy See was participated in the 26th Session of **ECOSOC** in Geneva in 1958, became a Permanent Observer to the **Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)**, and was invited by the UN to attend the **Conference on the Law of the Sea** in 1958 in Geneva.
 - **Bishop James Griffiths**, auxiliary of New York and head of the Committee on Peace for the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), a predecessor to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, became in the mid-1950s a liaison between the Holy See and the UN in New York, following the situation in Hungary at the time, representing the Holy See as a delegate on various UN technical assistance conferences, especially on the Special Committee on Refugees, the situation in the Middle East, China, and the population control movement.

The Holy See at the United Nations

- Permanent Observer Status
 - No provisions in UN Charter for Observer States, but only 51 States in 1945 could meet requirements of Membership or to gain approval of Security Council. Others wanted neutrality.
 - The following countries were Permanent Observers States: Switzerland, Austria, Bangladesh, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Monaco, Republic of Korea, Republic of Vietnam, Spain, Vietnam.
 - Holy See became a Permanent Observer State April 6, 1964
 - July 1, 2004. Resolution 58/314 gave the Holy See all of the rights and responsibilities except the right to vote, the right to submit resolutions without co-sponsoring, and the right to put forward candidates for the various UN and UN-related offices.
 - On November 29, 2012, the State of Palestine was granted Permanent Observer State Status, making it presently the second along with the Holy See.

The Holy See at the United Nations

- Five Papal Visits to the United Nations
 - Paul VI, October 4, 1965
 - John Paul II, October 2, 1979 and October 5, 1995
 - Benedict XVI, April 18, 2018
 - Francis, September 25, 2015

- Themes stressed in their visits
 - Esteem for the Institution, which they consider essential for the world.
 - Yet the UN is an institution ever in need of reform so that it may live up to its ideals and hopes.
 - The UN is a temporal reflection of “catholicity,” aspiring to be unique and universal.
 - The UN is essential for the building and maintenance of peace and is meant to be a “school of peace.”
 - To carry out this mission of peace, the UN must help nations and the international community to live up to the responsibility to protect.
 - There is a need for true justice, not just words or “declarationalist nominalism.”
 - The UN must promote and protect the dignity of every person.
 - Part of the mission of the UN must be to promote and protect respect for the sacredness of every human life.

The Holy See at the United Nations

- Esteem for the Institution
 - Paul VI: “Our message is meant to be, first of all, a moral and solemn ratification of this lofty institution. ... The edifice that you have constructed must never collapse; it must be continually perfected and adapted to the needs that the history of the world will present.”
 - John Paul II: “How can we fail to acknowledge the role of the United Nations Organization? Fifty years after its founding, the need for such an Organization is even more obvious.”
 - Benedict XVI: “My presence at this Assembly is a sign of esteem for the United Nations, and it is intended to express the hope that the Organization will increasingly serve as a sign of unity between States and an instrument of service to the entire human family.”
 - Francis: “This is the fifth time that a Pope has visited the United Nations. I follow in the footsteps of my predecessors. ... All of them expressed their great esteem for the Organization, which they considered the appropriate juridical and political response to this present moment of history. ... I can only reiterate the appreciation expressed by my predecessors, in reaffirming the importance which the Catholic Church attaches to this Institution and the hope which she places in its activities.”

The Holy See at the United Nations

- An Institution always in need of reform
 - John Paul II: “The United Nations Organization needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and to become a moral center where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a ‘family of nations.’”
 - Francis: “The experience of the past seventy years has made it clear that reform and adaptation to the times is always necessary in the pursuit of the ultimate goal of granting all countries, without exception, a share in, and a genuine and equitable influence on, decision-making processes. The need for greater equity is especially true in the case of those bodies with effective executive capability, such as the Security Council, the Financial Agencies and the groups or mechanisms specifically created to deal with economic crises.”
 - Francis: “The experience of these seventy years since the founding of the United Nations in general, and in particular the experience of these first fifteen years of the third millennium, reveal both the effectiveness of the full application of international norms and the ineffectiveness of their lack of enforcement.”
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The Holy See at the United Nations

- The UN is a **temporal reflection of “catholicity,”** aspiring to be unique and universal.
- Paul VI: “We would be tempted to say that your chief characteristic is a reflection, as it were, in the temporal field of what Our Catholic Church aspires to be in the spiritual field: unique and universal. Among the ideals by which mankind is guided, one can conceive of nothing greater on the natural level. Your vocation is to make brothers not only of some, but of all peoples. A difficult undertaking? Unquestionably; but this is the undertaking, your very noble undertaking.”
- John Paul II: “Although their respective purposes and operative approaches are obviously different, the Church and the United Nations constantly find wide areas of cooperation on the basis of their common concern for the human family. ... There is a moral logic which is built into human life and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples.”

The Holy See at the United Nations

- The UN is essential for the **building and preservation of peace** and is meant to be a “school of peace.”
 - Paul VI: “The words that you expect from us and which we cannot pronounce without full awareness of their gravity and solemnity: Never war against the other, never, never again. Was it not principally for this purpose that the United Nations came into being: against war and for peace? ... It is peace, peace that must guide the destinies of peoples and of all mankind.”
 - Francis: “War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples.”
 - Paul VI: “The United Nations is the great school where ... education [in the way of peace] is imparted, and we are today in the Assembly Hall of that school. Everyone taking his place here becomes a pupil and also a teacher in the art of building peace.... This is the finest aspect of the United Nations; it is its most truly human aspect.”

The Holy See at the United Nations

- To carry out this mission of peace, it must help nations and the international community live up to the **responsibility to protect**
- Benedict XVI: “Recognition of the unity of the human family, and attention to the innate dignity of every man and woman, today find renewed emphasis in the principle of the responsibility to protect. This ... was already present implicitly at the origins of the United Nations, and is now increasingly characteristic of its activity. Every State has the primary duty to protect its own population from grave and sustained violations of human rights, as well as from the consequences of humanitarian crises, whether natural or man-made. If States are unable to guarantee such protection, the international community must intervene with the juridical means provided in the United Nations Charter and in other international instruments.”

The Holy See at the United Nations

- There is a need for true justice, not just words:
 - Francis: “Solemn commitments, however, are not enough, although they are certainly a necessary step toward solutions. ... Our world demands of all government leaders a will which is effective, practical and constant. ... Such is the magnitude of these situations and their toll in innocent lives, that we must avoid every temptation to fall into a declarationist nominalism which would assuage our consciences. We need to ensure that our institutions are truly effective in the struggle against all these [aforementioned] scourges.”

The Holy See at the United Nations

- Promoting and protecting human dignity necessarily involves **promoting and protecting respect for the sacredness of every human life:**
 - Francis: “The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the sacredness of every human life, of every man and every woman, the poor, the elderly, children, the infirm, the unborn, the unemployed, the abandoned, those considered disposable because they are only considered as part of a statistic.”

The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations

- The Pope is represented at the UN on a daily basis by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN.
- To carry out his mission, the Permanent Observer is assisted by other Holy See diplomats and a support team in the Permanent Observer Mission.
- Since 1964, there have been six Permanent Observers
 - Msgr. Alberto Giovannetti (1964-1973)
 - Archbishop Giovanni Cheli (1973-1986)
 - Archbishop (Cardinal) Renato Martino (1986-2002)
 - Archbishop Celestino Migliore (2002-2010)
 - Archbishop Francis Chullikatt (2010-2014)
 - Archbishop Bernardito Auza (2014-present)

Perennial and Present Priorities of Holy See Diplomacy

- Peace
 - Preventing the Scourge of War
 - Nuclear Elimination
- Freedom, especially religious freedom and freedom of conscience
 - Defense of Christians and other ethnic minorities in the Middle East, Nigeria and other places
- Fundamental human rights
 - Fight against the Scourge of Human Trafficking
- Intercultural dialogue
 - A model for dialogue in politics and international relations

Perennial and Present Priorities of Holy See Diplomacy

- Support for democratic institutions
 - The form of government most in accord with human dignity.
- Development and seeking to lift the poor out of poverty.
 - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Care for migrants and refugees
 - Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
 - Global Compact for Refugees
- Care for our common home
 - *Laudato Si'*
 - Paris Accords

The Social Content of the Kerygma

- Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (177-181)
 - The kerygma has a clear social content
 - The Gospel has an immediate moral implication centered on charity
 - Our redemption has a social dimension because God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men.
 - Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need, a kind of “charity à la carte”, or a series of acts aimed solely at easing our conscience. The Gospel is about *the kingdom of God* (cf. *Lk 4:43*); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society.
 - True Christian hope, which seeks the eschatological kingdom, always generates history.
- These are the convictions that undergird the International Diplomatic work of the Holy See, as part of the Church’s seeking to be the salt of the earth, the life of the world, and the leaven that raises the world.

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