

Brazil's Lula Urges New Pope to Promote Social Justice

Contributed by Nelson Motta
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Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva sent a message to His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, chosen Tuesday, April 19, by 115 cardinals who participated in the Conclave at the Vatican. In the message, Brazilian President emphasizes the current moment of renewed hope for the world.

"I have special satisfaction in complimenting Your Holiness, in the name of Brazilian Government and people, for your election for Saint Peter's throne. I am sure that Your Holiness will promote peace and social justice, at the same time as the spiritual and moral values of the Church," says the President's message.

The message was released by the Presidential Press Secretariat.

Lula had said that he would like the next Pope to be a Brazilian. "It is my sincere desire for him to be a Brazilian. And I have so many friends who are cardinals here in Brazil that I would be happy for one of them to be elected," he affirmed in answer to questions from the press after a statement on the death of Pope John Paul II.

The President made a point of adding that he would also be "pleased" if the new Pope comes from Latin America, regardless of the country.

"Obviously, if he were from Latin America, he would be much closer to us and would be much more familiar with our problems, but I hope that the Church chooses a Pope with a broad social vision, a Pope concerned with combatting the extreme poverty and injustices of the world. If this happens, that in itself will make me content, because I shall certainly have an ally in the fight against hunger," he affirmed.

Lula emphasized, however, that he chiefly desires and roots for a Brazilian. "For me, it would be important from the political standpoint, and, from the geographical standpoint, it would be even better if he were Brazilian. Let's root."

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