

Christelijke mensvisie is “ja” tegen waardigheid van de persoon

Address to the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum



The Christian vision of man is, in fact, a great ‘yes’ to the dignity of the person

Zenit, 20 januari 2013

19 January 2013
Pope Benedict XVI

Dear friends,

I offer you my welcome with affection and joy on the occasion of the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum. I thank the president, Cardinal Robert Sarah, for his words and I address my cordial greeting to each one of you, extending it to all those who do charitable work in the Church. With the recent motu proprio “Intima Ecclesiae natura” I wished to emphasize the ecclesial meaning of your activity. Your witness can open the doors of faith to many people who seek Christ’s love. Thus, in this Year of Faith the theme “Charity, the New Ethics and Christian Anthropology,” which you are taking up, reflects the close connection between love and truth, or, if you will, between faith and charity. The whole Christian ethos receives its meaning from faith as a “meeting” with the love of Christ, which offers a new horizon and impresses a decisive direction on life (cf. “Deus caritas est,” 1). Christian love finds its basis and form in faith. Meeting God and experiencing his love, we learn “no longer to live for ourselves but for him and, with him, for others” (ibid. 33).

Beginning from this dynamic relationship between faith and charity, I would like to reflect on a point that I would call the prophetic dimension that faith instills in charity. The believer’s adherence to the Gospel impresses on charity its typically Christian form and constitutes it as a principle of discernment. The Christian, especially those who work in charitable organizations, must let himself be oriented by principles of faith through which we adopt “God’s perspective,” we accept his plan for us (cf. “Deus caritas est,” 1). This new way of looking at the world and man offered by faith also furnishes the correct criterion for the evaluation of expressions of charity in the present context.

In every age, when man did not try to follow this plan, he was victim of cultural temptations that ended up making him a slave. In recent centuries, the ideologies that praised the cult of the nation, the race, of the social class, showed themselves to be nothing but idolatry; and the same can be said of unbridled capitalism with its cult of profit, which has led to crisis, inequality and misery. There is a growing consensus today about the inalienable dignity of the human being and the reciprocal and interdependent responsibility toward man; and this is to the benefit of true civilization, the civilization of love. On the other hand, unfortunately, there are also shadows in our time that obscure God’s plan. I am referring above all to a tragic anthropological reduction that re-proposes ancient material hedonism, to which is added a “technological prometheism.” From the marriage of a materialistic vision of man and great technological development there emerges an anthropology that is at bottom atheistic. It presupposes that man is reduced to autonomous functions, the mind to the brain, human

history to a destiny of self-realization. All of this prescind from God, from the properly spiritual dimension and from a horizon beyond this world. In the perspective of a man deprived of his soul and of a personal relation with the Creator, that which is technologically possible becomes morally legitimate, every experiment is thus acceptable, every political demographic acceptable, every form of manipulation justified. The danger most to be feared in this current of thought is the absolutization of man: man wants to be “ab-solutus,” absolved of every bond and of every natural constitution. He pretends to be independent and thinks that his happiness lies solely in the affirmation of self. “Man calls his nature into question ... From now on there is only the abstract human being, who chooses for himself what his nature is to be” (Speech to the Roman Curia, December 21, 2012). This is a radical negation of man’s creatureliness and filial condition, which leads to a tragic solitude.

The faith and healthy Christian discernment bring us therefore to pay prophetic attention to this problematic ethical situation and to the mentality that it supposes. Just collaboration with international organizations in the field of development and in human promotion must not make us close our eyes to these dangerous ideologies, and the Pastors of the Church – which is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15) – have a duty to warn both faithful Catholics and every person of good will and right reason about these deviations. This is a harmful deviation for man even if it is waved with good intentions as a banner of presumed progress, or of presumed rights, or of a presumed humanism. In the face of these anthropological reductions, what is the task of every Christian – and especially your task – involved in charitable work, and so in direct relations with many social protagonists? We certainly must exercise a critical vigilance and, sometimes, refuse money and collaboration that would, directly or indirectly, support actions and projects that run contrary to a Christian anthropology. But, positively speaking, the Church is always committed to the promotion of man according to God’s plan, man in his integral dignity, with respect for his twofold vertical and horizontal dimension. The actions of ecclesial development organizations are also oriented in this direction. The Christian vision of man is, in fact, a great “yes” to the dignity of the person called to intimate communion with God, a filial communion, humble and confident. The human being is neither an individual subsisting in himself nor an anonymous element of the collective. He is rather a singular and unrepeatable person intrinsically ordered to relationship and sociality. For this reason the Church stresses her great “yes” to the dignity and beauty of marriage as an expression of a faithful and fecund alliance between man and woman, and says “no” to such philosophies as the philosophy of gender. The Church is guided by the fact that the reciprocity between man and woman is the expression of the beauty of the nature willed by the Creator.

Dear friends, I thank you for your commitment on behalf of man, in fidelity to his true dignity. In the face of these challenges of our times, we know that the answer is the encounter with Christ. In him man can fully realize his personal good and the common good. I encourage you to continue in your work with a joyful and generous spirit as I bestow upon you the Apostolic Benediction from my heart.

Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic

Ga en doe evenzo

Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the twenty-first World Day of the Sick (11 February 2013)



“Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37)

2 January 2013

Pope Benedict XVI

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. On 11 February 2013, the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Twenty-first World Day of the Sick will be solemnly celebrated at the Marian Shrine of Altötting. This day represents for the sick, for health care workers, for the faithful and for all people of goodwill “a privileged time of prayer, of sharing, of offering one’s sufferings for the good of the Church, and a call for all to recognize in the features of their suffering brothers and sisters the Holy Face of Christ, who, by suffering, dying and rising has brought about the salvation of mankind” (John Paul II, Letter for the Institution of the World Day of the Sick, 13 May 1992, 3). On this occasion I feel especially close to you, dear friends, who in health care centres or at home, are undergoing a time of trial due to illness and suffering. May all of you be sustained by the comforting words of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council: “You are not alone, separated, abandoned or useless. You have been called by Christ and are his living and transparent image” (Message to the Poor, the Sick and the Suffering).

2. So as to keep you company on the spiritual pilgrimage that leads us from Lourdes, a place which symbolizes hope and grace, to the Shrine of Altötting, I would like to propose for your reflection the exemplary figure of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25-37). The Gospel parable recounted by Saint Luke is part of a series of scenes and events taken from daily life by which Jesus helps us to understand the deep love of God for every human being, especially those afflicted by sickness or pain. With the concluding words of the parable of the Good Samaritan, “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37), the Lord also indicates the attitude that each of his disciples should have towards others, especially those in need. We need to draw from the infinite love of God, through an intense relationship with him in prayer, the strength to live day by day with concrete concern, like that of the Good Samaritan, for those suffering in body and spirit who ask for our help, whether or not we know them and however poor they may be. This is true, not only for pastoral or health care workers, but for everyone, even for the sick themselves, who can experience this condition from a perspective of faith: “It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love” (Spe Salvi, 37).

3. Various Fathers of the Church saw Jesus himself in the Good Samaritan; and in the man who fell among thieves they saw Adam, our very humanity wounded and disoriented on account of its sins (cf. Origen, Homily on the Gospel of Luke XXXIV,1-9; Ambrose, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke, 71-84; Augustine, Sermon 171). Jesus is the Son of God, the one who makes present the Father’s love, a love which is faithful, eternal and without boundaries. But Jesus is also the one who sheds the garment of his divinity, who leaves his divine condition to assume the likeness of men (cf. Phil 2:6-8), drawing near to human suffering, even to the point of descending into hell, as we recite in the Creed, in order to bring hope and light. He does not jealously guard his equality with God (cf. Phil 2:6) but, filled with compassion, he looks into the abyss of human suffering so as to pour out the oil of consolation and the wine of hope.

4. The Year of Faith which we are celebrating is a fitting occasion for intensifying the service of charity in our ecclesial communities, so that each one of us can be a good Samaritan for others, for those close to us. Here I would like to recall the innumerable figures in the history of the Church who helped the sick to appreciate the human and spiritual value of their suffering, so that they might serve as an example and an encouragement. Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face, “an expert in the scientia amoris” (Novo Millennio Ineunte, 42), was able to experience “in deep union with the Passion of Jesus” the illness that brought her “to death through great suffering” (Address at General Audience, 6 April 2011). The Venerable Luigi Novarese, who still lives in the memory of many, throughout his ministry realized the special importance of praying for and with the sick and suffering, and he would often accompany them to Marian shrines, especially to the Grotto of Lourdes. Raoul Follereau, moved by love of neighbour, dedicated his life to caring for people afflicted by Hansen’s disease, even at the world’s farthest reaches, promoting, among other initiatives, World Leprosy Day. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta would always begin her day with an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist and then she would go out into the streets, rosary in hand, to find and serve the Lord in the sick, especially in those “unwanted, unloved, uncared for”. Saint Anna Schäffer of Mindelstetten, too, was able to unite in an exemplary way her sufferings to those of Christ: “her sick-bed became her cloister cell and her suffering a missionary service. Strengthened by daily communion, she became an untiring intercessor in prayer and a mirror of God’s love for the many who sought her counsel” (Canonization Homily, 21 October 2012). In the Gospel the Blessed Virgin Mary stands out as one who follows her suffering Son to the supreme sacrifice on Golgotha. She does not lose hope in God’s victory over evil, pain and death, and she knows how to accept in one embrace of faith and love, the Son of God who was born in the stable of Bethlehem and died on the Cross. Her steadfast trust in the power of God was illuminated by Christ’s resurrection, which offers hope to the suffering and renews the certainty of the Lord’s closeness and consolation.

5. Lastly, I would like to offer a word of warm gratitude and encouragement to Catholic health care institutions and to civil society, to Dioceses and Christian communities, to religious congregations engaged in the pastoral care of the sick, to health care workers’ associations and to volunteers. May all realize ever more fully that “the Church today lives a fundamental aspect of her mission in lovingly and generously accepting every human being, especially those who are weak and sick” (Christifideles Laici, 38).

I entrust this Twenty-first World Day of the Sick to the intercession of Our Lady of Graces, venerated at Altötting, that she may always accompany those who suffer in their search for comfort and firm hope. May she assist all who are involved in the apostolate of mercy, so that they may become good Samaritans to their brothers and sisters afflicted by illness and suffering. To all I impart most willingly my Apostolic Blessing.

Vrede: het leven in zijn volheid respecteren

Boodschap van Paus Benedictus XVI voor de viering van de Werelddag van de Vrede 1 januari 2013



14 december 2012
Paus Benedictus XVI

Blessed are the peacemakers

1. EACH NEW YEAR brings the expectation of a better world. In light of this, I ask God, the Father of humanity, to grant us concord and peace, so that the aspirations of all for a happy and prosperous life may be achieved.

Fifty years after the beginning of the Second Vatican Council, which helped to strengthen the Church's mission in the world, it is heartening to realize that Christians, as the People of God in fellowship with him and sojourning among mankind, are committed within history to sharing humanity's joys and hopes, grief and anguish, [1] as they proclaim the salvation of Christ and promote peace for all.

In effect, our times, marked by globalization with its positive and negative aspects, as well as the continuation of violent conflicts and threats of war, demand a new, shared commitment in pursuit of the common good and the development of all men, and of the whole man.

It is alarming to see hotbeds of tension and conflict caused by growing instances of inequality between rich and poor, by the prevalence of a selfish and individualistic mindset which also finds expression in an unregulated financial capitalism. In addition to the varied forms of terrorism and international crime, peace is also endangered by those forms of fundamentalism and fanaticism which distort the true nature of religion, which is called to foster fellowship and reconciliation among people.

All the same, the many different efforts at peacemaking which abound in our world testify to mankind's innate vocation to peace. In every person the desire for peace is an essential aspiration which coincides in a certain way with the desire for a full, happy and successful human life. In other words, the desire for peace corresponds to a fundamental moral principle, namely, the duty and right to an integral social and communitarian development, which is part of God's plan for mankind. Man is made for the peace which is God's gift.

All of this led me to draw inspiration for this Message from the words of Jesus Christ: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:9).

Gospel beatitude

2. The beatitudes which Jesus proclaimed (cf. Mt 5:3-12 and Lk 6:20-23) are promises. In the biblical tradition, the beatitude is a literary genre which always involves some good news, a "gospel", which culminates in a promise. Therefore, the beatitudes are not only moral exhortations whose observance foresees in due time - ordinarily in the next life - a reward or a situation of future happiness. Rather, the blessedness of which the beatitudes speak consists in the fulfilment of a promise made to all those who allow themselves to be guided by the requirements of truth, justice and love. In the eyes of the world, those who trust in God and his promises often appear naïve or far from reality. Yet Jesus tells them that not only in the next life, but already in this life, they will discover that they are children of God, and that God has always been, and ever will be, completely on their side. They will understand that they are not alone, because he is on the side of those committed to truth, justice and love. Jesus, the revelation of the Father's love, does not hesitate to offer himself in self-sacrifice. Once we accept Jesus Christ, God and man, we have the joyful experience of an immense gift: the sharing of God's own life, the life of grace, the pledge of a fully blessed existence. Jesus Christ, in particular, grants us true peace, which is born of the trusting encounter of man with God.

Jesus' beatitude tells us that peace is both a messianic gift and the fruit of human effort. In effect, peace presupposes a humanism open to transcendence. It is the fruit of the reciprocal gift, of a mutual enrichment, thanks to the gift which has its source in God and enables us to live with others and for others. The ethics of peace is an ethics of fellowship and sharing. It is indispensable, then, that the various cultures in our day overcome forms of anthropology and ethics based on technical and practical suppositions which are merely subjectivistic and pragmatic, in virtue of which relationships of coexistence are inspired by criteria of power or

profit, means become ends and vice versa, and culture and education are centred on instruments, technique and efficiency alone. The precondition for peace is the dismantling of the dictatorship of relativism and of the supposition of a completely autonomous morality which precludes acknowledgment of the ineluctable natural moral law inscribed by God upon the conscience of every man and woman. Peace is the building up of coexistence in rational and moral terms, based on a foundation whose measure is not created by man, but rather by God. As Psalm 29 puts it: “May the Lord give strength to his people; may the Lord bless his people with peace” (v. 11).

Peace: God’s gift and the fruit of human effort

3. Peace concerns the human person as a whole, and it involves complete commitment. It is peace with God through a life lived according to his will. It is interior peace with oneself, and exterior peace with our neighbours and all creation. Above all, as Blessed John XXIII wrote in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, whose fiftieth anniversary will fall in a few months, it entails the building up of a coexistence based on truth, freedom, love and justice.[2] The denial of what makes up the true nature of human beings in its essential dimensions, its intrinsic capacity to know the true and the good and, ultimately, to know God himself, jeopardizes peacemaking. Without the truth about man inscribed by the Creator in the human heart, freedom and love become debased, and justice loses the ground of its exercise.

To become authentic peacemakers, it is fundamental to keep in mind our transcendent dimension and to enter into constant dialogue with God, the Father of mercy, whereby we implore the redemption achieved for us by his only-begotten Son. In this way mankind can overcome that progressive dimming and rejection of peace which is sin in all its forms: selfishness and violence, greed and the will to power and dominion, intolerance, hatred and unjust structures.

The attainment of peace depends above all on recognizing that we are, in God, one human family. This family is structured, as the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* taught, by interpersonal relations and institutions supported and animated by a communitarian “we”, which entails an internal and external moral order in which, in accordance with truth and justice, reciprocal rights and mutual duties are sincerely recognized. Peace is an order enlivened and integrated by love, in such a way that we feel the needs of others as our own, share our goods with others and work throughout the world for greater communion in spiritual values. It is an order achieved in freedom, that is, in a way consistent with the dignity of persons who, by their very nature as rational beings, take responsibility for their own actions.[3]

Peace is not a dream or something utopian; it is possible. Our gaze needs to go deeper, beneath superficial appearances and phenomena, to discern a positive reality which exists in human hearts, since every man and woman has been created in the image of God and is called to grow and contribute to the building of a new world. God himself, through the incarnation of his Son and his work of redemption, has entered into history and has brought about a new creation and a new covenant between God and man (cf. Jer 31:31-34), thus enabling us to have a “new heart” and a “new spirit” (cf. Ez 36:26).

For this very reason the Church is convinced of the urgency of a new proclamation of Jesus Christ, the first and fundamental factor of the integral development of peoples and also of peace. Jesus is indeed our peace, our justice and our reconciliation (cf. Eph 2:14; 2 Cor 5:18). The peacemaker, according to Jesus’ beatitude, is the one who seeks the good of the other, the fullness of good in body and soul, today and tomorrow.

From this teaching one can infer that each person and every community, whether religious, civil, educational or cultural, is called to work for peace. Peace is principally the attainment of the common good in society at its different levels, primary and intermediary, national, international and global. Precisely for this reason it can be said that the paths which lead to the attainment of the common good are also the paths that must be followed

in the pursuit of peace.

Peacemakers are those who love, defend and promote life in its fullness

4. The path to the attainment of the common good and to peace is above all that of respect for human life in all its many aspects, beginning with its conception, through its development and up to its natural end. True peacemakers, then, are those who love, defend and promote human life in all its dimensions, personal, communitarian and transcendent. Life in its fullness is the height of peace. Anyone who loves peace cannot tolerate attacks and crimes against life.

Those who insufficiently value human life and, in consequence, support among other things the liberalization of abortion, perhaps do not realize that in this way they are proposing the pursuit of a false peace. The flight from responsibility, which degrades human persons, and even more so the killing of a defenceless and innocent being, will never be able to produce happiness or peace. Indeed how could one claim to bring about peace, the integral development of peoples or even the protection of the environment without defending the life of those who are weakest, beginning with the unborn. Every offence against life, especially at its beginning, inevitably causes irreparable damage to development, peace and the environment. Neither is it just to introduce surreptitiously into legislation false rights or freedoms which, on the basis of a reductive and relativistic view of human beings and the clever use of ambiguous expressions aimed at promoting a supposed right to abortion and euthanasia, pose a threat to the fundamental right to life.

There is also a need to acknowledge and promote the natural structure of marriage as the union of a man and a woman in the face of attempts to make it juridically equivalent to radically different types of union; such attempts actually harm and help to destabilize marriage, obscuring its specific nature and its indispensable role in society.

These principles are not truths of faith, nor are they simply a corollary of the right to religious freedom. They are inscribed in human nature itself, accessible to reason and thus common to all humanity. The Church's efforts to promote them are not therefore confessional in character, but addressed to all people, whatever their religious affiliation. Efforts of this kind are all the more necessary the more these principles are denied or misunderstood, since this constitutes an offence against the truth of the human person, with serious harm to justice and peace.

Consequently, another important way of helping to build peace is for legal systems and the administration of justice to recognize the right to invoke the principle of conscientious objection in the face of laws or government measures that offend against human dignity, such as abortion and euthanasia.

One of the fundamental human rights, also with reference to international peace, is the right of individuals and communities to religious freedom. At this stage in history, it is becoming increasingly important to promote this right not only from the negative point of view, as freedom from – for example, obligations or limitations involving the freedom to choose one's religion – but also from the positive point of view, in its various expressions, as freedom for – for example, bearing witness to one's religion, making its teachings known, engaging in activities in the educational, benevolent and charitable fields which permit the practice of religious precepts, and existing and acting as social bodies structured in accordance with the proper doctrinal principles and institutional ends of each. Sadly, even in countries of long-standing Christian tradition, instances of religious intolerance are becoming more numerous, especially in relation to Christianity and those who simply wear identifying signs of their religion.

Peacemakers must also bear in mind that, in growing sectors of public opinion, the ideologies of radical liberalism and technocracy are spreading the conviction that economic growth should be pursued even to the detriment of the state's social responsibilities and civil society's networks of solidarity, together with social

rights and duties. It should be remembered that these rights and duties are fundamental for the full realization of other rights and duties, starting with those which are civil and political.

One of the social rights and duties most under threat today is the right to work. The reason for this is that labour and the rightful recognition of workers' juridical status are increasingly undervalued, since economic development is thought to depend principally on completely free markets. Labour is thus regarded as a variable dependent on economic and financial mechanisms. In this regard, I would reaffirm that human dignity and economic, social and political factors, demand that we continue "to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone." [4] If this ambitious goal is to be realized, one prior condition is a fresh outlook on work, based on ethical principles and spiritual values that reinforce the notion of work as a fundamental good for the individual, for the family and for society. Corresponding to this good are a duty and a right that demand courageous new policies of universal employment.

Building the good of peace through a new model of development and economics

5. In many quarters it is now recognized that a new model of development is needed, as well as a new approach to the economy. Both integral, sustainable development in solidarity and the common good require a correct scale of goods and values which can be structured with God as the ultimate point of reference. It is not enough to have many different means and choices at one's disposal, however good these may be. Both the wide variety of goods fostering development and the presence of a wide range of choices must be employed against the horizon of a good life, an upright conduct that acknowledges the primacy of the spiritual and the call to work for the common good. Otherwise they lose their real value, and end up becoming new idols.

In order to emerge from the present financial and economic crisis - which has engendered ever greater inequalities - we need people, groups and institutions which will promote life by fostering human creativity, in order to draw from the crisis itself an opportunity for discernment and for a new economic model. The predominant model of recent decades called for seeking maximum profit and consumption, on the basis of an individualistic and selfish mindset, aimed at considering individuals solely in terms of their ability to meet the demands of competitiveness. Yet, from another standpoint, true and lasting success is attained through the gift of ourselves, our intellectual abilities and our entrepreneurial skills, since a "liveable" or truly human economic development requires the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity and the logic of gift. [5] Concretely, in economic activity, peacemakers are those who establish bonds of fairness and reciprocity with their colleagues, workers, clients and consumers. They engage in economic activity for the sake of the common good and they experience this commitment as something transcending their self-interest, for the benefit of present and future generations. Thus they work not only for themselves, but also to ensure for others a future and a dignified employment.

In the economic sector, states in particular need to articulate policies of industrial and agricultural development concerned with social progress and the growth everywhere of constitutional and democratic states. The creation of ethical structures for currency, financial and commercial markets is also fundamental and indispensable; these must be stabilized and better coordinated and controlled so as not to prove harmful to the very poor. With greater resolve than has hitherto been the case, the concern of peacemakers must also focus upon the food crisis, which is graver than the financial crisis. The issue of food security is once more central to the international political agenda, as a result of interrelated crises, including sudden shifts in the price of basic foodstuffs, irresponsible behaviour by some economic actors and insufficient control on the part of governments and the international community. To face this crisis, peacemakers are called to work together in a spirit of solidarity, from the local to the international level, with the aim of enabling farmers, especially in small rural holdings, to carry out their activity in a dignified and sustainable way from the social, environmental and economic points of view.

Education for a culture of peace: the role of the family and institutions

6. I wish to reaffirm forcefully that the various peacemakers are called to cultivate a passion for the common good of the family and for social justice, and a commitment to effective social education.

No one should ignore or underestimate the decisive role of the family, which is the basic cell of society from the demographic, ethical, pedagogical, economic and political standpoints. The family has a natural vocation to promote life: it accompanies individuals as they mature and it encourages mutual growth and enrichment through caring and sharing. The Christian family in particular serves as a seedbed for personal maturation according to the standards of divine love. The family is one of the indispensable social subjects for the achievement of a culture of peace. The rights of parents and their primary role in the education of their children in the area of morality and religion must be safeguarded. It is in the family that peacemakers, tomorrow's promoters of a culture of life and love, are born and nurtured.[6]

Religious communities are involved in a special way in this immense task of education for peace. The Church believes that she shares in this great responsibility as part of the new evangelization, which is centred on conversion to the truth and love of Christ and, consequently, the spiritual and moral rebirth of individuals and societies. Encountering Jesus Christ shapes peacemakers, committing them to fellowship and to overcoming injustice.

Cultural institutions, schools and universities have a special mission of peace. They are called to make a notable contribution not only to the formation of new generations of leaders, but also to the renewal of public institutions, both national and international. They can also contribute to a scientific reflection which will ground economic and financial activities on a solid anthropological and ethical basis. Today's world, especially the world of politics, needs to be sustained by fresh thinking and a new cultural synthesis so as to overcome purely technical approaches and to harmonize the various political currents with a view to the common good. The latter, seen as an ensemble of positive interpersonal and institutional relationships at the service of the integral growth of individuals and groups, is at the basis of all true education for peace.

A pedagogy for peacemakers

7. In the end, we see clearly the need to propose and promote a pedagogy of peace. This calls for a rich interior life, clear and valid moral points of reference, and appropriate attitudes and lifestyles. Acts of peacemaking converge for the achievement of the common good; they create interest in peace and cultivate peace. Thoughts, words and gestures of peace create a mentality and a culture of peace, and a respectful, honest and cordial atmosphere. There is a need, then, to teach people to love one another, to cultivate peace and to live with good will rather than mere tolerance. A fundamental encouragement to this is "to say no to revenge, to recognize injustices, to accept apologies without looking for them, and finally, to forgive",[7] in such a way that mistakes and offences can be acknowledged in truth, so as to move forward together towards reconciliation. This requires the growth of a pedagogy of pardon. Evil is in fact overcome by good, and justice is to be sought in imitating God the Father who loves all his children (cf. Mt 5:21-48). This is a slow process, for it presupposes a spiritual evolution, an education in lofty values, a new vision of human history. There is a need to renounce that false peace promised by the idols of this world along with the dangers which accompany it, that false peace which dulls consciences, which leads to self-absorption, to a withered existence lived in indifference. The pedagogy of peace, on the other hand, implies activity, compassion, solidarity, courage and perseverance.

Jesus embodied all these attitudes in his own life, even to the complete gift of himself, even to "losing his life" (cf. Mt 10:39; Lk 17:33; Jn 12:25). He promises his disciples that sooner or later they will make the extraordinary discovery to which I originally alluded, namely that God is in the world, the God of Jesus, fully on the side of

man. Here I would recall the prayer asking God to make us instruments of his peace, to be able to bring his love wherever there is hatred, his mercy wherever there is hurt, and true faith wherever there is doubt. For our part, let us join Blessed John XXIII in asking God to enlighten all leaders so that, besides caring for the proper material welfare of their peoples, they may secure for them the precious gift of peace, break down the walls which divide them, strengthen the bonds of mutual love, grow in understanding, and pardon those who have done them wrong; in this way, by his power and inspiration all the peoples of the earth will experience fraternity, and the peace for which they long will ever flourish and reign among them.[8]

With this prayer I express my hope that all will be true peacemakers, so that the city of man may grow in fraternal harmony, prosperity and peace.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2012

BENEDICTUS PP XVI

Notes

[1] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1.

[2] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963): AAS 55 (1963), 265-266.

[3] Cf. *ibid.*: AAS 55 (1963), 266.

[4] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 32: AAS 101 (2009), 666-667.

[5] Cf. *ibid.*, 34 and 36: AAS 101 (2009), 668-670 and 671-672.

[6] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Message for the 1994 World Day of Peace (8 December 1993): AAS 86 (1994), 156-162.

[7] BENEDICT XVI, Address at the Meeting with Members of the Government, Institutions of the Republic, the Diplomatic Corps, Religious Leaders and Representatives of the World of Culture, Baabda-Lebanon (15 September 2012): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 September 2012, p. 7.

[8] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963): AAS 55 (1963), 304.

Noodzaak voor dialoog wetenschap en geloof

Toespraak tot de plenaire vergadering van de Pauselijke Academie voor Wetenschappen



8 november 2012

Paus Benedictus XVI

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greet the members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the occasion of this Plenary Assembly, and I express my gratitude to your President, Professor Werner Arber, for his kind words of greeting in your name. I am also pleased to salute Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, your Chancellor, and to thank him for his important work on your behalf.

The present plenary session, on “Complexity and Analogy in Science: Theoretical, Methodological and Epistemological Aspects”, touches on an important subject which opens up a variety of perspectives pointing towards a new vision of the unity of the sciences. Indeed, the significant discoveries and advances of recent years invite us to consider the great analogy of physics and biology which is clearly manifested every time that we achieve a deeper understanding of the natural order. If it is true that some of the new notions obtained in this way can also allow us to draw conclusions about processes of earlier times, this extrapolation points further to the great unity of nature in the complex structure of the cosmos and to the mystery of man’s place within it. The complexity and greatness of contemporary science in all that it enables man to know about nature has direct repercussions for human beings. Only man can constantly expand his knowledge of truth and order it wisely for his good and that of his environment.

In your discussions, you have sought to examine, on the one hand, the ongoing dialectic of the constant expansion of scientific research, methods and specializations and, on the other, the quest for a comprehensive vision of this universe in which human beings, endowed with intelligence and freedom, are called to understand, love, live and work. In our time the availability of powerful instruments of research and the potential for highly complicated and precise experiments have enabled the natural sciences to approach the very foundations of corporeal reality as such, even if they do not manage to understand completely its unifying structure and ultimate unity. The unending succession and the patient integration of various theories, where results once achieved serve in turn as the presuppositions for new research, testify both to the unity of the scientific process and to the constant impetus of scientists towards a more appropriate understanding of the truth of nature and a more inclusive vision of it. We may think here, for example, of the efforts of science and technology to reduce the various forms of energy to one elementary fundamental force, which now seems to be better expressed in the emerging approach of complexity as a basis for explanatory models. If this fundamental force no longer seems so simple, this challenges researchers to elaborate a broader formulation capable of embracing both the simplest and the most complex systems.

Such an interdisciplinary approach to complexity also shows too that the sciences are not intellectual worlds disconnected from one another and from reality but rather that they are interconnected and directed to the study of nature as a unified, intelligible and harmonious reality in its undoubted complexity. Such a vision has fruitful points of contact with the view of the universe taken by Christian philosophy and theology, with its notion of participated being, in which each individual creature, possessed of its proper perfection, also shares in a specific nature and this within an ordered cosmos originating in God’s creative Word. It is precisely this inbuilt “logical” and “analogical” organization of nature that encourages scientific research and draws the human mind to discover the horizontal co-participation between beings and the transcendental participation by the First Being. The universe is not chaos or the result of chaos, rather, it appears ever more clearly as an ordered complexity which allows us to rise, through comparative analysis and analogy, from specialization towards a more universalizing viewpoint and vice versa. While the very first moments of the cosmos and life still elude scientific observation, science nonetheless finds itself pondering a vast set of processes which reveals an order of evident constants and correspondences and serves as essential components of permanent creation.

It is within this broader context that I would note how fruitful the use of analogy has proved for philosophy and theology, not simply as a tool of horizontal analysis of nature’s realities, but also as a stimulus to creative thinking on a higher transcendental plane. Precisely because of the notion of creation, Christian thought has employed analogy not only for the investigation of worldly realities, but also as a means of rising from the created order to the contemplation of its Creator, with due regard for the principle that God’s transcendence implies that every similarity with his creatures necessarily entails a greater dissimilarity: whereas the structure of the creature is that of being a being by participation, that of God is that of being a being by essence, or *Esse*

subsistens. In the great human enterprise of striving to unlock the mysteries of man and the universe, I am convinced of the urgent need for continued dialogue and cooperation between the worlds of science and of faith in the building of a culture of respect for man, for human dignity and freedom, for the future of our human family and for the long-term sustainable development of our planet. Without this necessary interplay, the great questions of humanity leave the domain of reason and truth, and are abandoned to the irrational, to myth, or to indifference, with great damage to humanity itself, to world peace and to our ultimate destiny.

Dear friends, as I conclude these reflections, I would like to draw your attention to the Year of Faith which the Church is celebrating in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. In thanking you for the Academy's specific contribution to strengthening the relationship between reason and faith, I assure you of my close interest in your activities and my prayers for you and your families. Upon all of you I invoke Almighty God's blessings of wisdom, joy and peace.

Over sport en doping

Address of his holiness Benedict XVI to participants in the thirty-second world congress sponsored by the International Organisation of Sports Medicine (FIMS)



Hall of the Swiss, Apostolic Palace of Castel Gandolfo
Paus Benedictus XVI
27 september 2012

Distinguished Guests, dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome to Castel Gandolfo the representatives of the thirty-second World Congress of Sports Medicine as, for the first time in your history, you hold your biennial Congress in Rome. I would also like to thank Doctor Maurizio Casasco for his kind words on your behalf.

On this occasion, it seemed appropriate to offer you a few thoughts on the care of athletes and of participants in sports. I understand that you who have come for the Congress hail from one hundred and seventeen countries and five continents, your diversity being an important sign of the ubiquity of athletics across cultures, regions and circumstances. It is also a significant indication of the capacity for sports and athletic endeavours to unite persons and peoples in the common pursuit of peaceful competitive excellence. The recent Olympics and Paralympics in London made this clear. The universal appeal and importance of athletics and the field of sports medicine are also justly reflected in the theme of your Congress this year, which speaks of the worldwide implications of your work, and its potential to inspire many different people all around the globe.

As Doctor Casasco rightly pointed out in his speech, you as medical experts recognize that the starting point of all your work is the individual athlete whom you serve. Just as sport is more than just competition, each sportsman and woman is more than a mere competitor: they are possessed of a moral and spiritual capacity which ought to be enriched and deepened by sports and sports medicine. Sometimes, however, success, fame, medals and the pursuit of money become the primary, or even sole, motive for those involved. It has even

happened from time to time that winning at all costs has replaced the true spirit of sport and has led to the abuse and misuse of the means at the disposal of modern medicine.

You, as practitioners of sports medicine, are aware of this temptation and I know that you are discussing this important question during your Congress. This is surely because you too appreciate that those whom you care for are unique and gifted individuals, regardless of athletic capabilities, and that they are called to moral and spiritual perfection prior to the call to any physical achievement. Indeed, Saint Paul notes in his first letter to the Corinthians, that spiritual and athletic excellence are closely related, and he exhorts believers to train themselves in the spiritual life. "Every athlete", he says, "exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (9:25). This is why, dear friends, I urge you to continue to keep before you the dignity of those whom you assist by your professional medical work. In this way, you will be agents not only of physical healing and athletic excellence, but also of moral, spiritual and cultural regeneration.

As the Lord himself took human flesh and became man, so each human person is called to reflect perfectly the image and likeness of God. I therefore pray for you and for those whom your work benefits, that your efforts will lead to an ever more profound appreciation of the beauty, the mystery and the potential of each human person, athletic or otherwise, able-bodied or physically challenged. May your professionalism, good counsel and friendship benefit all those whom you are called to serve. With these thoughts, I invoke upon you and those whom you serve God's abundant blessings! Thank you.

Mens verblind door techniek

[Toespraak op de Katholieke Universiteit "Del Sacro Cuore" bij gelegenheid van de 50ste verjaardag van de "Agostino Gemelli" faculteit voor geneeskunde en chirurgie.](#)



Paus Benedictus XVI
3 mei 2012

Lord Cardinals, Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and Priesthood, Illustrious Pro-Rector, Distinguished Authorities, Docents, Doctors, Distinguished Health and University Staff, Dear Students and Dear Patients!

With particular joy I meet with you today to celebrate the 50 years of the foundation of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the "Agostino Gemelli" Polyclinic. I thank the President of the Toniolo Institute, Cardinal Angelo Scola, and the Pro-Rector, Professor Franco Anelli, for the courteous words they addressed to me. I greet the Lord President of the Chamber, The Honorable Gianfranco Fini, the Lord Ministers, the Honorable Lorenzo Ornaghi and Honorable Renato Balduzzi, the numerous Authorities, as well as the Docents, the Doctors, the Staff and the Students of the Polyclinic and of the Catholic University. A special thought goes to you, dear patients.

In this circumstance I would like to offer some reflections. Ours is a time in which the experimental sciences have transformed the vision of the world and the very self-understanding of man. The many discoveries, the innovative technologies that succeed one another at a feverish rhythm, are reasons for motivated pride, but

often they are not lacking in disquieting implications. In fact, projected on the background of the widespread optimism of scientific learning, is the shadow of a crisis of thought. Rich in means but not as much in ends, the man of our time often lives conditioned by reductionism and relativism, which lead to losing the meaning of things; almost dazzled by technical efficiency, he forgets the fundamental horizon of the question of meaning, thus relegating the transcendent dimension to irrelevance. On this background, thought becomes weak and an ethical impoverishment also gains ground, which clouds the normative references of value. What was the fertile European root of culture and progress seems to be forgotten. In it, the search for the absolute — the *quaerere Deum* — included the need to study further the natural sciences, the whole world of learning (cf. Address to the College of Bernardins of Paris, Sept. 12, 2008). In fact, scientific research and the question of meaning, also in their specific epistemological and methodological physiognomy, spring from only one source, the Logos that presides over the work of creation and guides the intelligence of history. An essential techno-practical mentality generates a risky imbalance between what is technically possible and what is morally good, with unforeseeable consequences.

Hence it is important that culture rediscover the meaning and dynamism of transcendence, in a word, that it open with determination the horizon of the *quaerere Deum*. The well-known Augustinian phrase comes to mind “You have created us for yourself [Lord], and our heart is restless until it rests in You” (The Confessions, I,1). It can be said that the very impulse to scientific research springs from nostalgia for God, who dwells in the human heart: at bottom, the man of science tends, even unconsciously, to reach that truth that can give meaning to life. However, no matter how passionate and tenacious human research is, it is not capable, on its own, to come to a safe conclusion, because “man is not able to clarify completely the strange faint light that rests on the question of the eternal realities ... God must take the initiative to come to meet us and to address man” (J. Ratzinger, *Benedict’s Europe in the Crisis of Cultures*, Cantagalli, Rome, 2005, 124; Zenit translation). To restore to reason its native, integral dimension, it is necessary then to rediscover the source that scientific research shares with the search of faith, *fides quaerens intellectum*, in keeping with Anselm’s intuition. Science and faith have a fecund reciprocity, almost a complementary need of the intelligence of the real. However, the *quaerere Deum* of man would be lost in a confusion of paths if he was not met by a way of illumination and sure orientation, which is that of God himself who comes close to man with immense love: “In Jesus Christ God not only speaks to man but also seeks him out [...] It is a search which begins in the heart of God and culminates in the Incarnation of the Word.” (John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 7).

A religion of the Logos, Christianity does not relegate faith to the realm of the irrational, but attributes the origin and meaning of reality to a creative Reason, which in the crucified God manifested itself as love and which invites us to undertake the path of the *quaerere Deum*: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Saint Thomas Aquinas comments here: “The point of arrival of this way is, in fact, the end of human desire. Now man desires two things primarily: in the first place, that knowledge of truth which is proper to his nature. In the second place, permanence in being, the common property of all things. One and the other are found in Christ. Hence, if you seek to know where to go, receive Christ because he is the way” (Esposizioni su Giovanni, chapter 14, lectio 2). Therefore, the Gospel of life illumines man’s arduous way, and in face of the temptation to absolute autonomy, it reminds that “man’s life comes from God; it is his gift, his image and imprint, a sharing in his breath of life” (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 39). And it is precisely by following the way of faith that man is able to discern in the very realities of suffering and death that cut across his existence, a genuine possibility of goodness and life. In the Cross of Christ he recognizes the Tree of life, revelation of the passionate love of God for man. The care of those who suffer is then a daily encounter with the face of Christ, and the dedication of the intelligence and the heart is a sign of the mercy of God and of his victory over death.

Lived in its integrality, research is illumined by science and faith, and from these two “wings” it draws impulse

and outburst, without ever losing the rightful humility, the sense of its own limit. In this way the search for God becomes fecund for the intelligence, ferment of culture, promoter of true humanism, a search that does not stop on the surface. Dear friends, allow yourselves always to be guided by the wisdom that comes from above, by a learning illumined by faith, remembering that wisdom calls for passion and the effort of research.

Inserted here is the irreplaceable task of the Catholic University, a place in which the educational relationship is placed at the service of the person in the construction of a qualified scientific competence, rooted in a patrimony of learning that the change of generations has distilled in wisdom of life; a place in which the relationship of care is not a job but a mission; where the charity of the Good Samaritan is the first chair, and the face of suffering man the very Face of Christ: “you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). In its daily work of research, teaching and study, the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart lies in this tradition which expresses its own potential for innovation: no progress, much less so on the cultural plane, is nourished by mere repetition, instead, it calls for an ever new beginning. Moreover, it requires that willingness to confront and dialogue that opens the intelligence and attests to the rich fecundity of the patrimony of the faith. Thus shape is given to a solid personality structure, where Christian identity penetrates daily living and is expressed from within an excellent professionalism.

The Catholic University, which has a particular relationship with the See of Peter, is called today to be an exemplary institution which does not restrict learning to the functionality of economic success, but widens the extension of the project in which the gift of intelligence investigates and develops the gifts of the created world, exceeding a productive and utilitarian vision of existence, because “the human being is made for gift, which expresses and makes present his transcendent dimension” (Caritas in veritate, 34). In fact this combination of scientific research and unconditional service to life delineates the Catholic physiognomy of the “Agostino Gemelli” Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, because the perspective of faith is interior — not superimposed or juxtaposed — to the acute and tenacious search of learning.

A Catholic Faculty of Medicine is the place where transcendent humanism is not a rhetorical slogan, but a rule lived by daily dedication. Dreaming of an authentic Catholic Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Father Gemelli – and with him so many others, such as Professor Brasca — put at the center of care the human person in his fragility and greatness, in the ever new resources of a passionate research and no less awareness of the limit and mystery of life. This is why you wished to institute a new Athenaeum Center for life, which supports other already existing realities, such as, for example, the Paul VI International Scientific Institute. Therefore, I encourage care of life in all its phases.

I would now like to turn to all the patients present here at the “Gemelli,” to assure them of my prayer and affection and to tell them that they will always be followed with love so that in their faces, the suffering face of Christ is reflected.

It is in fact the love of God, which shines in Christ, which renders acute and penetrating the look of research and to grasp what no research is able to grasp. Blessed Giuseppe Toniolo had this very present, who affirmed how it is of man’s nature to read in others the image of God-love and his imprint on creation. Without love, science also loses its nobility. Love alone guarantees the humanity of research. Thank you for your attention.

Over onvruchtbaarheid

Toespraak tot de deelnemers aan de vergadering van de Pauselijke Academie voor het Leven



Sala Clementina
Paus Benedictus XVI
25 februari 2012

Heren kardinalen, vereerde broeders in het bisschopsambt en het priesterschap, geliefde broeders en zusters,

Ik ben blij u te ontmoeten bij gelegenheid van het werk van de 18e Algemene Vergadering van de Pauselijke Academie voor het Leven. Ik groet u en dank u allen voor de edelmoedige dienst die u vervult voor de verdediging en de bescherming van het leven en ik dank in het bijzonder de president, mgr. Ignacio Carrasco de Paula, voor de woorden die hij ook uit uw naam tot mij gericht heeft. De instelling waarmee u uw werk gedaan hebt getuigt van het vertrouwen dat de Kerk altijd heeft gesteld in de menselijke rede en in strikt uitgevoerde wetenschappelijke arbeid die rekening houdt met het morele aspect. Het thema dat u dit jaar gekozen hebt: “Diagnostiek en behandeling van onvruchtbaarheid” bezit naast een menselijke en sociale relevantie ook een bijzondere wetenschappelijke waarde en is uitdrukking van de concrete mogelijkheid van een vruchtbare dialoog tussen de ethische dimensie en het biomedisch onderzoek.

Voorafgaande aan het probleem van de onvruchtbaarheid van het echtpaar hebt u in feite ervoor gekozen om met aandacht de morele dimensie naar voren te brengen en te overwegen, door wegen te zoeken voor een juiste diagnostische beoordeling een behandeling die de oorzaken van de onvruchtbaarheid corrigeert. Deze benadering komt niet alleen voort uit het verlangen om het echtpaar een kind te geven, maar ook uit de wens om aan de echtgenoten hun vruchtbaarheid terug te geven en de volledige waardigheid om verantwoordelijk te zijn voor de eigen keuzen in de voorplanting, door medewerkers van God te zijn in de voortbrenging van een nieuw menselijk wezen. Het zoeken naar een diagnose en een behandeling betekent een in wetenschappelijk opzicht betere aanpak van het probleem van de onvruchtbaarheid, maar gaat ook meer respectvol om met het gehele mens-zijn van de betrokkenen. Feitelijk vormt de vereniging van man en vrouw in die gemeenschap van liefde en leven die het huwelijk is, de enige “plaats” die waardig is om een nieuw menselijk wezen tot het bestaan te roepen, wat altijd een gave is.

Het is daarom mijn wens om intellectuele oprechtheid in uw werk aan te moedigen als uitdrukking van een wetenschap waarin de geest van zoeken naar de waarheid wakker wordt gehouden in dienst van het authentieke welzijn van de mens en waarin het risico tot een louter functioneel praktisch handelen te worden wordt vermeden. De menselijke en christelijke waardigheid van de voortplanting bestaat niet in een “product”, maar in haar verbondenheid met de huwelijksdaad die de uitdrukking is van de liefde van de echtgenoten, van hun eenwording die niet slechts biologisch is maar ook geestelijk. De Instructie *Donum Vitae* herinnert er in dit verband aan dat “door haar innerlijke structuur de huwelijksdaad, terwijl zij de echtgenoten met de aller diepste banden aan elkaar bindt hen in staat stelt tot het doen ontstaan van nieuw leven” (n. 126). Voor het legitieme streven naar ouderschap van het paar dat er is in geval van onvruchtbaarheid, zal met hulp van de wetenschap een antwoord moeten worden gevonden, een antwoord dat volkomen de waardigheid respecteert van hen als personen en als echtgenoten. De nederigheid en nauwkeurigheid waarmee u diepgaand onderzoek verricht

naar deze problematiek, welke door sommige van uw collega's als achterhaald wordt beschouwd door de vooruitgang van de technologie van de kunstmatige bevruchting, verdient aanmoediging en ondersteuning. Bij gelegenheid van de 10e verjaardag van de encycliek *Fides et Ratio* hebben wij eraan herinnerd hoezeer "het gemakkelijke gewin of erger nog, de arrogantie om zich in de plaats van de Schepper te stellen soms een bepalende rol spelen. Dit is een vorm van hoogmoed van de rede, die gevaarlijke vormen kan aannemen voor de mensheid zelf". (*Toespraak tot de deelnemers aan het internationale congres georganiseerd door de Pauselijke Universiteit van Lateranen, 16 oktober 2008: AAS 100 [2008], 788-789*). Inderdaad, sciëntisme en de logica van de winst lijken nu een hoofdrol te spelen op het gebied van onvruchtbaarheid en de menselijke voortplanting, met als gevolg dat het onderzoek in veel andere domeinen beperkt wordt.

De Kerk wijdt veel aandacht aan het lijden van echtparen met onvruchtbaarheid, heeft zorg om hen en moedigt daarbij medische research aan. De wetenschap is echter niet altijd in staat een antwoord te geven op de wensen van zoveel echtparen. Ik zou de echtgenoten, die leven in een situatie van onvruchtbaarheid, eraan willen herinneren dat daardoor hun roeping tot het huwelijk niet belemmerd wordt. De echtgenoten zijn, juist door de roeping van hun doopsel en hun huwelijk altijd geroepen met God mee te werken aan de schepping van een nieuwe mensheid. De roeping tot liefde is eigenlijk een roeping tot het geven van zichzelf en dat is een mogelijkheid die door geen enkele organische beperking kan belemmerd worden. Daar waar dan de wetenschap geen antwoord weet te vinden, komt het antwoord dat licht brengt van Christus.

Ik wil u allen, die bijeengekomen bent voor deze studiedagen en die soms werkt in een medisch-wetenschappelijke omgeving waar de dimensie van de waarheid niet helder is, zeggen: gaat verder op de weg die u bent ingegaan met een wetenschapsbeoefening die intellectueel oprecht is en gefascineerd door een blijvend zoeken naar het welzijn van de mens. Ga op uw intellectuele tocht de dialoog met het geloof niet uit de weg. Ik richt het appel tot u dat werd gegeven in de encycliek *Deus Caritas est*: "Om juist te kunnen handelen, moet de rede steeds opnieuw gezuiverd worden, omdat ethische verblindings ervan die het gevolg is van eigenbelang en macht die haar blind maken, een gevaar is dat nooit geheel uit te roeien is. [...] Het geloof stelt de rede in staat haar werk beter te doen en beter in te zien wat haar eigen is." (n. 28). Aan de andere zijde van de culturele matrix die door het christendom geschapen is – geworteld in de bevestiging van het bestaan van de Waarheid en van de begrijpelijkheid van de werkelijkheid in het licht van de Hoogste Waarheid – is in het Europa van de middeleeuwen de ontwikkeling mogelijk gemaakt van de kennis van de moderne wetenschap, een kennis die in de voorafgaande culturen slechts in de kiem aanwezig was.

Geachte wetenschappers en u allen, leden van de Academie zich ertoe verbonden hebt om het leven en de waardigheid van de menselijke persoon te bevorderen, houdt ook altijd in gedachten de belangrijke culturele rol die u in de samenleving hebt en de invloed die u hebt in de vorming van de publieke opinie. Mijn voorganger, de zalige Johannes Paulus II herinnerde eraan dat wetenschappers, "omdat ze meer weten, geroepen zijn om meer te dienen" (*Toespraak tot de Pauselijke Academie van Wetenschappen, 11 november 2002: AAS 95 [2003], 206*). De mensen hebben vertrouwen in u die het leven dient, ze hebben vertrouwen in uw plicht om hen die steun en hoop nodig hebben bij te staan. Geeft nooit toe aan de bekoring om het welzijn van een persoon te behandelen door het te reduceren tot een louter technisch probleem! Onverschilligheid van het geweten ten opzichte van het ware en het goede betekent een gevaarlijke bedreiging voor een authentieke vooruitgang van de wetenschap.

Ik zou willen besluiten met het hernieuwen van de hoop die het Tweede Vaticaans Concilie de mensen uit de wereld van het denken en de wetenschap voorhoudt: "Gelukkig zijn zij die, in het bezit van de waarheid, doorgaan met haar te zoeken, haar te vernieuwen, te verdiepen en aan de anderen door te geven" (*Boodschap aan de mensen uit de wereld van het denken en de wetenschap, 8 december 1965. AAS 58 [1966], 12*). En met deze hoop verleen ik aan u allen hier aanwezig aan uw geliefden de Apostolische Zegen.

Vertaling: *dr. J.A. Raymakers*

Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI to participants in the General Assembly Of The Pontifical Academy For Life

Clementine Hall
Saturday, 25 February 2012

Your Eminences, Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am glad to meet you on the occasion of the 18th General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life. I greet and thank all of you for your generous pro-life service, and Bishop Ignacio Carrasco de Paula, your President, in particular for his words to me also on your behalf. The orientation you have given your work reflects the trust that the Church has always placed in the possibilities of human reason and in strictly conducted scientific work, which always takes the moral aspect into account.

The theme you have chosen this year, “Diagnosis and Treatment of Infertility”, in addition to its human and social importance, it has a particular scientific value and expresses the concrete possibility of fruitful dialogue between the ethical dimension and biomedical research. With regard to the problem of the infertility of couples you have in fact chosen to recall and to consider attentively the moral dimension, seeking to find a correct diagnostic evaluation and treatment that corrects the causes of infertility. This approach is not only prompted by the wish to give the couple a child but also to restore to the spouses their fertility and the full dignity of being responsible for their own procreative decisions, in order to cooperate with God in begetting a new human being.

Research for diagnosing the condition and appropriate treatment is the correct scientific approach to the question of infertility, and also the one that best respects the integral humanity of those involved. Indeed, the union of the man and the woman in the community of love and life, which is marriage, constitutes the only worthy “place” to call into existence a new human being, who is always a gift.

I therefore wish to encourage intellectual honesty in your work. It is an example of a science that retains its spirit in seeking the truth at the service of the authentic good of the human being and that avoids the risk of being a merely functional practice. The human and Christian dignity of procreation, in fact, does not consist in a “product”, but in its link to the conjugal act, an expression of the love of the husband and wife, of their union, which is not only biological but also spiritual.

The Instruction *Donum Vitae* reminds us in this regard that “by its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new life, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and of woman” (B 4a). The couple’s legitimate aspirations to parenthood who experience a condition of infertility, must therefore — with the help of science — find an answer that fully respects their dignity as people and as spouses. The humility, precision and depth with which you study these problems, deemed superseded by some of your colleagues in the face of the fascination of artificial fertilization technology, deserves encouragement and support.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, I recalled that “easy earnings or, even worse, the arrogance of replacing the Creator, at times play a decisive role. This is a form of the hybrid of reason, which can acquire characteristics that are dangerous to humanity itself” (Discourse to the Participants in the International Congress organized by the Pontifical Lateran University, 16 October 2008: *L’Osservatore Romano* English edition, 22 October 2008, p. 43). Scientism and the logic of profit seem effectively to dominate the field of infertility and human procreation today, even to the point of limiting many other areas of research.

The Church pays great attention to the distress of infertile couples, she cares for them and for this very reason encourages medical research. Science, however, is not always able to respond positively to the desires of numerous couples. I would therefore like to remind spouses in a condition of infertility, that this does not thwart their matrimonial vocation. Spouses are always called by their baptismal and matrimonial vocation itself to cooperate with God in the creation of a new human life. The vocation to love is in fact a vocation to the gift of self, and this is a possibility that no physical condition can prevent. Therefore, whenever science finds no answer, the answer that gives light comes from Christ.

I would like to encourage all of you gathered here for these study days and who at times work in a medical and scientific context where the dimension of truth is obscured: persevere on the way on which you have set out with an intellectually honest science, fascinated by the constant search for the good of the human being. On your intellectual journey, do not disdain the dialogue with faith. I address to you the heartfelt appeal expressed in the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: “if reason is to be exercised properly, it must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely free of the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests.... Faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly” (n. 28).

On the other hand, the cultural matrix Christianity created — rooted in the affirmation of the existence of the Truth and of the intelligibility of the real in the light of the Supreme Truth — I mean, the cultural matrix — made possible in Medieval Europe the development of modern scientific knowledge, a knowledge that in previous cultures had remained only in embryo.

Distinguished scientists and all of you, members of the Academy engaged in promoting the life and dignity of the human person, may you always also bear in mind the fundamental cultural role you play in society and the influence you have in forming public opinion. My Predecessor, Bl. John Paul II, recalled that “scientists, therefore, precisely because they ‘know more’, are called to ‘serve more’” (Discourse to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 11 November 2002; *L’Osservatore Romano* 20 November 2003, p. 4).

People trust in you who serve life, they trust in your commitment to support those in need of comfort and hope. Never give in to the temptation to treat the good of the person by reducing him or her to a mere technical problem! The conscience’s indifference to the true and the good is a dangerous threat to authentic scientific progress.

I would like to conclude by renewing the hope that the Second Vatican Council addressed to men of thought and science: “Happy are those who, while possessing the truth, search more earnestly for it in order to renew it, deepen it, and transmit it to others” (Message to Men of Thought and Science, 8 December 1965: AAS 58 [1966], 12). With these hopes I impart the Apostolic Blessing to all of you present here and to your loved ones. Many thanks.

Sta op, uw geloof heeft u gered

Boodschap van de Heilige Vader bij gelegenheid van de twintigste Wereldziekendag

“Stand up and go; your faith has saved you” (Lk 17:19)



11 februari 2012

Paus Benedictus XVI

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the occasion of the World Day of the Sick, which we will celebrate on 11 February 2012, the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, I wish to renew my spiritual closeness to all sick people who are in places of care or are looked after in their families, expressing to each one of them the solicitude and the affection of the whole Church. In the generous and loving welcoming of every human life, above all of weak and sick life, a Christian expresses an important aspect of his or her Gospel witness, following the example of Christ, who bent down before the material and spiritual sufferings of man in order to heal them.

1. This year, which involves the immediate preparations for the Solemn World Day of the Sick that will be celebrated in Germany on 11 February 2013 and will focus on the emblematic Gospel figure of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:29-37), I would like to place emphasis upon the “sacraments of healing”, that is to say upon the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and that of the Anointing of the Sick, which have their natural completion in Eucharistic Communion.

The encounter of Jesus with the ten lepers, narrated by the Gospel of Saint Luke (cf. Lk 17:11-19), and in particular the words that the Lord addresses to one of them, “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you” (v. 19), help us to become aware of the importance of faith for those who, burdened by suffering and illness, draw near to the Lord. In their encounter with him they can truly experience that he who believes is never alone! God, indeed, in his Son, does not abandon us to our anguish and sufferings, but is close to us, helps us to bear them, and wishes to heal us in the depths of our hearts (cf. Mk 2:1-12).

The faith of the lone leper who, on seeing that he was healed, full of amazement and joy, and unlike the others, immediately went back to Jesus to express his gratitude, enables us to perceive that reacquired health is a sign of something more precious than mere physical healing, it is a sign of the salvation that God gives us through Christ; it finds expression in the words of Jesus: your faith has saved you. He who in suffering and illness prays to the Lord is certain that God’s love will never abandon him, and also that the love of the Church, the extension in time of the Lord’s saving work, will never fail. Physical healing, an outward expression of the deepest salvation, thus reveals the importance that man – in his entirety of soul and body – has for the Lord. Each sacrament, for that matter, expresses and actuates the closeness of God himself, who, in an absolutely freely-given way, “touches us through material things ... that he takes up into his service, making them instruments of the encounter between us and himself” (Homily, Chrism Mass, 1 April 2010). “The unity between creation and redemption is made visible. The sacraments are an expression of the physicality of our faith, which embraces the whole person, body and soul” (Homily, Chrism Mass, 21 April 2011).

The principal task of the Church is certainly proclaiming the Kingdom of God, “But this very proclamation must be a process of healing: ‘bind up the broken-hearted’ (Is 61:1)” (ibid.), according to the charge entrusted by Jesus to his disciples (cf. Lk 9:1-2; Mt 10:1,5-14; Mk 6:7-13). The tandem of physical health and renewal after lacerations of the soul thus helps us to understand better the “sacraments of healing”.

2. The sacrament of Penance has often been at the centre of the reflection of the Church's Pastors, specifically because of its great importance in the journey of Christian life, given that "The whole power of the sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God's grace, and joining with him in an intimate friendship" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1468). The Church, in continuing to proclaim Jesus' message of forgiveness and reconciliation, never ceases to invite the whole of humanity to convert and to believe in the Gospel. She makes her own the call of the Apostle Paul: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). Jesus, during his life, proclaimed and made present the mercy of the Father. He came not to condemn but to forgive and to save, to give hope in the deepest darkness of suffering and sin, and to give eternal life; thus in the sacrament of Penance, in the "medicine of confession", the experience of sin does not degenerate into despair but encounters the Love that forgives and transforms (cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 31).

God, "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), like the father in the Gospel parable (cf. Lk 15:11-32), does not close his heart to any of his children, but waits for them, looks for them, reaches them where their rejection of communion imprisons them in isolation and division, and calls them to gather around his table, in the joy of the feast of forgiveness and reconciliation. A time of suffering, in which one could be tempted to abandon oneself to discouragement and hopelessness, can thus be transformed into a time of grace so as to return to oneself, and like the prodigal son of the parable, to think anew about one's life, recognizing its errors and failures, longing for the embrace of the Father, and following the pathway to his home. He, in his great love, always and everywhere watches over our lives and awaits us so as to offer to every child that returns to him the gift of full reconciliation and joy.

3. From a reading of the Gospels it emerges clearly that Jesus always showed special concern for sick people. He not only sent out his disciples to tend their wounds (cf. Mt 10:8; Lk 9:2; 10:9) but also instituted for them a specific sacrament: the Anointing of the Sick. The Letter of James attests to the presence of this sacramental act already in the first Christian community (cf. 5:14-16): by the Anointing of the Sick, accompanied by the prayer of the elders, the whole of the Church commends the sick to the suffering and glorified Lord so that he may alleviate their sufferings and save them; indeed she exhorts them to unite themselves spiritually to the passion and death of Christ so as to contribute thereby to the good of the People of God.

This sacrament leads us to contemplate the double mystery of the Mount of Olives, where Jesus found himself dramatically confronted by the path indicated to him by the Father, that of his Passion, the supreme act of love; and he accepted it. In that hour of tribulation, he is the mediator, "bearing in himself, taking upon himself the sufferings and passion of the world, transforming it into a cry to God, bringing it before the eyes and into the hands of God and thus truly bringing it to the moment of redemption" (Lectio Divina, Meeting with the Parish Priests of Rome, 18 February 2010). But "the Garden of Olives is also the place from which he ascended to the Father, and is therefore the place of redemption ... This double mystery of the Mount of Olives is also always 'at work' within the Church's sacramental oil ... the sign of God's goodness reaching out to touch us" (Homily, Chrism Mass, 1 April 2010). In the Anointing of the Sick, the sacramental matter of the oil is offered to us, so to speak, "as God's medicine ... which now assures us of his goodness, offering us strength and consolation, yet at the same time points beyond the moment of the illness towards the definitive healing, the resurrection (cf. Jas 5:14)" (ibid.).

This sacrament deserves greater consideration today both in theological reflection and in pastoral ministry among the sick. Through a proper appreciation of the content of the liturgical prayers that are adapted to the various human situations connected with illness, and not only when a person is at the end of his or her life (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1514), the Anointing of the Sick should not be held to be almost "a minor sacrament" when compared to the others. Attention to and pastoral care for sick people, while, on the one

hand, a sign of God's tenderness towards those who are suffering, on the other brings spiritual advantage to priests and the whole Christian community as well, in the awareness that what is done to the least, is done to Jesus himself (cf. Mt 25:40).

4. As regards the "sacraments of healing", Saint Augustine affirms: "God heals all your infirmities. Do not be afraid, therefore, all your infirmities will be healed ... You must only allow him to cure you and you must not reject his hands" (Exposition on Psalm 102, 5; PL 36, 1319-1320). These are precious instruments of God's grace which help a sick person to conform himself or herself ever more fully to the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. Together with these two sacraments, I would also like to emphasize the importance of the Eucharist. Received at a time of illness, it contributes in a singular way to working this transformation, associating the person who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ to the offering that he made of himself to the Father for the salvation of all. The whole ecclesial community, and parish communities in particular, should pay attention to guaranteeing the possibility of frequently receiving Holy Communion, to those people who, for reasons of health or age, cannot go to a place of worship. In this way, these brothers and sisters are offered the possibility of strengthening their relationship with Christ, crucified and risen, participating, through their lives offered up for love of Christ, in the very mission of the Church. From this point of view, it is important that priests who offer their discreet work in hospitals, in nursing homes and in the homes of sick people, feel they are truly "'ministers of the sick', signs and instruments of Christ's compassion who must reach out to every person marked by suffering" (Message for the XVIII World Day of the Sick, 22 November 2009).

Becoming conformed to the Paschal Mystery of Christ, which can also be achieved through the practice of spiritual Communion, takes on a very particular meaning when the Eucharist is administered and received as Viaticum. At that stage in life, these words of the Lord are even more telling: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (Jn 6:54). The Eucharist, especially as Viaticum, is - according to the definition of Saint Ignatius of Antioch - "medicine of immortality, the antidote for death" (Letter to the Ephesians, 20: PG 5, 661); the sacrament of the passage from death to life, from this world to the Father, who awaits everyone in the celestial Jerusalem.

5. The theme of this Message for the Twentieth World Day of the Sick, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you", also looks forward to the forthcoming Year of Faith which will begin on 11 October 2012, a propitious and valuable occasion to rediscover the strength and beauty of faith, to examine its contents, and to bear witness to it in daily life (cf. Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*, 11 October 2011). I wish to encourage sick people and the suffering always to find a safe anchor in faith, nourished by listening to the Word of God, by personal prayer and by the sacraments, while I invite pastors to be increasingly ready to celebrate them for the sick. Following the example of the Good Shepherd and as guides of the flocks entrusted to them, priests should be full of joy, attentive to the weakest, the simple and sinners, expressing the infinite mercy of God with reassuring words of hope (cf. Saint Augustine, Letter 95, 1: PL 33, 351-352).

To all those who work in the field of health, and to the families who see in their relatives the suffering face of the Lord Jesus, I renew my thanks and that of the Church, because, in their professional expertise and in silence, often without even mentioning the name of Christ, they manifest him in a concrete way (cf. Homily, Chrism Mass, 21 April 2011).

To Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Sick, we raise our trusting gaze and our prayer; may her maternal compassion, manifested as she stood beside her dying Son on the Cross, accompany and sustain the faith and the hope of every sick and suffering person on the journey of healing for the wounds of body and spirit!

I assure you all of a remembrance in my prayers, and I bestow upon each one of you a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 20 November 2011, Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King.

Geloof en rede in het kader van nieuwe evangelisatie

Tot de Bisschoppen uit de Verenigde Staten (regio IV-VI) tijdens hun bezoek "Ad Limina



19 januari 2012
Paus Benedictus XVI

Dierbare broeders Bisschoppen,

Van harte groet ik u allen en bid dat deze pelgrimage van spirituele vernieuwing en verdieping van de gemeenschap het geloof en de inzet zal bevestigen van uw taak als herder van de Kerk in de Verenigde Staten van Amerika. Zoals u weet, is het mijn bedoeling om in de loop van dit jaar met u enkele spirituele en culturele uitdagingen van de nieuwe evangelisatie te overwegen.

Een van de meest gedachtenisvolle aspecten van mijn pastorale bezoek aan de Verenigde Staten was de mogelijkheid die het mij gaf na te denken over de historische ervaring van godsdienstvrijheid in Amerika en meer in het bijzonder de relatie tussen geloof en cultuur. Aan iedere cultuur ligt ten grondslag, bewust of onbewust, de consensus over de werkelijkheid van de natuur en het morele goed, en dus over de condities van de menselijke ontwikkeling. In Amerika was deze consensus, zoals het is vastgelegd in de oprichtingsdocumenten, gebaseerd in een visie op de wereld niet alleen door geloof gevormd maar ook in een toewijding aan bepaalde ethische principes voortkomen uit de natuur en de God van de natuur. Tegenwoordig is deze consensus aanmerkelijk geërodeerd ten gevolge van de krachtige culturele bewegingen die niet alleen tegen de kern van de morele leer van de Joods-christelijke traditie zijn, maar toenemend vijandig tegen het Christendom op zich.

Wat haar betreft is de Kerk van de Verenigde Staten geroepen om, gewenst of ongewenst, het Evangelie verkondigt, hetgeen niet alleen een onveranderde morele waarheid voorstelt, maar het juist voorstelt als de sleutel voor menselijk geluk en sociale vooruitgang. (1) In de mate dat enkele culturele ontwikkelingen elementen bevatten die de verkondiging van deze waarheden zouden beknotten, ofwel door het beperken binnen de grenzen van de louter wetenschappelijke rationaliteit, dan wel door het te onderdrukken in de naam van de politieke macht of regel van de meerderheid, zij vertegenwoordigen niet alleen een bedreiging van het christelijk geloof, maar ook de mensheid zelf en tot in de diepste waarheid over ons bestaan en de ultieme roeping, onze relatie met God. Wanneer een cultuur probeert de dimensies van het ultieme mysterie te onderdrukken en de deur sluit voor de transcendente waarheid, wordt het onvermijdelijk verarmd en valt ten prooi aan, zoals wijlen Paus Johannes Paulus II zo duidelijk zag, de reductionistische en totalitaire kijk op de menselijke persoon en de aard van de samenleving.

Met haar lange traditie van respect voor de juiste relatie tussen geloof en rede, heeft de Kerk een cruciale rol te spelen in het weerstaan van de culturele tendensen, welke de idee aanmoedigt, op basis van een extreem

individualisme, dat vrijheid losstaat van morele waarheid. Onze traditie gaat niet uit van een blind geloof, maar van een rationeel perspectief dat gekoppeld is aan onze inzet om een authentieke, rechtvaardige, menselijke en welvarende samenleving op te bouwen met onze ultieme zekerheid dat de kosmos vervuld is van een innerlijke logica die toegankelijk is voor de menselijke rede. De verdediging van de Kerk van een morele beredenering, op basis van de natuurlijke wet, is gegrondvest op haar overtuiging dat deze wet geen bedreiging is van onze vrijheid, maar eerder een “taal”, die ons in staat stelt onszelf en de waarheid van ons zijn te begrijpen, en een meer rechtvaardige en humane wereld vorm te geven. Ze biedt daarom haar morele leer als boodschap aan, niet van dwang, maar van vrijheid, en als basis om een veilige toekomst te bouwen.

De getuigenis van de Kerk is dan van nature publiek: zij zoekt te overtuigen door rationele argumenten voor te stellen in het publieke debat. De legitieme scheiding van Kerk en Staat kan niet aangewend worden als middel om de Kerk te laten zwijgen over bepaalde onderwerpen, maar ook niet dat de Staat mag kiezen om niet deel te nemen, of om ingezet te worden door stemmen van toegewijde gelovigen in het bepalen van de waarden die vorm zullen geven aan de toekomst van de natie.

In het kader van deze overwegingen is het noodzakelijk dat de gehele Katholieke gemeenschap van Amerika zich is gaan realiseren welke ernstige gevaren voor de getuigenis van de Kerk van haar publieke moraal wordt gevormd door een radicaal secularisme, dat steeds meer uiting vindt op politieke en culturele terreinen. De ernst van deze bedreiging moet op iedere niveau van het kerkelijk leven helder voor ogen staan. Een bijzondere zorg zijn de bepaalde pogingen om één van de meest gekoesterde Amerikaanse vrijheden te beperken, namelijk de godsdienstvrijheid. Velen van u hebben aangegeven dat gerichte acties zijn ondernomen om het recht van gewetensbezwaren te beperken voor Katholieke personen instellingen met betrekking tot medewerking aan intrinsieke kwade praktijken. Anderen hebben mij gesproken over de zorgwekkende tendens om godsdienstvrijheid te beperken tot alleen de vrijheid van vieringen zonder waarborgen voor het respect voor gewetensvrijheid.

Hier opnieuw zien we de noodzaak voor een toegewijde, mondige en goed gevormde Katholieke leken begiftigd met een sterk kritische zin versus de dominante cultuur en met de moed om zich te weer te stellen tegen een reductief secularisme, dat ernaar streeft om de wettige deelname van de Kerk aan het publieke debat over de toekomst van de Amerikaanse gemeenschap te ontnemen. De voorbereiding van overtuigde leken leiders en de presentatie van een overtuigende uiting van de christelijke visie op de mens en samenleving blijft de belangrijkste taak van de Kerk in uw land. Als essentiële onderdelen van de nieuwe evangelisatie moeten deze zorgen de visie en doelstellingen van catechetische programma's zijn op alle niveaus.

In dit verband spreek ik mijn waardering uit voor uw inspanningen om de contacten te behouden met Katholieken, die betrokken zijn bij het politieke leven, en om hen te helpen begrijpen dat zij een persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid hebben om publiek getuigenis af te leggen van hun geloof, in het bijzonder met betrekking tot de grote morele problemen van onze tijd: respect voor Gods gave van het leven, de bescherming van de menselijke waardigheid en het bevorderen van authentieke mensenrechten. Zoals het Concilie heeft aangegeven, en hetgeen ik heb willen herhalen tijdens mijn pastorale reis, moet het respect voor de rechtvaardige autonomie van de seculiere omgeving ook rekening houden met de waarheid dat er geen wereldse werkelijkheden zijn die los gezien kunnen worden van de Schepper en Zijn heerschappij. (2) Zonder twijfel dat een meer consistent getuigenis van de kant van de Amerikaanse Katholieken over hun diepste overtuigingen een belangrijke bijdrage zal leveren aan een vernieuwing van de samenleving als geheel.

Dierbare broeders Bisschoppen, in deze korte opmerkingen heb ik willen ingaan op een aantal van de dringende onderwerpen die in uw dienst aan het Evangelie en hun betekenis voor de evangelisatie van de Amerikaanse cultuur van belang zijn. Niemand die deze problemen realistisch bekijkt kan voorbij gaan aan de echte

problemen waar de Kerk op het moment mee te maken heeft. Maar uit het geloof kunnen we moed putten voor een groeiend bewustzijn voor de noodzaak om de burgerlijke orde duidelijk geworteld te houden in de Joods-christelijke traditie, maar ook uit de belofte die door de nieuwe generatie van Katholieken wordt geboden, die door hun ervaring en overtuiging een beslissende rol zullen hebben in de vernieuwing van de aanwezigheid van de Kerk en het getuigen in de Amerikaanse samenleving. De hoop die deze “tekenen des tijds” ons geven is op zichzelf een reden om onze inspanningen te vernieuwen om de intellectuele en morele middelen van de gehele Katholieke gemeenschap te mobiliseren ten dienste van de evangelisatie van de Amerikaanse cultuur en te bouwen aan de beschaving van liefde. Met grote genegenheid beveel ik u allen, en de aan uw zorg toevertrouwde kudde, aan de gebeden van Maria, de Moeder van Hoop, en van harte schenk ik u mijn Apostolische zegen als een belofte van genade en vrede in Jezus Christus, onze Heer.

Noten

1. Vgl. 2e Vaticaans Concilie, Constitutie, Over de Kerk in de wereld van deze tijd, *Gaudium et Spes* (7 dec 1965), 10
2. Vgl. 2e Vaticaans Concilie, Constitutie, Over de Kerk in de wereld van deze tijd, *Gaudium et Spes* (7 dec 1965), 36

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Hedonisme bedreigt moraal

Homilie tijdens het pastorale bezoek aan het bisdom San Marino-Montefeltro



19 Juni 2011

Paus Benedictus XVI

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Great is my joy at being able to break with you the bread of the Word of God and of the Eucharist and to address to you, dear people of San Marino, my most cordial greeting. My special thoughts go to the Captains Regent and to the other political and civil authorities present at this Eucharistic celebration. I greet with affection your pastor, Bishop Luigi Negri, whom I thank for his courteous words and, with him, I greet all the priests and faithful of the Diocese of San Marino-Montefeltro; I greet each one of you and express my heartfelt gratitude for the cordiality and affection with which you have welcomed me. I have come to share with you the joys and hopes, efforts and duties, ideals and aspirations of this diocesan community. I know that you are not without difficulties, problems and concerns here. I want to assure you all that I am close to you and remember you in prayer, and I encourage you to persevere in bearing witness to the human and Christian values that are so deeply rooted in the faith and history of this territory and its people, with its granitic faith of which the Bishop spoke.

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, the Feast of God, of the centre of our faith: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When one thinks of the Trinity, one usually thinks of the aspect of the mystery: they are Three and they are One, one God in three Persons. Actually God in his greatness cannot be anything but a mystery for us, yet he revealed himself. We can know him in his Son and thus also know the Father and the Holy Spirit. Instead today's Liturgy draws our attention not so much to this mystery as to the reality of love that is contained in this first and supreme mystery of our faith. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one because God is love and love is an absolute life-giving force; the unity created by love is a unity greater than a purely physical unity. The Father gives everything to the Son; the Son receives everything from the Father with gratitude; and the Holy Spirit is the fruit of this mutual love of the Father and the Son. The texts of today's Mass speak of God and thus speak of love; they do not dwell so much on the three Persons, but rather on love which is the substance and, at the same time, the unity and trinity.

The first passage that we heard, taken from the Book of Exodus and which I dwelt on at a recent Wednesday catechesis, is surprising because the revelation of God's love comes after a very serious sin of the people. They had hardly concluded the oath of the Covenant which they took at Mount Sinai, and already the people were disloyal. In Moses' prolonged absence, the people said: "but where has this Moses gone, where is his God?" and they asked Aaron to create a god who would be visible, accessible and controllable, within the reach of man instead of this mysterious, invisible and distant God. Aaron complied and made a golden calf. Coming down from Sinai, Moses saw what had happened and broke the tablets of the Covenant which was already broken, shattered, two stones on which were written the "Ten Words", the concrete contents of the agreement with God. It looked as if all was lost, the friendship, immediately and from the outset, was broken. Yet, despite this most grievous sin of the people, through Moses' intercession God chose to forgive them and invited Moses to climb the mountain once again to receive anew his law, the Ten Commandments, and to renew the pact. Moses then asked God to reveal himself, to allow him to see his face. However, God did not show his face, but rather revealed his being, full of goodness, with these words: "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6). This is the Face of God. This self-definition of God expresses his merciful love: a love that triumphs over sin, covers it, eliminates it. We can always be sure of this goodness which does not abandon us. There can be no clearer revelation. We have a God who refuses to destroy sinners and wants to show his love in an even more profound and surprising way to sinners themselves, in order to always offer them the possibility of conversion and forgiveness.

The Gospel completes this revelation, we heard in the First Reading, because it indicates the point to which God has shown his mercy. John the Evangelist refers to these words of Jesus: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (3:16). In the world there is evil, there is selfishness, there is wickedness, and God could come to judge this world, to destroy evil, to punish those who work in darkness. Instead, he shows his love for the world and for men and women, despite their sin, and sends what is most precious to him: his Only-Begotten Son. Not only does God send him, but he gives him as a gift to the world. Jesus is the Son of God who was born for us, who lived for us, who healed the sick, forgave sins and welcomed everyone. Responding to the love that comes from the Father, the Son gave his own life for us: on the cross God's merciful love reaches its highest expression. And it is on the cross that the Son of God obtains for us participation in eternal life that is communicated to us with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the mystery of the cross, the three divine Persons are present: the Father, who gives his Only-Begotten Son for the salvation of the world; the Son, who totally fulfils the Father's plan; the Holy Spirit — poured out by Jesus at the moment of his death — who comes to make us participants in divine life, to transform our existence so that it may be enlivened by divine love.

Dear brothers and sisters, faith in the Trinitarian God has characterized this Church of San Marino-Montefeltro,

too, throughout the course of its ancient and glorious history. The evangelization of this land is attributed to the holy stonemasons Marinus and Leo who are said to have come to Rimini from Dalmatia in the middle of the third century. Because of the holiness of their lives they were ordained, respectively a priest and a deacon, by Bishop Gaudentius who sent them inland, one to Monte Feretro, later known as San Leo, and the other to Monte Titano, later known as San Marino. Over and above the historical issues — which it is not our task to examine — it is interesting to state that Marinus and Leo brought into the context of this local reality, with the faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ, new perspectives and values, determining the birth of a culture and a civilization centred on the human person, the image of God and therefore the bearer of rights that precede all human legislation. The variety of ethnic groups — Romans, Goths and later Lombards — who came into contact with each other, sometimes in very conflictual situations, found in their common reference to faith a powerful factor for ethical, cultural, social and, in a certain way, political, edification. It was obvious to them that they could not consider a project of civilization complete until all the members of the people had become a living and well-structured Christian community built on faith in the Trinitarian God. Therefore one can rightly say that the wealth of this people, your wealth, dear Sammarinesi, has been and still is faith, and that this faith has created a truly unique civilization. Alongside your faith, we must also recall your absolute fidelity to the Bishop of Rome, whom this Church has always viewed with devotion and affection; likewise the attention shown to the great tradition of the Eastern Church and a deep devotion to the Virgin Mary.

You are justly proud of and grateful for all that the Holy Spirit has done in your Church throughout the centuries. However, you also know that the best way to appreciate an inheritance is to cultivate and enrich it. You are called, in fact, to develop this precious deposit in one of the most crucial moments in history. Today your mission is facing profound and rapid cultural, social, economic and political transformations that have determined new directions and changed mentalities, customs and sensitivities. Here too, as elsewhere, there is no lack of difficulties and obstacles, due above all to hedonistic models that obscure minds and risk uprooting all morality. The temptation has crept in to believe that man's true wealth is not faith, but personal and social power, his intellect, his culture and his capacity to manipulate scientific, technological and social reality. Thus, in these lands too, people have begun to replace faith and Christian values with presumed riches which ultimately prove to be inconsistent and unable to sustain the great promise of the true, the good, the beautiful and the just that for centuries your ancestors have identified with the experience of faith. Nor should we forget the crisis into which many families have been plunged, aggravated by the widespread psychological and spiritual fragility of couples, as well as the struggle experienced by many educators in offering formative continuity to young people, who are conditioned by various types of instability, and in the first place that of their social role and work opportunities.

Dear friends, I am well acquainted with the committed involvement of every member of this particular Church in fostering the various aspects of Christian life. I urge all the faithful to be like leaven in the world, showing that in both Montefeltro and San Marino there are enterprising and consistent Christians present. May priests and religious live in an ever more cordial and active ecclesial communion, helping and listening to the diocesan pastor. May you too feel the urgent need for a resurgence in priestly vocations and to those of special consecration: I appeal to families and to young people to open their hearts to a prompt response to the Lord's call. No one ever regrets being generous to God! I urge you lay people to be actively involved in the community so that, in addition to your specific civic, political, social and cultural tasks, you may find the time and inclination for a life of faith, for pastoral life. Dear people of San Marino, stay firmly faithful to the heritage built over the centuries under the inspiration of your great patrons, Marinus and Leo. I invoke God's blessing on your journey, today and in the future, and I commend you all to "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:14). Amen!