

Wees present in het publieke debat

Toespraak tot de Nederlandse bisschoppen bij hun Ad Liminabezoek aan de Apostelen



2 december 2013

Paus Franciscus

Beste broeders in het bisschopsambt,

Tijdens deze dagen van uw Ad Liminabezoek aan de Apostelen groet ik u allen van harte in de Heer en ik verzeker u van mijn gebed, opdat deze pelgrimage rijk mag zijn aan genade en vruchten voor de Kerk in Nederland. Beste kardinaal Willem Jacobus Eijk, dank voor de woorden die u in naam van allen tot mij gesproken heeft!

Laat mij u voor alles mijn erkentelijkheid tonen voor wat u doet voor de dienst van Christus en het Evangelie, welke u vervult voor het volk dat u is toevertrouwd in vaak harde omstandigheden. Het is niet gemakkelijk om hoopvol te blijven bij de moeilijkheden, waarmee u wordt geconfronteerd! De collegiale uitoefening van uw bisschopsambt in eenheid met de bisschop van Rome, is noodzakelijk om de hoop op een ware dialoog en een effectieve samenwerking te laten groeien. Het zal u goed doen om met vertrouwen de tekenen van vitaliteit in ogenschouw te nemen, die in de christelijke gemeenschappen van uw bisdommen duidelijke aanwezig zijn. Het zijn tekenen van de actieve aanwezigheid van de Heer te midden van de mensen in uw land, die wachten op authentieke getuigen van hoop, die u laat leven van wat van Christus komt.

De Kerk blijft zich met een moederlijk geduld inspannen om antwoorden te geven op onrust van mensen, geconfronteerd met angst en ontmoediging, de toekomst tegemoet zien. Met uw priesters, uw directe medewerkers, wilt u nabij zijn aan mensen die lijden onder een spirituele leegte en die op zoek zijn naar de zin van hun leven, zelfs als zij dat niet altijd weten uit te drukken. We kunnen hen op die zoektocht alleen maar broederlijk vergezellen door betrokken naar hen te luisteren en hen voor te gaan in de hoop en de vreugde die Jezus Christus ons geeft.

Daarom probeert de Kerk het geloof op een authentieke, begrijpelijke en pastorale wijze voor te houden. Het "Jaar van het Geloof" is een gelukkige gelegenheid geweest om duidelijk te maken hoe zeer de inhoud van het geloof alle mensen kan bereiken. De christelijke antropologie en de sociale leer van de Kerk maken deel uit van het erfgoed, van de ervaring en van het humanisme die aan de basis liggen van de Europese beschaving. Zij kunnen helpen om concreet het primaat van de mens boven de techniek en de structuren te herbevestigen. Dit primaat van de mens veronderstelt een openheid voor transcendentie. Daarentegen, wanneer je de transcendente dimensie wegdrukt, verarmt een cultuur die de mogelijkheid moet laten zien in constante harmonie geloof en rede, waarheid en vrijheid steeds met elkaar te verbinden.

Aldus stelt de Kerk niet alleen onveranderlijke morele waarheden voor en houdingen die tegen de stroom van de wereld ingaan, maar zij stelt deze ook voor als de sleutel van menselijk geluk en van sociale ontwikkeling. Christenen hebben een eigen missie om deze uitdaging te laten zien.



De vorming van gewetens wordt een prioriteit, vooral door de vorming van een kritisch oordeel, alles met een positieve houding voor de sociale realiteit; zo vermijdt men de oppervlakkigheid van oordeel en het verval tot onverschilligheid. Vandaar dat van katholieken, priesters, religieuzen en leken een solide en kwalitatieve vorming vereist wordt. Ik moedig u aan om met vereende krachten te beantwoorden aan deze behoefte en ervoor te zorgen dat het evangelie optimaal wordt verkondigd. In deze context heeft het getuigenis en het engagement van leken in de Kerk en in de samenleving hun eigen plaats en zij moeten hierbij krachtig ondersteund worden. Als gedoopten zijn wij allen uitgenodigd om daar waar we staan missionaire leerlingen te zijn.

Onze samenleving wordt krachtig gemarkeerd door secularisatie. Ik moedig u aan ook present te zijn in het publieke debat, op alle domeinen waar mensen aanwezig zijn om de barmhartigheid van God en Zijn tederheid voor iedereen zichtbaar te maken. In de wereld van vandaag moet de Kerk zonder aarzelen de woorden van Jezus herhalen: "Kom allen tot mij, die vermoeid zijn en onder lasten gebukt, ik zal jullie rust geven." (Mt. 11, 28). Maar laten wij ons de vraag stellen: wie een christen ontmoet, begrijpt hij iets van de goedheid van God, van de vreugde Christus te hebben ontmoet? Zoals ik al vaker bevestigd heb, vertrekkend vanuit een authentieke ervaring van het bisschopsambt, groeit de Kerk niet door proselitisme maar door aantrekkingskracht. Zij is naar allen gezonden om de hoop te doen ontwaken! Daarom is het belangrijk om uw gelovigen te bemoedigen en om gelegenheden tot dialoog aan te grijpen en present te zijn bij instanties waar de toekomst bepaald wordt; zo zullen ze hun bijdrage leveren aan het debat over de grote vragen van de samenleving betreffende bijvoorbeeld het gezin, het huwelijk of het einde van het leven.

Meer dan ooit is er een noodzaak tot oecumene en een uitnodiging om te komen tot een ware dialoog die elementen van waarheid en van goedheid zoekt en die antwoorden geeft vanuit de inspiratie van het evangelie. De Heilige Geest laat ons vanuit onszelf vertrekken op weg naar de anderen!

In een in veel opzichten rijk land raakt de armoede veel mensen. Waardeer de edelmoedigheid van de gelovigen om het licht en het meeleven van Christus te brengen in milieus die Hem verwachten, vooral de meest gemarginaliseerden!

Zo zal de katholieke school die aan jongeren een goede opvoeding geeft, voortgaan voorkeur te geven aan hun menselijke en spirituele vorming, in een geest van dialoog en broederlijkheid met hen die hun geloof niet delen. Het is dus belangrijk dat de jongeren een goede inhoudelijke catechese ontvangen, die het geloof ondersteunt en die leidt tot de ontmoeting met Christus. Solide vorming en een open geest! Zo zien we hoe de Blijde Boodschap zich blijft verspreiden.

U weet heel goed dat de toekomst en de vitaliteit van de kerk in Nederland ook afhangt van roepingen tot het priesterschap en het religieuze leven! Het is noodzakelijk een krachtige en aantrekkelijke roepingenpastoraal op te zetten en tegelijk gemeenschappelijk te zoeken naar begeleiding bij de menselijke en spirituele rijping van de seminaristen. Dat zij in hun leven een persoonlijke relatie opbouwen met de Heer, die het fundament van hun priesterleven zal zijn! Wij mogen ook de urgentie voelen om tot de Heer van de oogst te bidden! De herontdekking van het gebed in diverse vormen en speciaal de eucharistische aanbidding is een motief van hoop om de Kerk te laten groeien en wortelen. Het is heel belangrijk en essentieel om dicht bij uw priesters te zijn, beschikbaar voor ieder van uw priesters om hen te ondersteunen en te leiden als het nodig is. Neem als een vader de tijd om hen altijd te ontvangen en naar hen te luisteren, wanneer zij daar om vragen. En vergeet ook niet degenen te ontmoeten die zelf niet komen. Onder hen zijn er helaas ook van wie het eerste elan sterk verminderd is.

Heel speciaal wil ik mijn compassie tonen en u verzekeren van mijn gebed voor alle mensen die slachtoffer geworden zijn van seksueel misbruik en hun gezinnen. Ik vraag u door te gaan en hen te blijven ondersteunen



op hun smartvolle weg van genezing, die zij met moed ondernemen. Attent op het verlangen van Christus, de Goede Herder, neem ter harte, bewaak en laat groeien de liefde en eenheid in alles en tussen allen.

Tot slot wil ik u nog bedanken voor de tekenen van vitaliteit waarmee de Heer de Kerk in Nederland zegent, in een context die niet altijd gemakkelijk is. Dat hij u bemoedigt en u bevestigt in uw delicate missie uw gemeenschappen te begeleiden op de weg van geloof en eenheid, van waarheid en liefde. U toevertrouwend, eveneens uw priesters, religieuzen en de leken in uw bisdommen, aan de bescherming van de Heilige Maagd Maria, Moeder van de Kerk, geef ik u van harte mijn apostolische zegen verbonden met de vrede en geestelijke vreugde. Broederlijk vraag ik u om mij niet te vergeten in uw gebed.

Bron: Website RKKerk.nl

Aandacht voor ouderen met degeneratieve ziekten

Address to participants in the 28th International Conference sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers

Paul VI Audience Hall
23 November 2013
Pope Francis



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for your welcome! I cordially greet you all.

Today I would like to repeat that the elderly have always been and still are protagonists in the Church. Today more than ever the Church must set an example for the whole of society that, despite their inevitable and sometimes grave “ailments”, the elderly are always important; indeed, they are indispensable. They carry the memory and wisdom of life to hand down to others, and they participate fully in the Church’s mission. Let us remember that, in God’s eyes, human life always retains its value far beyond any discriminating vision.

The increased life expectancy which developed over the course of the 20th century has entailed that a growing number of people are facing neurodegenerative diseases, which are often accompanied by a deterioration of the cognitive capacities. These diseases push the socio-health care world both to the horizons of research, and to those of assistance and care in social facilities, as well as in the family, which remains the privileged place of warmth and closeness.

The provision of adequate assistance and services which respect the dignity, identity and needs of patients is important, but the support of those who assist them, whether family members or healthcare professionals, is also important. This is only possible within the context of trust and within an atmosphere of a mutually respectful relationship. Lived in this way, care becomes quite an enriching experience, both professionally and humanly; otherwise, it becomes all too similar to cold, basic “physical protection”.

It therefore becomes necessary to be committed to a form of assistance that, alongside the traditional biomedical model, offers spaces of dignity and freedom, far, far away from closure and silence, that torture of



silence! Silence is so often transformed into torture. People who live in assisted care are often surrounded by this sense of enclosure and silence. Within this perspective, I would like to stress the importance of the religious and spiritual aspect. Indeed, this is a dimension that remains vital even when cognitive faculties have been reduced or lost. It is a matter of implementing a special pastoral approach in order to accompany the religious life of elderly patients with serious degenerative diseases in various forms, to ensure that their minds and hearts do not interrupt their dialogue and relationship with God.

I would like to conclude by greeting the elderly. Dear friends, you are not only recipients of the good news of the Gospel message; in virtue of your Baptism you shall always be its heralds in the truest sense. Each day you can live as witnesses of the Lord, in your families, in your parishes and in your habitual meeting places, by making Christ and his Gospel known, especially to the younger generations. Remember that it was two elderly people who recognized Jesus in the Temple and proclaimed him with joy, with hope. I entrust all of you to the protection of Our Lady, and I thank you from my heart for your prayers. Now, all together let us pray to Our Lady for all healthcare workers, for the sick, for the elderly and then let us receive the blessing (Hail Mary...).

Ongeboren kind heeft Gods aangezicht

Address to Group of Catholic Gynecologists: "Spread the Gospel of Life. Every unborn child, condemned unjustly to being aborted, has the face of the Lord"

Zenit, 20 september 2013



20 september 2013

Pope Francis

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Please excuse the delay, there were complications today on account of the audiences ... forgive me please.

1. The first reflection that I would like to share with you is this: today we are witnessing a paradoxical situation, which concerns the medical profession. On the one hand, we note — and we thank God for it — the advances made in medicine, thanks to the work of scientists who passionately and unsparingly dedicate themselves to the search for new cures. On the other hand, however, we also find the danger of a doctor losing his own identity as a servant of life. Cultural disorientation has beset what seemed to be an unassailable sphere: yours, medicine!

Although, by their very nature, healthcare professions are at the service of life, they are sometimes induced to disregard life itself. Yet, as the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* reminds us: "Openness to life is at the centre of true development". There is no true development without this openness to life. "If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away. The acceptance of life strengthens moral fibre and makes people capable of mutual help" (n. 28). This paradoxical situation may be seen in the fact that, while persons are being accorded new rights — at times

even presumed rights — life itself is not always protected as a primary value and primordial right of every human being. The final aim of the doctor's action is always the defence and promotion of life.

2. The second point: in this context of contradiction, the Church makes an appeal to consciences, to the consciences of all healthcare professionals and volunteers, and especially to you gynaecologists, who are called to assist in the birth of new human lives. Yours is a singular vocation and mission, which requires study, conscientiousness and humanity. There was a time when women who helped in the delivery were called "comadre" [co-mothers, midwives]: like one mother with another, with the real mother. You, too, are "co-mothers" and "co-fathers", you too.

A widespread mentality of the useful, the "culture of waste" that today enslaves the hearts and minds of so many, comes at a very high cost: it asks for the elimination of human beings, especially if they are physically or socially weaker. Our response to this mentality is a decisive and unreserved "yes" to life. "The first right of the human person is his life. He has other goods and some are more precious, but this one is fundamental — the condition of all the others" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on procured abortion, 18 November 1974, n. 11). Things have a price and can be sold, but people have a dignity; they are worth more than things and are above price. So often we find ourselves in situations where we see that what is valued the least is life. That is why concern for human life in its totality has become in recent years a real priority for the Church's Magisterium, especially for the most defenseless; i.e., the disabled, the sick, the newborn, children, the elderly, those whose lives are most defenseless.

In a frail human being, each one of us is invited to recognize the face of the Lord, who in his human flesh experienced the indifference and solitude to which we so often condemn the poorest of the poor, whether in developing countries or in wealthy societies. Every child who, rather than being born, is condemned unjustly to being aborted, bears the face of Jesus Christ, bears the face of the Lord, who even before he was born, and then just after birth, experienced the world's rejection. And every elderly person – I spoke of children: let us move to the elderly, another point! And every elderly person, even if he is ill or at the end of his days, bears the face of Christ. They cannot be discarded, as the "culture of waste" suggests! They cannot be thrown away!

3. The third aspect is a mandate: be witnesses and diffusers of the "culture of life". Your being Catholic entails a greater responsibility: first of all to yourselves, through a commitment consistent with your Christian vocation; and then to contemporary culture, by contributing to recognizing the transcendent dimension of human life, the imprint of God's creative work, from the first moment of its conception. This is a task of the new evangelization that often requires going against the tide and paying for it personally. The Lord is also counting on you to spread the "gospel of life".

Within this perspective, hospital departments of gynecology are privileged places of witness and evangelization, for wherever the Church becomes "the bearer of the presence of God", there, too, she becomes the "instrument of the true humanization of man and the world" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization, n. 9).

By fostering an awareness that the human person in his frailty stands at the centre of all medical and healthcare work, the healthcare facility becomes "a place in which the relationship of treatment is not a profession" — your relationship of treatment is not a profession — "but a mission; where the charity of the Good Samaritan is the first seat of learning and the face of suffering man is the Christ's own Face" (Benedict XVI, Address at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, 3 May 2012).

Dear friends and physicians, you are called to care for life in its initial stage; remind everyone, by word and deed, that this is sacred — at each phase and at every age — that it is always valuable. And not as a matter of



faith — no, no — but of reason, as a matter of science! There is no human life more sacred than another, just as there is no human life qualitatively more significant than another. The credibility of a healthcare system is not measured solely by efficiency, but above all by the attention and love given to the person, whose life is always sacred and inviolable.

Never fail to ask the Lord and the Virgin Mary for the strength to accomplish your work well and to bear witness courageously — courageously! Today courage is needed — to bear witness courageously to the “gospel of life”! Thank you very much.

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.

COMECE Reflections on Science and Bioethics

How can we deal with patients in state of post-coma unresponsiveness? What are the prospects for human enhancement by technological means? How can we fight organ trafficking and transplant tourism? What exactly are sexual and reproductive health rights? These are very technical yet nevertheless crucial topics with which EU lawmakers are more and more confronted. In order to offer an insight into the ethical implications of these issues the COMECE Secretariat has now published volume 2 of 'Science & Ethics'. The Opinions developed by its Bioethics Reflection Group provide an analysis of these concepts and situations and offer reflections and recommendations directed towards EU decision-makers.



The principal and most recent Report and Opinion in the collection deals with the term 'sexual and reproductive health' which is deeply ambiguous since it appears to include abortion as a 'right', in contradiction with a strict interpretation of international law and European legislation. The repeated use of the term – in declarations, resolutions, recommendations– tends to bring the phrase into common use and contributes, through customary law, to the establishment of a 'right', despite the reservations made by many countries, the primary actors in international law, and despite the fact that it is not mentioned in any convention or universal international



treaty. The COMECE Opinion therefore offers a clarification of this concept as well as some recommendations to EU decision-makers.

The publication contains three other Opinions on 'the state of post-coma unresponsiveness', 'human enhancement' and the 'non-commercialisation of parts of the human body'. The publication is available in English and French. It can be viewed and downloaded [COMECE Sexual and reproductive health, post-coma unresponsiveness, human enhancement and non-commercialisation of the human body](#).

The COMECE Secretariat monitors and analyses current EU policy and legislation concerning, inter alia, research, health and other matters with relevance to the field of bioethics. To this end, the Secretariat of COMECE has maintained since 1996 a Reflection Group on Bioethics comprising 15 Bioethics experts representing some of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences. Such experts provide a rich exchange of views facilitated by their multi-disciplinary backgrounds including theological, philosophical, legal, medical and other scientific disciplines. Members meet twice a year to discuss the impact of scientific advances and biotechnological innovations for mankind. This is done normally with contributions from invited external experts, either from the EU institutions or other entities.

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.