



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
"CENTESIMUS ANNUS - PRO PONTIFICE" FOUNDATION**

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 19 May 2007

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Friends!*

I am truly pleased to welcome you in this visit that follows the Eucharistic celebration in which you participated this morning in St Peter's Basilica.

My cordial greeting goes to each one of you, which I direct in the first place to Cardinal Attilio Nicora, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, thanking all the representatives for the words they have addressed to me.

My greeting then goes to Count Lorenzo Rossi di Montelera, your President, to the Bishops and priests present, and I extend it to all the members of your worthy Sodality, also to those who could not attend today's meeting, as well as to your families.

In the course of this year's meeting you reflected on the fundamental commitment that characterizes the *Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontifice* Foundation: to deepen the most current aspects of the Church's social doctrine with reference to the most pressing problems and challenges of today's world.

Secondly, you have come to present to the Pope the fruit of your generosity, so that he may use it to respond to the many requests for help that reach him from every part of the world. And I assure you, they are truly many.

Thank you, therefore, for this contribution, thank you for what you do and for the commitment with which you dedicate yourselves to the activity of your Association, willed by my venerable Predecessor John Paul II. I welcome the occasion to offer some brief reflections for your consideration on the ample and stimulating social theme you have taken up during your work.

You have, in fact, analyzed the changes taking place in the "emerging" countries under the economic and social profile, with the resulting cultural and religious repercussions. In particular, you have focused your attention on the Asian nations, marked by a strong dynamic of economic growth which does not, however, always bring real social development, and on Africa, where economic growth and social development unfortunately meet many obstacles and challenges.

What these people undoubtedly need, as well as those of every part of the earth, is social progress and economic harmony and a real human dimension.

In this regard I am pleased to repeat an incisive passage in the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* of our beloved John Paul II, where he affirms that "development must not be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human". And he adds that "[i]t is not only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest countries, but rather of building up a more decent life through united labour, of concretely enhancing every individual's dignity and creativity, as well as his capacity to respond to his personal vocation, and thus to God's call" inherent in it (n. 29).

Here we find a constant teaching of the Church's social doctrine, often repeated by my Predecessors in these last decades. Exactly this year is the 40th anniversary of the publication of a great social Encyclical of the Servant of God Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*. In this text, often cited in successive Documents, that great Pontiff already strongly asserted that "[d]evelopment cannot be limited to mere economic growth". In fact, "to be authentic, it must be complete: integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man" (n. 14).

Attention to the true demands of the human being, respect for the dignity of each person and the sincere pursuit of the common good are the inspiring principles that it is good to keep in mind when the development of a nation is being planned.

Unfortunately, however, this does not always happen. Today's globalized society often registers paradoxical and dramatic imbalances. As a result, when one considers the increasing toll of economic growth, when one stops to analyze the problems linked to modern progress, not excluding the high rate of pollution and the irresponsible consumption of natural and environmental resources, it appears evident that only a process of globalization attentive to the demands of solidarity can assure humanity a future of authentic well-being and stable peace for all.

Dear friends, I know that you, professionals and lay faithful actively committed in the world, want to contribute to resolve these problems in the light of the Church's social doctrine. Your goal is also to promote a culture of solidarity and to favour economic development attentive to the real expectations of individuals and peoples.

While I encourage you to follow this pledge, I would like to confirm that only by the ordered interweaving of the three critically needed aspects of development - economic, social and human - can a free and solidary society be born.

In this circumstance, I willingly make my own what Pope Montini expressed with impassioned clarity in his above-cited Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*: "If further development calls for the work of more and more technicians, even more necessary is the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism which will enable modern man to find himself anew by embracing the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation" (n. 20).

This is your mission; this is the duty that the Lord entrusts to you at the service of the Church and society, and I know that you are carrying it out with zeal and generosity.

In this regard, I am happy to learn that your Foundation is extending its presence in various countries of Europe and America. I am truly pleased about it!

Upon you and your initiatives, as also upon your families, I invoke the abundant Blessing of God.

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