



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE OFFICES OF THE DAILY NEWSPAPER OF *L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO*
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Tuesday, 5 July 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to be able to meet you in the offices of the daily newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, where every day you carry out your valuable and highly qualified work at the service of the Holy See. I greet you all with affection. I greet the Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Giovanni Maria Vian, the Assistant Editor, the editorial staff, and the whole of this paper's large family.

A few days ago, on 1 July, *L'Osservatore Romano* reached the important milestone of 150 years of existence. I would like to wish you really warmly, as one does at home, "Happy Birthday!". This event gives rise to sentiments of gratitude and legitimate pride, but alongside the special, solemn commemorations — I also wanted to come here to be with you, to express my gratitude to each one of those who actually "put out" the newspaper, with human and Christian enthusiasm and with professionalism.

For some time I have been truly curious to see how a newspaper is produced today, to see where the paper comes into being and to meet, at least for a moment, the people who put our paper together. I now have the joy of discovering the modern method, totally different from what it was 50 years ago, which brings a newspaper into being. It demands far more human creativity, let us say, than technical work. And thus this "workshop" is certainly dedicated to doing, but first and above all to knowing, to thinking, to judging and to reflecting. It is not even solely a "workshop". It is above all a great observatory, as its name says. An observatory for seeing the reality of this world and for informing ourselves of this reality.

It seems to me that from this observatory we see both things that are distant from us as well as those that are close. Distant in a dual sense: first of all remote in all the parts of the world, as are the Philippines, Australia and Latin America; for me this is one of the great advantages of *L'Osservatore Romano* which truly offers a universal information, which really views the whole world and not only a part of it. I am really grateful for this because in newspapers news is provided but with a preponderance of our own world and this makes us forget many other parts of the earth that are no less important.

Here may be seen something of the coincidence of the *Urbs et Orbis* which is characteristic of catholicity and, in a certain sense, is also a Roman heritage, truly to view the world and not only ourselves.

In the second place, from this observatory we see distant things in another sense too. "*L'Osservatore*" [the observer] does not stop at the surface of events but goes to their root. Beyond the surface it shows us the cultural roots and the depth of things.

Moreover in my opinion this is not only a newspaper but also a cultural journal. I admire the fact that it is possible every day to make important contributions that help us understand better the human being, the roots from which things come and how they should be understood, brought about and transformed. But this newspaper also sees things from close at hand. Sometimes it is really difficult to see our small world from close to which is nevertheless an immense world.

There is another phenomenon that makes me think and for which I am grateful: namely, that no one can be informed about everything. Even the most globalized media, so to speak, cannot say everything: it is impossible.

Discernment, a choice, is always necessary. Hence in presenting events the criterion of choice is crucial: there is never pure fact, there is always also a choice that determines what appears and what does not appear. And we know well that the priority choices today, in many organs of public opinion, are often highly disputable. And *L'Osservatore Romano*, as the Editor-in-Chief said, has always offered in its masthead two criteria: "*Unicuique suum*" and "*Non praevalent*".

This characteristically sums up the culture of the Western world. On the one hand, the great Roman law, natural law, the natural human culture expressed in Roman culture, with its law and its sense of justice; and on the other hand the Gospel.

One could also say: with these two criteria — of natural law and of the Gospel — we have justice as our criterion and, moreover, the hope that derives from faith. Together, these two criteria — justice that respects everyone and hope that sees even negative things in the light of a divine goodness of which we may be sure through faith — really help to offer a human, a humanistic, information in the sense of a humanism whose roots are in God's goodness. And in this way it is

not only information but, really, cultural formation. For all this I am grateful to you. I warmly impart to all of you and to your loved ones the Apostolic Blessing.