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Presentation of the third “Economy and Society” International Award of the “Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice” Foundation and the International Congress “Constructive Alternatives in an Era of Global Turmoil”

This morning in the Holy See Press Office, a press conference was held to present the third “Economy and Society” International Award, to promote knowledge of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, and the International Congress “Constructive Alternatives in an Era of Global Turmoil”.

The winners are: for the International Award, the German Professor Markus Vogt, for his work *Prinzip Nachhaltigkeit. Ein Entwurf aus theologisch-ethischer Perspektive*, Monaco 2013; and for the prizes for journalists, instituted this year, the French Assumptionist Fr. Dominique Greiner, whose prize-winning blog “*La doctrine social sur le fil*”, is published on the website of the daily “*La Croix*”, and the German Burkhard Schäfers, for his radio show “*Oswald von Nell-Breuning - Was von der katholischen Soziallehre geblieben ist*”.

The award will be presented on 18 May in Rome’s Palazzo della Cancelleria, in the context of the annual international congress of the Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice (CAPP) Foundation, “Constructive Alternatives in an Era of Global Turmoil. Job creation and human integrity in the digital space – incentives for solidarity and civic virtue”, to take place in the New Synod Hall in the Vatican and in Palazzo della Cancelleria from 18 to 20 May.

The speakers were Cardinal Reinhard Marx, archbishop of Munich und Freising, and president of the CAPP Foundation, Domingo Sugranyes Bickel.

Cardinal Marx, president of the jury of the “Society and Economy” International Award of the CAPP Foundation, outlined the reasons for the award, selected this time from among more than 57 works from 12 countries and five continents, and explained that with the institution of the award for journalists, the Foundation wishes to acknowledge the importance of the profession in disseminating the Church’s social doctrine.

“Markus Vogt has worked for some years as an ecology expert for the German government, and from 1998 to 2007 as professor of Christian Social Ethics at the Salesian philosophical-theological University in Benediktbeuern”, he said. “He is currently professor of the same subject at the University of Munich. For more

than twenty years, as Cardinal Marx explained, he has been studying sustainability and can be considered one of the leading experts on this subject, which is also the focus of Pope Francis's recent Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

"The principle of sustainability is no stranger to traditional economics", remarked Cardinal Marx. "Throughout the centuries there have been principles that take into account the consequences of human action on the environment, for example by regulating the use of woods and forests. Modern technologies however have increased our possibilities and therefore the consequences of our actions on the world with the result that today's problems have a much broader range requiring a global rethink".

In his book, Markus Vogt suggests we "reconsider the connections between the three essential interdependent facets of human life: the economy, ecology and the social dimension. In the long run, the economy will not flourish without a healthy environment and without resolving the problem of poverty. But this is equally true for the two other dimensions: it will be impossible to safeguard the environment without a functioning economy and without offering everyone the opportunity to develop their gifts while the problem of poverty cannot be tackled with a weak economy and without proper care of the environment".

"According to Vogt an example of a society where ecology, economy and social affairs were well coordinated was the Old Testament Jewish society. This was a society where men, respecting certain rules concerning the environment and the poor (for instance the sabbatical year in which the fields were kept fallow and debts were forgiven), were able to extract even from poor soil enough food to avoid famines which recurred elsewhere over several centuries".

Therefore, the author holds that we cannot resolve unaided the enormous problems facing today's world. "Vogt rejects the view that would make ecology a new doctrine of salvation. The person, not the environment, is at centre of the Church's social doctrine and the environment becomes crucial depending on the person's needs. What is required therefore is a discerning process capable of spelling out the connections between the various issues. Vogt's book addresses the issue of sustainability from different ethical, theological, scientific, sociological and even political perspectives. The challenge here is to find new ways of thinking which also for example shoulder responsibility for future generations (the "solidarity" principle) that considers nature as creation, that is a gift, and not merely as the embodiment of resources to be used for industrial production".

"It is true that politics play a key role in addressing the ecological issue and yet the competences of international institutions must also be strengthened. At the same time, it is not entirely a political problem. Indeed, Vogt underlines the importance of the subsidiarity principle, pointing out that many steps must be taken at local level by the intermediary bodies that form society".

"What is the role of the Church in the search for sustainability?", asked the cardinal archbishop of Munich. "Vogt suggests that it accepts sustainability as one of the fundamental principles of its social doctrine alongside personality, solidarity and subsidiarity. In fact, he considers sustainability a modern-day development of the traditional principle of the common good".

In conclusion, he remarked that "reading Vogt's book is an enriching experience. He does not wish to endorse a unilateral way of thinking, but knows how to take even-handed and unbiased positions in the face of radical attitudes. Nonetheless, he also indicates some concrete ways to improve our world".

With regard to the winning journalists, the Assumptionist Fr. Dominique Greiner teaches moral, social and political theology at the Theological Faculties of the Catholic Institute of Lille and Paris and is editor-in-chief of the "La Croix" newspaper. His blog "*La doctrine sociale sur le fil*" was started in 2013 and focuses on the Church's social doctrine. It includes more than one hundred articles published in "La Croix" in recent years, which can be subdivided into six main areas: 1) Ecology and ways of life; 2) The poor and migrants; 3) Economics, market, enterprise and employment; 4) Politics and the common good; 5) War, peace, terrorism and 6) Miscellaneous. The blog uses the resources provided by the internet to offer those wishing to widen their interest in the Church's social doctrine, a rich and invaluable tool vis-à-vis "a more just, more fraternal and more supportive society".

The second award-winning journalist is Burkhard Schäfers who works in Munich as a journalist for public radio (Deutschlandfunk and DeutschlandradioKultur), for various newspapers and some online media, and is director of the Institut zur Förderung publizistischen Nachwuchses (Institute for the advancement of new generations of publicists). He receives the award for the 15-minute radio show showing the qualities of Oswald von Nell-Breuning (1890-1991), one of the major protagonists of the Church's twentieth century social doctrine. Von Nell-Breuning was one of the main authors of Pius XI's 1931 *Quadragesimo Anno*. During his long life, he recognised the need to start from facts rather than from rules and regulations, in order to understand the social reality. During Schäfers's broadcast, several interviewees illustrate the principles of subsidiarity, personality and solidarity. The contribution concludes with some reflections on the relevance of the Church's social doctrine in today's Germany.

The president of the Managing Board, Domingo Sugranyes Bickel, stated that the annual International Congress of the CAPP Foundation will take place in the Vatican from 18 to 20 May 2017, on the theme: "Constructive Alternatives in an Era of Global Turmoil. Job creation and human integrity in the digital space – incentives for solidarity and civic virtue".

"The conference will attract around 250 professionals, business persons, workers' representatives, politicians, academics and specialists in Catholic social teaching", he affirmed. "The conference receives reports from several regional meetings and international expert consultations, as well as reports from its local chapters and members in 19 countries".

He went on to illustrate the work carried out by the Foundation during the last 24 months, focusing on the following themes:

- Business initiatives in the fight against poverty, with contributions presented at its May 2016 international conference at the Vatican and at the CAPP-USA/Fordham University conference held in New York City in September, 2016.
- A digital economy at the service of the common good, with a special focus on the future of work (CAPP Italian conference, held at the headquarters of the 'La Civiltà Cattolica' in November, 2016) and the cultural, organizational and ethical effects of digitisation (CAPP/Universidad Pontificia Comillas/BBVA fourth 'Dublin Process' expert consultation, Madrid, January 2017)
- New alliances and ethical dialogue in the search for inclusive economic reforms (May 2016 CAPP International conference at the Vatican).

All the papers are made available for further research and debate on the CAPP website www.centesimusannus.org and through other publications. These activities aim at fulfilling the CAPP Foundation's purpose, as defined by founder St. John Paul II: "to promote informed knowledge of the social teachings of the Church and of the activity of the Holy See among qualified and socially motivated business and professional leaders". It also tries to take up the challenging message addressed to the Foundation by Pope Francis: "It is my hope that your conference will contribute to generating new models of economic progress more clearly directed to the universal common good, inclusion and integral development, the creation of labour and investment in human resources."

By adhering to the CAPP Foundation, members commit themselves to acquire knowledge of Catholic social teachings and to disseminate the conclusions reached within the Foundation in their professional circles. They must be Catholic. In addition, the Board has established a group of friends of the CAPP Foundation to allow non-Catholics to collaborate in its work. The Foundation has always tried to maintain rigorous standards in its work, whereby academic and ethical research is confronted with direct management experience. The Board is assisted by an international Scientific Committee and by ecclesiastical counsellors.

The CAPP Foundation's activities are supported by members' fees and donations. The endowment's revenue allows the Foundation to make a donation every year to the Holy Father's charities. The amount given to the

Holy Father and to Holy See institutions on his indications total more than two million euros since 2010. Fully audited accounts are available on the Foundation's website.
