



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLENARY
OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE**

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 2 October 2014*

*Dear Cardinals,
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,
Brothers and Sisters,*

I greet you all affectionately and I thank Cardinal Peter Turkson for the words with which he introduced this meeting. Your Plenary Assembly coincides with the fifth anniversary of the promulgation of the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, a fundamental document for the evangelization of society, which offers valuable guidelines for the presence of Catholics in society, in institutions, in the economy, in finance and in politics. *Caritas in Veritate* called attention to the benefits but also the dangers of globalization, when it is not oriented to the good of peoples. If globalization has notably increased the aggregate wealth of the whole and of numerous individual States, it has also exacerbated the gap among the various social groups, creating inequality and new poverty in the very countries considered the wealthiest.

One of the aspects of today's economic system is the exploitation of the international disparity in labour costs, which weighs on thousands of people who live on less than two dollars a day. This imbalance not only fails to respect the dignity of those who provide low-cost labour, but it destroys the sources of employment in those regions in which it is the most protected. This raises the issue of creating mechanisms for the protection of the right to employment, as well as of the environment, in the presence of a growing consumerist ideology, which does not show responsibility in conflicts with cities and with Creation.

The growth of inequality and poverty undermines inclusive and participatory democracy at risk which always presupposes an economy and an equitable and nonexclusive market. It is a

question, therefore, of overcoming the structural causes of inequality and poverty. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I wished to point out three fundamental instruments for the social inclusion of the most needy: education, access to health care and employment for all (cf. n. 192).

In other words, the social state of right and, in particular, the fundamental right to employment should not be dismantled. This cannot be considered a variable dependent on financial and monetary markets. It is a fundamental good in regard to dignity (cf. *ibid.*), to the formation of a family, to the realization of the common good and of peace. Education, work and access to health care for all (cf. *ibid.*, 205) are key elements for development and the just distribution of goods, for the attainment of social justice, for membership in society (cf. *ibid.*, 53), and for free and responsible participation in political life, meaning the administration of the *res publica*. Views that claim to increase profitability, at the cost of restricting the labour market, thereby creating new exclusions, are not in conformity with an economy at the service of man and of the common good, with an inclusive and participatory democracy.

Another problem arises from the persistent inequalities in economic sectors, in wages, in commercial and speculative banks, including institutions and global problems: it is necessary to maintain deep concern for the poor and for social justice (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 201). It requires, on one hand, significant *reforms* that provide for the redistribution of the wealth produced and universalization of free markets at the service of families, and, on the other, the redistribution of sovereignty, on both the national and supranational planes.

Caritas in Veritate also called us to regard the present social issue as an environmental question. In particular, it remarked on the link between environmental ecology and human ecology, between the former and life's ethics.

The principle of *Caritas in Veritate* is extremely relevant today. A love full of truth is in fact the foundation on which to build the peace that is particularly desired and necessary today for the good of all. With this principle, dangerous fanaticisms, conflicts over the possession of resources, migrations of biblical dimensions, unrelenting epidemics of hunger and poverty, human trafficking, social and economic injustices and disparities, and unequal access to collective goods can be overcome.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Church is always moving, seeking new ways to proclaim the Gospel also in the social sphere. I thank you for your commitment in this area and, on entrusting you to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I ask you to pray for me and I bless you from my heart. Thank you.

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