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Audience with the participants in the Convention organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on the fiftieth anniversary of “Populorum Progressio”

At 11.30 this morning, in the Synod Hall, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the convention organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, which took place in the Vatican from 3 to 4 April.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

Thank you for the invitation and welcome. I thank you for your presence and for your activities in promoting human development and the common good. I thank Cardinal Turkson for his words of greeting and for having initiated, not without difficulty, the new Pontifical Council for Integral Development of Human Services. It has been a model process, in peace, creativity, consultation, truly a model of ecclesial construction: thank you, Your Eminence.

You have come to this International Congress as the birth of the new dicastery significantly corresponds with the 50th anniversary of Blessed Paul VI’s encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. It was he who clarified in detail in the encyclical the meaning of “full development” (cf. n. 21), and it was he who proposed that concise and accurate formula: “the development of each man and of the whole man” (n. 14).

What does full or integral development mean – that is, the development of each man and the whole man – today and in the near future? In the wake of Paul VI, perhaps in the verb “to integrate” – a verb very dear to me – we can find a fundamental orientation for the new dicastery. Let us look at some aspects together.

It means *integrating the different peoples of the earth*. The duty of solidarity requires us to seek fair ways of sharing, so that there is no longer that dramatic inequality between those who have too much and those who have nothing, between those who discard and those who are discarded. Only the path of integration between peoples can permit to humanity a future of peace and hope.

It means *offering viable models of social integration*. Everyone has a contribution to make to the whole of society, everyone has a special feature that can be useful to enable us to live together, and no-one is excluded from contributing something for the good of all. This is both a right and a duty. And the principle of subsidiarity guarantees the need for the contribution of everyone, both as individuals and as groups, if we want to create a human society open to all.

It also means the *integration in development of all those elements of which it is truly constituted*. The different systems: the economy, finance, labour, culture, family life, and religion are, each in its own way, essential components of this growth. None of them can be rendered absolute and none of them can be excluded from a concept of integral human development which takes into account that the human life is like an orchestra that sounds good if the different instruments are in accord and follow a score shared by all.

In addition, it means *integrating individual and community dimensions*. It is true that we are children of a culture, at least in the Western world, which has exalted the individual to the point of turning it into an island, as if one can be happy alone. On the other hand, there are ideological views and political powers that have crushed the person, that have standardized it and deprived it of that freedom without man no longer feels human. This standardization is also due to economic powers that wish to take advantage of globalization, instead of encouraging greater sharing among men, simply to impose a global market of which they themselves set the rules and reap the profits. The self and the community are not in competition with each other, but the self can mature only in the presence of authentic relationships, and the community is generative when its members are, together and individually. This is even more applicable to the family, which is the first cell of society and where we learn to live together.

Finally, it means *integrating the body and soul*. Paul VI wrote that development cannot be reduced merely to economic growth (cf. n. 14); development does not consist in having more and more goods, enabling a solely material well-being. Integrating body and soul also means that no development work can really achieve its purpose if it does not respect the place where God is present to us and speaks to our hearts.

God has made Himself fully known in Jesus Christ: in Him, God and man are not divided and separated. God became man to make of human life, both personal and social, a concrete path to salvation. So the manifestation of God in Christ – including his acts of healing, liberation, and reconciliation that today we are called to offer in turn to the many injured who lie by the roadside – shows the way and the form of service that the Church intends to offer to the world: in this light, it is possible to understand what “integral” development means, a development that harms neither God nor man, since it takes on the consistency of both.

In this sense, the very concept of person, born and matured in Christianity, helps in the pursuit of a fully human development. Because “person” means *relation*, not individualism; it affirms *inclusion* not exclusion; unique and inviolable *dignity* rather than exploitation; *freedom* not coercion.

The Church never tires of offering this wisdom and her work in the world, in the knowledge that integral development is the road of good that the human family is called to travel. I invite you to bring forward this action with patience and consistency, trusting that the Lord accompanies you. May He bless you, and Our Lady keep you. Thank you.
