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Message of the Holy Father to the participants in the Conference “Paul VI, the Pope of modernity: justice among peoples and love for Italy”

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the participants at the Conference “Paul VI, the Pope of modernity: justice among peoples and love for Italy”, organized and held yesterday morning in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls, by the chair of ecclesiastical law at the University *Roma Tre* in collaboration with the Benedictine Abbey:

Message of the Holy Father

To Professor Carlo Cardia

I have learned that in Rome this morning a seminar is taking place dedicated to “Paul VI, the Pope of Modernity”. I would like to address a cordial greeting to the religious and civil authorities present and to all the participants, especially the many students, and to express my gratitude to the illustrious speakers and organizers of the initiative.

Fifty years have passed since the promulgation of the Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, which was intended to be a solemn appeal “for man’s complete development and the development of all mankind” and the solidarity of mankind (5). Such a call is urgent nowadays too, as poverty spreads and peace is deferred daily in many parts of the world. To build it, it is necessary to eliminate the causes of discord, precisely “starting with injustice”; peace between men, in fact, is an “enterprise of justice” (*Gaudium et spes*, 83; 78). So your reflection, focusing on “justice among peoples”, is particularly timely. It is inspired by that “journeying Gospel” that demands we bring charity, faith and Christian hope to man on the streets today.

The conference also deals with “love for Italy”. Love and Italy are two words happily connected, both for the discreet and attentive affection that Paul VI always demonstrated for his beloved country, and because the most genuine soul of the Italian people witnesses that solidarity and closeness that are the indispensable foundations of the human community. In fact, they support that authentic humanism, which is always modern and that we

must not tire of reworking and promoting at all times, so as to avoid the detriment of our own dignity.

With the hope that the Conference proceeds well, and expressing my wish that it may honour the Blessed Paul VI, above all by inspiring renewed and fruitful germs of goodness, I impart my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 8 November 2017
