HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE
BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

BOLLETTINO
SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 180226b

Friday 26.01.2018

Audience with participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

At 11.40 this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The following is the Pope's address to those present at the audience:

Address of the Holy Father

Cardinals,
Venerable Brothers in the episcopate and in the priesthood,
Dear brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to meet you at the end of the Plenary Session of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I thank the Prefect for his introduction, with which he has summarized the most important lines of your work over the last two years.

I express my appreciation for your delicate service, which responds to your Dicastery's particular bond with the ministry of the Successor of Peter, who is called to confirm brothers in faith and the Church in unity.

I thank you for your daily commitment in support of the teaching of the bishops, in the protection of the righteous faith and the holiness of the Sacraments, and in all the various issues that today require important pastoral discernment, such as the examination of cases relating to *graviora delicta* and applications for the dissolution of the marriage bond *in favorem fidei*.

All these tasks are even more current when faced with the horizon, ever more fluid and changeable, which characterizes the self-understanding of the man of today and which has a significant influence on his existential

and ethical choices. The man of today no longer knows who he is and, therefore, struggles to recognize how to act well.

In this sense, your Congregation's task in recalling the transcendent vocation of man and the indivisible connection of his reason to truth and good, introduced by faith in Jesus Christ, appears decisive. There is nothing like the opening of reason to the light that comes from God to help man know himself and God's plan for the world.

I therefore appreciate the study you have undertaken on some aspects of Christian salvation, in order to reaffirm the meaning of redemption, in reference to the current neo-Pelagian and neo-gnostic tendencies. These tendencies are expressions of an individualism that relies on its own forces to save itself. We, on the other hand, believe that salvation consists in communion with the risen Christ Who, thanks to the gift of His Spirit, has introduced us into a new order of relations with the Father and among men. Thus we can unite ourselves to the Father as sons in the Son and become a sole body in He Who is "the firstborn among many brothers" (*Rom* 8: 29).

How can I fail to mention, then, the studies you are performing in relation to the ethical implications of an adequate anthropology also in the economic-financial field? Only a vision of man as a person, that is, as an essentially relational subject and connoted by a specific and broad rationality, is able to act in conformity with the objective order of morality. In this regard, the Magisterium of the Church has always clearly stated that "economic activity is to be carried on according to its own methods and laws within the limits of the moral order" (Vatican Ecumenical Council II), Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 64).

During this Plenary Session, you have also studied some sensitive issues regarding the accompaniment of terminally ill patients. In this regard, the process of secularization, by rendering absolute the concepts of self-determination and autonomy, has led to the growth of the demand for euthanasia in many countries as an ideological affirmation of man's will to power over life. This has also led to considering the voluntary interruption of human existence as a choice of "civilization". It is clear that where life is valid not for its dignity, but for its efficiency and productivity, all this becomes possible. In this scenario it must be reiterated that human life, from conception to its natural end, has a dignity that makes it intangible.

Pain, suffering, the meaning of life and death are realities that contemporary mentality struggles to face with a look full of hope. And yet, without a trustworthy hope to help him confront pain and death, man can not live well and maintain a confident perspective before his future. This is one of the services that the Church is called to make to contemporary man.

In this sense, your mission assumes an eminently pastoral face. Authentic pastors are those who do not abandon man to himself, nor leave him in the grip of his disorientation and his errors, but with truth and mercy bring him back to find his true face in goodness. Therefore every action aimed at taking the man by the hand, when he has lost the sense of his dignity and his destiny, to lead him trustfully to rediscover the loving paternity of God, his good destiny and the ways to build a more humane world, is authentically pastoral. This is the great task that awaits your Congregation and every other pastoral institution of the Church.

Certain of your dedication to this important service, which has always been the high road of the Church, I reiterate my gratitude and express to you all my closeness, imparting my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing.