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UDIENZA AI PARTECIPANTI ALLA PLENARIA DEL PONTIFICIO CONSIGLIO DELLE COMUNICAZIONI SOCIALI

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Alle 12.30 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha ricevuto in Udienza i partecipanti alla Plenaria del Pontificio Consiglio delle Comunicazioni Sociali ed ha loro rivolto il discorso che riportiamo di seguito:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Vatican today on the occasion of the annual Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. I wish first to thank Archbishop Foley, President of the Council, for his kind words of introduction, and indeed to thank all of you for your commitment to the important apostolate of social communications, both as a direct form of evangelization and as a contribution to the promotion of all that is good and true for every human society.

In my first Message for World Communications Day I chose to reflect on the media as a network which facilitates communication, communion and cooperation. I did so recalling that the Decree of the Second Vatican Council, *Inter Mirifica*, had already recognized the enormous power of the media to inform the minds of individuals and to shape their thinking. Forty years later we realize, more than ever, the pressing need to harness that power for the benefit of all humanity.

Saint Paul reminds us that through Christ we are no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, growing into a holy temple, a dwelling place for God (cf. *Eph. 2:19-22*). This sublime portrayal of a life of communion engages all aspects of our lives as Christians and for you, in a particular

way, points to the challenge to encourage the social communications and entertainment industries to be protagonists of truth and promoters of the peace that ensues from lives lived in accordance with that liberating truth. As you well know, such a commitment demands principled courage and resolve, on the part of those who own and work within the hugely influential media industry, to ensure that promotion of the common good is never sacrificed to a self-serving quest for profit or an ideological agenda with little public accountability. In reflecting on such concerns I am confident that your study of my beloved Predecessor's Apostolic Letter *The Rapid Development*, will be of great assistance.

I also wished in my message this year to draw particular attention to the urgent need to uphold and support marriage and family life, the foundation of every culture and society. In cooperation with parents, the social communications and entertainment industries can assist in the difficult but sublimely satisfying vocation of bringing up children, through presenting edifying models of human life and love. How disheartening and destructive it is to us all when the opposite occurs! Do not our hearts cry out, most especially, when our young people are subjected to debased or false expressions of love which ridicule the God-given dignity of the human person and undermine family interests?

In conclusion, I urge you to renew your efforts to assist those working in the world of media to promote what is good and true, especially in regard to the meaning of human and social existence, and to denounce what is false, especially pernicious trends which erode the fabric of a civil society worthy of the human person. Let us be encouraged by the words of Saint Paul: Christ is our peace: In him we are one (cf. *Eph. 2:14*)! And let us work together to build up the communion of love according to the designs of the Creator made known through his Son! To all of you, your colleagues, and the members of your families at home I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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