

BULLETTIN

ta' l-Arcidjoċesi



Maħruġ mill-Arcidjoċesi Maltija
Hargha Nru. 135
Nov/Diċ 2005

BULLETTIN TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI

Nru. 135

Novembru - Dicembru 2005

MILL-KNISJA UNIVERSALI

- Instruction From Congregation for
Catholic Education: "Concerning the Criteria for
the Discernment of Vocations with regard to
persons with homosexual tendencies in view of their
admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders."673
- Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care:
Message for the World Day Against Aids680
- Solennità dell'Immacolata Concezione della
Beata Vergine Maria Giovedì, 8 dicembre 2005:
Omelia di Sua Santità Benedetto XVI685
- On the Real Spirit of Christmas "The Crib Can Help Us":
Message of Pope Benedict XVI at the recitation of the
midday Angelus691
- World Day of Peace 2006:
Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI693

DOKUMENTI MILL-KURJA

- Festa ta' Kristu Sultan 2005:
Messagg ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof702
- Il-Fenomenu ta' l-Omosesswalità:
Stqarrija ta' l-Isqfijiet Maltin707
- Messagg tal-Milied minn Monsinjur Arcisqof
lill-Missjunarji Maltin710
- Messagg tal-Milied minn Monsinjur Arcisqof
lill-emigranti Maltin712

Cirkolari 485: Indulgenza Plenarja fis-Solennità tal-Kuncizzjoni	716
Quddiesa ta' Radd il-Hajr għall-Gradwati l-Ġodda: · Omelija ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof	718
Il-Finanzjament ta' Riċerki bl-Embrijuni Umani: Stqarrija ta' l-Isqfijiet Maltin	720
Messaġġ ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof għall-Milied 2005	721

STQARRIJET OĦRA MILL-KURJA

Is-Saċerdoti jiddiksutu l-Familja	726
It-Tieni sena tar-Rivista "Flimkien"	727
Festa ta' Kristu Sultan 2005	728
Jiltaqgħu l-Isqfijiet tal-pajjiżi ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea	729
Kjarifika dwar id-Djar tal-Knisja għall-Anzjani	730
Awguri tal-istaġun tal-Festi lill-Isqfijiet Maltin	731
Festa tal-Madonna ta' Caraffa	731
Kappillan ġdid għall-parroċċa ta' Marsaxlokk	732
Żjara ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof f'Ruma	732
Applikazzjonijiet għad-dhul fl-iskejjel tal-Knisja	733
Messaġġ tal-Papa għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi 2006	734
Kummissjoni Djoċesana Familji ġdida	735
L-Arcisqof fi żmien il-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-Sena	736
Funzjonijiet tal-Milied fil-Kattidral	737
Il-Kurja fi żmien il-Milied	737
L-Isqfijiet jilqgħu lill-pubbliku fl-okkażjoni tal-Milied u s-Sena l-Ġdida	738

Produzzjoni: Media Centre Publications
Stampat fil-Media Centre, Blata l-Bajda, Novembru-Dicembru 2005.

“Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders.”

Instruction From Congregation for Catholic Education

Introduction

In continuity with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and, in particular, with the Decree “*Optatam totius*”¹ on priestly formation, the Congregation for Catholic Education has published various documents with the aim of promoting a suitable, integral formation of future priests, by offering guidelines and precise norms regarding its diverse aspects.²

¹ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on priestly formation *Optatam totius* (28 October 1965): AAS 58 (1966), 713-727.

² Cf. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, “*Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*” (6 January 1970; second edition 19 March 1985); *The Study of Philosophy in Seminaries* (20 January 1972); *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy* (11 April 1974); *On the Teaching of Canon Law to Those Preparing to be Priests* (2 April 1975); *The Theological Formation of Future Priests* (22 February 1976); “*Epistula circularis de formatione vocationum adularum*” (14 July 1976); *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* (3 June 1979); *Circular Letter Concerning Some of the More Urgent Aspects of Spiritual Formation in Seminaries* (6 January 1980); *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* (1 November 1983); *Pastoral Care of People on the Move in the Formation of Future Priests* (25 January 1986); *Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communication* (19 March 1986); *Circular Letter Concerning Studies of the Oriental Churches* (6 January 1987); *The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation* (25 March 1988); *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church’s Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests* (30 December 1988); *Instruction on the Study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests* (10 November 1989); *Directives Concerning the Preparation of Seminary Educators* (4 November 1993); *Directives on the Formation of Seminarians Concerning Problems Related to Marriage and the Family* (19 March 1995); *Instruction to the Episcopal Conferences on the Admission to Seminary of Candidates Coming from Other Seminaries or Religious Families* (9 October 1986 and 8 March 1996); *The Propaedeutic Period* (1 May 1998); *Circular Letters Concerning the Canonical Norms relating to Irregularities and Impediments both “ad Ordines recipiendos” and “ad Ordines exercendos”* (27 July 1992 and 2 February 1999).

In the meantime, the 1990 Synod of Bishops also reflected on the formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day, with the intention of bringing to completion the doctrine of the Council on this theme and making it more explicit and effective in today's world. Following this Synod, Pope John Paul II published the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Pastores dabo vobis."³

In light of this abundant teaching, the present Instruction does not intend to dwell on all questions in the area of affectivity and sexuality that require an attentive discernment during the entire period of formation. Rather, it contains norms concerning a specific question, made more urgent by the current situation, and that is: whether to admit to the seminary and to holy orders candidates who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

1. Affective Maturity and Spiritual Fatherhood

According to the constant Tradition of the Church, only a baptized person of the male sex validly receives sacred ordination.⁴ By means of the sacrament of orders, the Holy Spirit configures the candidate to Jesus Christ in a new and specific way: the priest, in fact, sacramentally represents Christ, the head, shepherd and spouse of the Church.⁵ Because of this configuration to Christ, the entire life of the sacred minister must

³ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Pastores dabo vobis" (25 March 1992): AAS 84 (1992), 657-864.

⁴ Cf. e.Le., can. 1024 and e.e.E.O., can. 754; POPE JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter "Ordinatio sacerdotalis" on reserving priestly ordination to men alone (22 May 1994): AAS 86 (1994), 545-548.

⁵ Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the ministry and life of priests "Presbyterorum ordinis" (1 December 1965), n. 2: AAS 58 (1966), 991-993; Pastores dabo vobis, n. 16: AAS 84 (1992), 681-682. With regard to the priest's configuration to Christ, bridegroom of the Church, "Pastores dabo vobis" states that "The priest is called to be the living image of Jesus Christ, the spouse of the Church. ġ...h In his spiritual life, therefore, he is called to live out Christ's spousal love toward the Church, his bride. Therefore, the priest's life ought to radiate this spousal character, which demands that he be a witness to Christ's spousal love" (n. 22): AAS 84 (1992), 691.

be animated by the gift of his whole person to the Church and by an authentic pastoral charity.⁶

The candidate to the ordained ministry, therefore, must reach affective maturity. Such maturity will allow him to relate correctly to both men and women, developing in him a true sense of spiritual fatherhood towards the Church community that will be entrusted to him.⁷

2. Homosexuality and the Ordained Ministry

From the time of the Second Vatican Council until today, various documents of the Magisterium, and especially the Catechism of the Catholic Church, have confirmed the teaching of the Church on homosexuality. The Catechism distinguishes between homosexual acts and homosexual tendencies.

Regarding acts, it teaches that Sacred Scripture presents them as grave sins. The Tradition has constantly considered them as intrinsically immoral and contrary to the natural law. Consequently, under no circumstance can they be approved.

Deep-seated homosexual tendencies, which are found in a number of men and women, are also objectively disordered and, for those same people, often constitute a trial. Such persons must be accepted with respect and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should

⁶ Cf. "Presbyterorum ordinis," n. 14: AAS 58 (1966), 1013-1014; "Pastores dabo vobis," n. 23: AAS 84 (1992), 691-694.

⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (31 March 1994), n. 58.

be avoided. They are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter.⁸

In the light of such teaching, this dicastery, in accord with the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, believes it necessary to state clearly that the Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called "gay culture."¹⁰

Such persons, in fact, find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and women. One must in no way overlook the negative consequences that can derive from the ordination of persons with deep-seated homosexual tendencies.

Different, however, would be the case in which one were dealing with homosexual tendencies that were only the expression of a transitory problem — for example, that of an adolescence not yet superseded. Nevertheless, such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination to the diaconate.

⁸ Cf. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ("editio typica," 1997), nn. 2357-2358. Cf. also the various documents of the CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH: Declaration "Persona humana" on certain questions concerning sexual ethics (29 December 1975); Letter "Homosexualitatis problema" to the bishops of the Catholic Church on the pastoral care of homosexual persons (1 October 1986); Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative Proposals on Non-discrimination of Homosexual Persons (23 July 1992); Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons (3 June 2003). With regard to homosexual inclinations, the Letter "Homosexualitatis problema" states that "Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder" (n. 3).

⁹ Cf. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ("editio typica," 1997), n. 2358; cf. also c.I.c., can. 208 and C.C.E.O., can. 11.

¹⁰ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, A memorandum to bishops seeking advice in matters concerning homosexuality and candidates for admission to Seminary (9 July 1985); CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Letter (16 May 2002): Notitiae 38 (2002), 586.

3. Discernment by the Church

Concerning the Suitability of Candidates

There are two inseparable elements in every priestly vocation: the free gift of God and the responsible freedom of the man. A vocation is a gift of divine grace, received through the Church, in the Church and for the service of the Church. In responding to the call of God, the man offers himself freely to him in love.¹¹ The desire alone to become a priest is not sufficient, and there does not exist a right to receive sacred ordination. It belongs to the Church — in her responsibility to define the necessary requirements for receiving the sacraments instituted by Christ — to discern the suitability of him who desires to enter the seminary,¹² to accompany him during his years of formation, and to call him to holy orders if he is judged to possess the necessary qualities.¹³

The formation of the future priest must distinctly articulate, in an essentially complementary manner, the four dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.¹⁴ In this context, it is necessary to highlight the particular importance of human formation, as the necessary foundation of all formation.¹⁵ In order to admit a candidate to ordination

¹¹ Cf. "Pastores dabo vobis," nn. 35-36: AAS 84 (1992), 714-718.

¹² Cf. e.Le., can. 241, § 1: "A diocesan bishop is to admit to a major seminary only those who are judged qualified to dedicate themselves permanently to the sacred ministries; he is to consider their human, moral, spiritual, and intellectual qualities, their physical and psychic health, and their correct intention"; cf. e.e.E.O., can. 342, § 1.

¹³ Cf. "Optatam totius," n. 6: AAS 58 (1966), 717. Cf. also e.Le., can. 1029: "Only those are to be promoted to orders who, in the prudent judgment of their own bishop or of the competent major superior, all things considered, have integral faith, are moved by the right intention, have the requisite knowledge, possess a good reputation, and are endowed with integral morals and proven virtues and the other physical and psychic qualities in keeping with the order to be received"; cf. e.e.E.O., can. 758. Not to call to orders those who do not have the necessary qualities is not an unjust discrimination: cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative Proposals on Nondiscrimination of Homosexual Persons*.

¹⁴ Cf. "Pastores dabo vobis," nn. 43-59: AAS 84 (1992), 731-762.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 43: "The priest, who is called to be a 'living image' of Jesus Christ, head and shepherd of the Church, should seek to reflect in himself, as far as possible, the human perfection which shines forth in the incarnate Son of God and which is reflected with particular liveliness in his attitudes toward others": AAS 84 (1992), 732.

to the diaconate, the Church must verify, among other things, that the candidate has reached affective maturity.¹⁶

The call to orders is the personal responsibility of the bishop¹⁷ or the major superior. Bearing in mind the opinion of those to whom he has entrusted the responsibility of formation, the bishop or major superior, before admitting the candidate to ordination, must arrive at a morally certain judgment on his qualities. In the case of a serious doubt in this regard, he must not admit him to ordination.¹⁸

The discernment of a vocation and of the maturity of the candidate is also a serious duty of the rector and of the other persons entrusted with the work of formation in the seminary. Before every ordination, the rector must express his own judgment on whether the qualities required by the Church are present in the candidate.¹⁹

In the discernment concerning the suitability for ordination, the spiritual director has an important task. Although he is bound to secrecy, he represents the Church in the internal forum. In his discussions with the candidate, the spiritual director must especially point out the demands of the Church concerning priestly chastity and the affective maturity that is characteristic of the priest, as well as help him to discern whether he has

16 Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 44 and 50: AAS 84 (1992), 733-736 and 746-748. Cf. also: CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Circular Letter to the Most Reverend Diocesan Bishops and Other Ordinaries with Canonical Faculties to Admit to Sacred Orders Concerning: Scrutinies regarding the Suitability of Candidates for Orders (10 November 1997): *Notitiae* 33 (1997), 507-518, particularly Enclosure V.

17 Cf. CONGREGATION FOR BISHOPS, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops "Apostolorum Successores"* (22 February 2004), n. 88.

18 Cf. e.Le., can. 1052, § 3: "If g...h the bishop doubts for specific reasons whether a candidate is suitable to receive orders, he is not to promote him." Cf. also e.e.E.O., can. 770.

19 Cf. e.Le., can. 1051: "The following prescripts regarding the investigation about the qualities required in the one to be ordained are to be observed: g...h there is to be a testimonial of the rector of the seminary or house of formation about the qualities required to receive the order, that is, about the sound doctrine of the candidate, his genuine piety, good morals, and aptitude to exercise the ministry, as well as, after a properly executed inquiry, about his state of physical and psychic health."

the necessary qualities.²⁰ The spiritual director has the obligation to evaluate all the qualities of the candidate's personality and to make sure that he does not present disturbances of a sexual nature, which are incompatible with the priesthood. If a candidate practices homosexuality or presents deep-seated homosexual tendencies, his spiritual director, as well as his confessor, have the duty to dissuade him in conscience from proceeding toward ordination.

It goes without saying that the candidate himself has the primary responsibility for his own formation.²¹ He must offer himself trustingly to the discernment of the Church, of the bishop who calls him to orders, of the rector of the seminary, of his spiritual director and of the other seminary educators to whom the bishop or major superior has entrusted the task of forming future priests. It would be gravely dishonest for a candidate to hide his own homosexuality in order to proceed, despite everything, toward ordination. Such a deceitful attitude does not correspond to the spirit of truth, loyalty and openness that must characterize the personality of him who believes he is called to serve Christ and his Church in the ministerial priesthood.

Conclusion

This Congregation reaffirms the need for bishops, major superiors and all relevant authorities to carry out an attentive discernment concerning the suitability of candidates for holy orders, from the time of admission to the seminary until ordination. This discernment must be done in light of a conception of the ministerial priesthood that is in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

Let bishops, episcopal conferences and major superiors look to see that the constant norms of this Instruction be faithfully observed for the good

²⁰ Cf. "Pastores dabo vobis," nn. 50 and 66: AAS 84 (1992), 746-748 and 772-774. Cf. also "Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis," n. 48.

²¹ Cf. "Pastores dabo vobis," n. 69: AAS 84 (1992), 778

of the candidates themselves, and to guarantee that the Church always has suitable priests who are true shepherds according to the heart of Christ.

The Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, on 31 August 2005, approved this present Instruction and ordered its publication.

Rome, 4 November 2005,
Memoria of Saint Charles Borromeo, Patron of Seminaries.
ZENON Card. GROCHOLEWSKI
Prefect

✠ J. MICHAEL MILLER, C.S.B.
Titular Archbishop of Vertara
Secretary

MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD DAY AGAINST AIDS

To Bishops' Conferences, to national and international institutions and organisations, to NGOs and associations involved in prevention and assistance, to men and women of good will.

1. The World Day against AIDS of this year, organised by UNAIDS, with the slogan 'Stop AIDS. Keep the promise', seeks to call everyone, and in particular those who occupy positions of responsibility in the field of HIV/AIDS, to a renewed and conscious commitment to the lasting prevention of the spread of this pandemic and to care for those afflicted by it, especially in poor countries, in order to stem and invert the trend towards the growing spread of infection by HIV/AIDS

2. The Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care joins with other national and international organisations, and in particular UNAIDS, which every year organises a world campaign of combating AIDS, so that this planetary evil, which has brought about a global crisis, can be met with an action that is equally global and united. The adherence in 2001 of Heads of State and representatives of governments to the Declaration of commitment to the struggle against HIV/AIDS was an important moment of affirming awareness and political commitment at a world level in favour of a strong, global and decisive reaction and response by the international community.

3. The epidemiological situation of HIV/AIDS continues to rouse great concern. It is estimated that in 2005 the number of people living with AIDS was 40,3 million, of whom 2.3 million were minors under the age of fifteen. Year by year the number of people infected by this disease continues to grow. In 2005, 4.9 million people contracted the HIV virus, of whom 700,000 were minors under the age of fifteen, and in 2005 3.1 million people died of AIDS, of whom 570,000 were young people under the age of fifteen. HIV/AIDS continues to sow death in all the countries of the world.

4. The best cure is prevention to avoid infection by HIV/AIDS, which we should remember is transmitted through the triple route of blood, transmission from mother to child, and sexual contact. As regards transfusions and other forms of contact with the blood of an infected person, today such infection has been notably reduced. Despite this fact, the very greatest attention should be paid to avoid this pathway of infection, especially in centres that deal with transfusions and during surgical operations.

We may thank the Lord that contagion from mother to child is strongly controlled by suitable drugs. Prevention in this field must be intensified through the provision of suitable medication to seropositive mothers, especially by public bodies in the various countries of the world.

The third pathway of infection – sexual transmission – still remains the most important. This is greatly fostered by a kind of pansexual culture

that devalues sexuality, reducing it to mere pleasure without any further meaning. Radical prevention in this field must come from a correct conception and practice of sexuality, where sexual activity is understood in its deep meaning as a total and absolute expression of the fecund giving of love. This totality leads us to the exclusiveness of its exercise in marriage, which is unique and indissoluble. Secure prevention in this field thus lies in the intensification of the solidity of the family.

This is the profound meaning of the Sixth Commandment, of the law of God, which constitutes the fulcrum of the authentic prevention of AIDS in the field of sexual activity.

5. Faced with the difficult social, cultural and economic situation in which many countries find themselves, there can be no doubt that a defence and promotion of health is required that is a sign of the unconditional love of everyone, in particular for the poorest and the weakest, and which meets the human needs of every individual and the community. As a result those laws that do not take into sufficient consideration the equal distribution of conditions of health for everyone must be reformed. Health is a good in itself and we can say that 'there weighs upon it a social mortgage'. Thus health must be assured to all the inhabitants of the earth and studies must be engaged in so that resources are used to achieve health for everyone by ensuring the basic care and treatment that are still denied to the majority of the population of the world. The right to the defence of health must, however, be matched by the duty to implement forms of behaviour and to follow lifestyles that are directed to defending health and to reject those that compromise health.

6. The Catholic Church continues to make her contribution both as regards prevention and in caring for people afflicted by HIV/AIDS and their families at the level of medical care and assistance and at the social, spiritual and pastoral levels. 26.7% of centres for the provision of care in relation to HIV/AIDS in the world are Catholic based. Local Churches, religious institutions and lay associations have promoted very many projects and programmes dealing with training and education, prevention and assistance, care and the pastoral accompanying of sick people, with love, a sense of responsibility, and a spirit of charity.

7. At a practical level, on the basis of the information that comes from the various local Churches and Catholic institutions in the world, the actions that are engaged in the field of AIDS may be categorised in the following way: the promotion of campaigns of sensitisation, programmes of prevention and health-care education, support for orphans, the distribution of medicaments and food, home care, the creation of hospitals, centres and therapeutic communities that concentrate their work around the provision of care and assistance for people afflicted by HIV/AIDS, working with governments, care in prisons, courses of catechesis, the creation of systems of help through Internet, and the establishment of support groups for sick people. Flanking this inestimable and praiseworthy endeavour, on 12 September 2004 Pope John Paul II created the 'Good Samaritan' Foundation, which was entrusted to the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care and subsequently confirmed by Pope Benedict XVI, in order to bring economic help, thanks to the donations that are received, to the sick people who are most in need in the world, and in particular to the victims of HIV/AIDS. During this first year of activity of the Foundation significant financial help to purchase pharmaceuticals has been sent to the local Churches in America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

8. I would like to offer certain suggestions at the level of guidelines for action to those who are involved at various levels in the fight against HIV/AIDS:

- To Christian communities – that they may continue to promote the stability of the family and the education of children in a correct understanding of sexual activity as a gift of God for self-giving that is lovingly full and fertile.
- To governments – that they may promote the overall health of their populations and foster care for AIDS patients, basing themselves on the principles of responsibility, solidarity, justice and fairness.
- To the pharmaceutical industries – that they may facilitate economic access to anti-viral pharmaceuticals for the treatment of HIV/AIDS and those pharmaceuticals that are needed to treat opportunistic infections.

BULLETIN TA' L-ARĊIDJOĊESI

- To scientists and health-care workers – that they may renew their solidarity and do everything they can to advance biomedical research into HIV/AIDS in order to find new and effective pharmaceuticals that are able to stem the phenomenon.
- To the mass media – that they may provide transparent, correct and truthful information to populations on this phenomenon and on methods for its prevention, without forms of exploitation.

9. I would like to conclude with the words which Pope Benedict XVI addressed to the Bishops of South Africa during their *Ad Limina* visit on 10 June 2005: 'Brother Bishops, I share your deep concern over the devastation caused by AIDS and related diseases. I especially pray for the widows, the orphans, the young mothers and those whose lives have been shattered by this cruel epidemic. I urge you to continue your efforts to fight this virus which not only kills but seriously threatens the economic and social stability of the Continent'.

✠ Javier Cardinal Lozano Barragán
President of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care

1 DECEMBER 2005

OMELIA DI SUA SANTITÀ BENEDETTO XVI

**Solennità dell'Immacolata Concezione
della Beata Vergine Maria
Giovedì, 8 dicembre 2005**

Quarant'anni fa, l'8 dicembre 1965, sulla Piazza antistante questa Basilica di San Pietro, Papa Paolo VI concluse solennemente il Concilio Vaticano II. Era stato inaugurato, secondo la volontà di Giovanni XXIII, l'11 ottobre 1962, allora festa della Maternità di Maria, ed ebbe la sua conclusione nel giorno dell'Immacolata. Una cornice mariana circonda il Concilio. In realtà, è molto di più di una cornice: è un orientamento dell'intero suo cammino. Ci rimanda, come rimandava allora i Padri del Concilio, all'immagine della Vergine in ascolto, che vive nella Parola di Dio, che serba nel suo cuore le parole che le vengono da Dio e, congiungendole come in un mosaico, impara a comprenderle (cfr *Lc* 2,19.51); ci rimanda alla grande Credente che, piena di fiducia, si mette nelle mani di Dio, abbandonandosi alla Sua volontà; ci rimanda all'umile Madre che, quando la missione del Figlio lo esige, si fa da parte e, al contempo, alla donna coraggiosa che, mentre i discepoli si danno alla fuga, sta sotto la croce. Paolo VI, nel suo discorso in occasione della promulgazione della Costituzione conciliare sulla Chiesa, aveva qualificato Maria come "*tutrix huius Concilii*" – "protettrice di questo Concilio" (cfr *Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II, Constitutiones Decreta Declarationes*, Città del Vaticano 1966, pag. 983) e, con un'allusione inconfondibile al racconto di Pentecoste tramandato da Luca (*At* 1,12-14), aveva detto che i Padri si erano riuniti nell'aula del Concilio "*cum Maria, Matre Iesu*" e, pure nel suo nome, ne sarebbero ora usciti (pag. 985).

Resta indelebile nella mia memoria il momento in cui, sentendo le sue parole: "*Mariam Sanctissimam declaramus Matrem Ecclesiae*" – "dichiariamo Maria Santissima Madre della Chiesa", spontaneamente i Padri si alzarono di scatto dalle loro sedie e applaudirono in piedi,

rendendo omaggio alla Madre di Dio, a nostra Madre, alla Madre della Chiesa. Di fatto, con questo titolo il Papa riassumeva la dottrina mariana del Concilio e dava la chiave per la sua comprensione. Maria non sta soltanto in un rapporto singolare con Cristo, il Figlio di Dio che, come uomo, ha voluto diventare figlio suo. Essendo totalmente unita a Cristo, ella appartiene anche totalmente a noi. Sì, possiamo dire che Maria ci è vicina come nessun altro essere umano, perché Cristo è uomo per gli uomini e tutto il suo essere è un “esserci per noi”. Cristo, dicono i Padri, come Capo è inseparabile dal suo Corpo che è la Chiesa, formando insieme con essa, per così dire, un unico soggetto vivente. La Madre del Capo è anche la Madre di tutta la Chiesa; lei è, per così dire, totalmente espropriata da se stessa; si è data interamente a Cristo e con Lui viene data in dono a tutti noi. Infatti, più la persona umana si dona, più trova se stessa.

Il Concilio intendeva dirci questo: Maria è così intrecciata nel grande mistero della Chiesa che lei e la Chiesa sono inseparabili come sono inseparabili lei e Cristo. Maria rispecchia la Chiesa, la anticipa nella sua persona e, in tutte le turbolenze che affliggono la Chiesa sofferente e faticante, ne rimane sempre la stella della salvezza. È lei il suo vero centro di cui ci fidiamo, anche se tanto spesso la sua periferia ci pesa sull'anima. Papa Paolo VI, nel contesto della promulgazione della Costituzione sulla Chiesa, ha messo in luce tutto questo mediante un nuovo titolo radicato profondamente nella Tradizione, proprio nell'intento di illuminare la struttura interiore dell'insegnamento sulla Chiesa sviluppato nel Concilio. Il Vaticano II doveva esprimersi sulle componenti istituzionali della Chiesa: sui Vescovi e sul Pontefice, sui sacerdoti, i laici e i religiosi nella loro comunione e nelle loro relazioni; doveva descrivere la Chiesa in cammino, “che comprende nel suo seno peccatori, santa insieme e sempre bisognosa di purificazione...” (*Lumen gentium*, 8). Ma questo aspetto “petrino” della Chiesa è incluso in quello “mariano”. In Maria, l'Immacolata, incontriamo l'essenza della Chiesa in modo non deformato. Da lei dobbiamo imparare a diventare noi stessi “anime ecclesiali”, così si esprimevano i Padri, per poter anche noi, secondo la parola di san Paolo, presentarci “immacolati” al cospetto del Signore, così come Egli ci ha voluto fin dal principio (*Col 1,21; Ef 1,4*).

Ma ora dobbiamo chiederci: Che cosa significa “Maria, l’Immacolata”? Questo titolo ha qualcosa da dirci? La liturgia di oggi ci chiarisce il contenuto di questa parola in due grandi immagini. C’è innanzitutto il racconto meraviglioso dell’annuncio a Maria, la Vergine di Nazaret, della venuta del Messia. Il saluto dell’Angelo è intessuto di fili dell’Antico Testamento, specialmente del profeta Sofonia. Esso fa vedere che Maria, l’umile donna di provincia che proviene da una stirpe sacerdotale e porta in sé il grande patrimonio sacerdotale d’Israele, è “il santo resto” d’Israele a cui i profeti, in tutti i periodi di travagli e di tenebre, hanno fatto riferimento. In lei è presente la vera Sion, quella pura, la vivente dimora di Dio. In lei dimora il Signore, in lei trova il luogo del Suo riposo. Lei è la vivente casa di Dio, il quale non abita in edifici di pietra, ma nel cuore dell’uomo vivo. Lei è il germoglio che, nella buia notte invernale della storia, spunta dal tronco abbattuto di Davide. In lei si compie la parola del *Salmo*: “La terra ha dato il suo frutto” (67,7). Lei è il virgulto, dal quale deriva l’albero della redenzione e dei redenti. Dio non ha fallito, come poteva apparire già all’inizio della storia con Adamo ed Eva, o durante il periodo dell’esilio babilonese, e come nuovamente appariva al tempo di Maria quando Israele era diventato un popolo senza importanza in una regione occupata, con ben pochi segni riconoscibili della sua santità. Dio non ha fallito. Nell’umiltà della casa di Nazaret vive l’Israele santo, il resto puro. Dio ha salvato e salva il Suo popolo. Dal tronco abbattuto rifulge nuovamente la sua storia, diventando una nuova forza viva che orienta e pervade il mondo. Maria è l’Israele santo; ella dice “sì” al Signore, si mette pienamente a Sua disposizione e diventa così il tempio vivente di Dio.

La seconda immagine è molto più difficile ed oscura. Questa metafora tratta dal *Libro della Genesi* parla a noi da una grande distanza storica, e solo a fatica può essere chiarita; soltanto nel corso della storia è stato possibile sviluppare una comprensione più profonda di ciò che lì viene riferito. Viene predetto che durante tutta la storia continuerà la lotta tra l’uomo e il serpente, cioè tra l’uomo e le potenze del male e della morte. Viene però anche preannunciato che “la stirpe” della donna un giorno vincerà e schiaccerà la testa al serpente, alla morte; è preannunciato che la stirpe della donna – e in essa la donna e la madre stessa – vincerà e che così, mediante l’uomo, Dio vincerà. Se insieme con la Chiesa credente

ed orante ci mettiamo in ascolto davanti a questo testo, allora possiamo cominciare a capire che cosa sia il peccato originale, il peccato ereditario, e anche che cosa sia la tutela da questo peccato ereditario, che cosa sia la redenzione.

Qual è il quadro che in questa pagina ci vien posto davanti? L'uomo non si fida di Dio. Egli, tentato dalle parole del serpente, cova il sospetto che Dio, in fin dei conti, gli tolga qualcosa della sua vita, che Dio sia un concorrente che limita la nostra libertà e che noi saremo pienamente esseri umani soltanto quando l'avremo accantonato; insomma, che solo in questo modo possiamo realizzare in pienezza la nostra libertà. L'uomo vive nel sospetto che l'amore di Dio crei una dipendenza e che gli sia necessario sbarazzarsi di questa dipendenza per essere pienamente se stesso. L'uomo non vuole ricevere da Dio la sua esistenza e la pienezza della sua vita. Vuole attingere egli stesso dall'albero della conoscenza il potere di plasmare il mondo, di farsi dio elevandosi al livello di Lui, e di vincere con le proprie forze la morte e le tenebre. Non vuole contare sull'amore che non gli sembra affidabile; egli conta unicamente sulla conoscenza, in quanto essa gli conferisce il potere. Piuttosto che sull'amore punta sul potere col quale vuole prendere in mano in modo autonomo la propria vita. E nel fare questo, egli si fida della menzogna piuttosto che della verità e con ciò sprofonda con la sua vita nel vuoto, nella morte. Amore non è dipendenza, ma dono che ci fa vivere. La libertà di un essere umano è la libertà di un essere limitato ed è quindi limitata essa stessa. Possiamo possederla soltanto come libertà condivisa, nella comunione delle libertà: solo se viviamo nel modo giusto l'uno con l'altro e l'uno per l'altro, la libertà può svilupparsi. Noi viviamo nel modo giusto, se viviamo secondo la verità del nostro essere e cioè secondo la volontà di Dio. Perché la volontà di Dio non è per l'uomo una legge imposta dall'esterno che lo costringe, ma la misura intrinseca della sua natura, una misura che è iscritta in lui e lo rende immagine di Dio e così creatura libera. Se noi viviamo contro l'amore e contro la verità – contro Dio –, allora ci distruggiamo a vicenda e distruggiamo il mondo. Allora non troviamo la vita, ma facciamo l'interesse della morte. Tutto questo è raccontato con immagini immortali nella storia della caduta originale e della cacciata dell'uomo dal Paradiso terrestre.

Cari fratelli e sorelle! Se riflettiamo sinceramente su di noi e sulla nostra storia, dobbiamo dire che con questo racconto è descritta non solo la storia dell'inizio, ma la storia di tutti i tempi, e che tutti portiamo dentro di noi una goccia del veleno di quel modo di pensare illustrato nelle immagini del *Libro della Genesi*. Questa goccia di veleno la chiamiamo peccato originale. Proprio nella festa dell'Immacolata Concezione emerge in noi il sospetto che una persona che non pecchi affatto sia in fondo noiosa; che manchi qualcosa nella sua vita: la dimensione drammatica dell'essere autonomi; che faccia parte del vero essere uomini la libertà del dire di no, lo scendere giù nelle tenebre del peccato e del voler fare da sé; che solo allora si possa sfruttare fino in fondo tutta la vastità e la profondità del nostro essere uomini, dell'essere veramente noi stessi; che dobbiamo mettere a prova questa libertà anche contro Dio per diventare in realtà pienamente noi stessi. Con una parola, noi pensiamo che il male in fondo sia buono, che di esso, almeno un po', noi abbiamo bisogno per sperimentare la pienezza dell'essere. Pensiamo che Mefistofele – il tentatore – abbia ragione quando dice di essere la forza “che sempre vuole il male e sempre opera il bene” (J.W. v. Goethe, *Faust* I, 3). Pensiamo che patteggiare un po' col male, riservarsi un po' di libertà contro Dio, in fondo, sia bene, forse sia addirittura necessario.

Guardando però il mondo intorno a noi, possiamo vedere che non è così, che cioè il male avvelena sempre, non innalza l'uomo, ma lo abbassa e lo umilia, non lo rende più grande, più puro e più ricco, ma lo danneggia e lo fa diventare più piccolo. Questo dobbiamo piuttosto imparare nel giorno dell'Immacolata: l'uomo che si abbandona totalmente nelle mani di Dio non diventa un burattino di Dio, una noiosa persona consenziente; egli non perde la sua libertà. Solo l'uomo che si affida totalmente a Dio trova la vera libertà, la vastità grande e creativa della libertà del bene. L'uomo che si volge verso Dio non diventa più piccolo, ma più grande, perché grazie a Dio e insieme con Lui diventa grande, diventa divino, diventa veramente se stesso. L'uomo che si mette nelle mani di Dio non si allontana dagli altri, ritirandosi nella sua salvezza privata; al contrario, solo allora il suo cuore si desta veramente ed egli diventa una persona sensibile e perciò benevola ed aperta.

Più l'uomo è vicino a Dio, più vicino è agli uomini. Lo vediamo in Maria. Il fatto che ella sia totalmente presso Dio è la ragione per cui è anche così vicina agli uomini. Per questo può essere la Madre di ogni consolazione e di ogni aiuto, una Madre alla quale in qualsiasi necessità chiunque può osare rivolgersi nella propria debolezza e nel proprio peccato, perché ella ha comprensione per tutto ed è per tutti la forza aperta della bontà creativa. È in lei che Dio imprime la propria immagine, l'immagine di Colui che segue la pecorella smarrita fin nelle montagne e fin tra gli spini e i pruni dei peccati di questo mondo, lasciandosi ferire dalla corona di spine di questi peccati, per prendere la pecorella sulle sue spalle e portarla a casa. Come Madre che compatisce, Maria è la figura anticipata e il ritratto permanente del Figlio. E così vediamo che anche l'immagine dell'Addolorata, della Madre che condivide la sofferenza e l'amore, è una vera immagine dell'Immacolata. Il suo cuore, mediante l'essere e il sentire insieme con Dio, si è allargato. In lei la bontà di Dio si è avvicinata e si avvicina molto a noi. Così Maria sta davanti a noi come segno di consolazione, di incoraggiamento, di speranza. Ella si rivolge a noi dicendo: "Abbi il coraggio di osare con Dio! Provaci! Non aver paura di Lui! Abbi il coraggio di rischiare con la fede! Abbi il coraggio di rischiare con la bontà! Abbi il coraggio di rischiare con il cuore puro! Compromettiti con Dio, allora vedrai che proprio con ciò la tua vita diventa ampia ed illuminata, non noiosa, ma piena di infinite sorprese, perché la bontà infinita di Dio non si esaurisce mai!".

Vogliamo, in questo giorno di festa, ringraziare il Signore per il grande segno della Sua bontà che ci ha donato in Maria, Sua Madre e Madre della Chiesa. Vogliamo pregarlo di porre Maria sul nostro cammino come luce che ci aiuta a diventare anche noi luce e a portare questa luce nelle notti della storia. Amen.

Message of Pope Benedict XVI
at the recitation of the midday Angelus
On the Real Spirit of Christmas: "The Crib Can Help Us"

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

After celebrating the solemnity of Mary's Immaculate Conception, we enter these days in the evocative atmosphere of preparations for this coming holy Christmas. In the present-day consumer society, this period suffers, unfortunately, a sort of commercial "contamination," which runs the risk of altering its authentic spirit, characterized by recollection, sobriety, a joy that is not exterior but profound.

Therefore, it is providential that, as a door of entrance to Christmas, the feast exists of the Mother of Jesus, who better than any one, can guide us to know, love and worship the Son of God made man. Therefore, let us allow her to accompany us; may her sentiments encourage us to predispose ourselves with sincerity of heart and openness of spirit to recognize the Son of God in the Child of Bethlehem, come to earth for our redemption. Let us walk with her in prayer and accept the reiterated invitation addressed to us by the Advent liturgy to remain in expectation, in a vigilant and joyful expectation, as the Lord will not delay: He comes to deliver his people from sin.

Continuing a beautiful and consolidated tradition, in many families the crib begins to be prepared, as if to relive with Mary these days full of trepidation that preceded Jesus' birth. To set up the crib at home can be a simple but effective way of presenting the faith and transmitting it to one's children. The manger helps us to contemplate the mystery of God's love who revealed himself in the poverty and simplicity of the Bethlehem cave.

St. Francis of Assisi was so overwhelmed by the mystery of the Incarnation, that he wanted to present it again in Greccio with the living

manger, thus becoming the initiator of a long popular tradition which still keeps its value for evangelization today.

The crib can help us, in fact, to understand the secret of the true Christmas, because it speaks of humility and the merciful goodness of Christ, who “though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor” (2 Corinthians 8:9). His poverty enriches those who embrace it and Christmas brings joy and peace to those who, as the shepherds, accept in Bethlehem the words of the angel: “And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12). It continues to be a sign also for us, men and women of the 21st century. There is no other Christmas.

As our beloved John Paul II did, in a few moments I will also bless the images of the Child Jesus that the children of Rome will place in the crib in their homes. With this gesture, I want to invoke the Lord's help so that all Christian families will prepare to celebrate with faith the forthcoming Christmas feasts. May Mary help us to enter into the genuine spirit of Christmas.

11th December, 2005

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD DAY OF
PEACE – 1 JANUARY 2006

IN TRUTH, PEACE

1. In this traditional *Message for the World Day of Peace* at the beginning of the New Year, I offer cordial greetings and good wishes to men and women everywhere, especially those who are suffering as a result of violence and armed conflicts. My greeting is one filled with hope for a more serene world, a world in which more and more individuals and communities are committed to the paths of justice and peace.

2. Before all else, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my Predecessors, the great Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, who were astute promoters of peace. Guided by the spirit of the Beatitudes, they discerned in the many historical events which marked their respective Pontificates the providential intervention of God, who never ceases to be concerned for the future of the human race. As tireless heralds of the Gospel, they constantly invited everyone to make God the starting-point of their efforts on behalf of concord and peace throughout the world. This, my first Message for the World Day of Peace, is meant to follow in the path of their noble teaching; with it, I wish to reiterate the steadfast resolve of the Holy See to continue serving the cause of peace. The very name Benedict, which I chose on the day of my election to the Chair of Peter, is a sign of my personal commitment to peace. In taking this name, I wanted to evoke both the Patron Saint of Europe, who inspired a civilization of peace on the whole continent, and Pope Benedict XV, who condemned the First World War as a ‘‘useless slaughter’’¹ and worked for a universal acknowledgment of the lofty demands of peace.

3. The theme chosen for this year’s reflection—*In truth, peace*—expresses the conviction that wherever and whenever men and women are

¹ *Appeal to the Heads of the Warring Peoples* (1 August 1917): AAS 9 (1917), 423.

enlightened by the splendour of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace. The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated forty years ago at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, stated that mankind will not succeed in "building a truly more human world for everyone, everywhere on earth, unless all people are renewed in spirit and converted to the truth of peace".² But what do those words, "the truth of peace", really mean? To respond adequately to this question, we must realize that peace cannot be reduced to the simple absence of armed conflict, but needs to be understood as "the fruit of an order which has been planted in human society by its divine Founder", an order "which must be brought about by humanity in its thirst for ever more perfect justice".³ As the result of an order planned and willed by the love of God, peace has an intrinsic and invincible truth of its own, and corresponds "to an irrepressible yearning and hope dwelling within us".⁴

4. Seen in this way, peace appears as a heavenly gift and a divine grace which demands at every level the exercise of the highest responsibility: that of conforming human history—in truth, justice, freedom and love—to the divine order. Whenever there is a loss of fidelity to the transcendent order, and a loss of respect for that "grammar" of dialogue which is the universal moral law written on human hearts,⁵ whenever the integral development of the person and the protection of his fundamental rights are hindered or denied, whenever countless people are forced to endure intolerable injustices and inequalities, how can we hope that the good of peace will be realized? The essential elements which make up the truth of that good are missing. Saint Augustine described peace as *tranquillitas ordinis*,⁶ the tranquillity of order. By this, he meant a situation which ultimately enables the truth about man to be fully respected and realized.

5. Who and what, then, can prevent the coming of peace? Sacred Scripture, in its very first book, *Genesis*, points to the lie told at the very

² No. 77.

³ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴ John Paul II, *Message for the 2004 World Day of Peace*, 9.

⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations* (5 October 1995), No. 3.

⁶ *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 13.

beginning of history by the animal with a forked tongue, whom the Evangelist John calls "the father of lies" (*Jn* 8:44). Lying is also one of the sins spoken of in the final chapter of the last book of the Bible, *Revelation*, which bars liars from the heavenly Jerusalem: "outside are... all who love falsehood" (22:15). Lying is linked to the tragedy of sin and its perverse consequences, which have had, and continue to have, devastating effects on the lives of individuals and nations. We need but think of the events of the past century, when aberrant ideological and political systems wilfully twisted the truth and brought about the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously concerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the framework for menacing scenarios of death in many parts of the world. Any authentic search for peace must begin with the realization that the problem of truth and untruth is the concern of every man and woman; it is decisive for the peaceful future of our planet.

6. Peace is an irrepressible yearning present in the heart of each person, regardless of his or her particular cultural identity. Consequently, everyone should feel committed to service of this great good, and should strive to prevent any form of untruth from poisoning relationships. All people are members of one and the same family. An extreme exaltation of differences clashes with this fundamental truth. We need to regain an awareness that we share a common destiny which is ultimately transcendent, so as to maximize our historical and cultural differences, not in opposition to, but in cooperation with, people belonging to other cultures. These simple truths are what make peace possible; they are easily understood whenever we listen to our own hearts with pure intentions. Peace thus comes to be seen in a new light: not as the mere absence of war, but as a harmonious coexistence of individual citizens within a society governed by justice, one in which the good is also achieved, to the extent possible, for each of them. The truth of peace calls upon everyone to cultivate productive and sincere relationships; it encourages them to seek out and to follow the paths of forgiveness and reconciliation, to be transparent in their dealings with others, and to be faithful to their word. In a particular way, the followers of Christ, recognizing the insidious presence of evil and the need for that liberation brought by the divine Master, look to him with

confidence, in the knowledge that "he committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips" (*1 Pet* 2:22; cf. *Is* 53:9). Jesus defined himself as the Truth in person, and, in addressing the seer of the Book of Revelation, he states his complete aversion to "every one who loves and practices falsehood" (*Rev* 22:15). He has disclosed the full truth about humanity and about human history. The power of his grace makes it possible to live "in" and "by" truth, since he alone is completely true and faithful. Jesus is the truth which gives us peace.

7. The truth of peace must also let its beneficial light shine even amid the tragedy of war. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, pointed out that "not everything automatically becomes permissible between hostile parties once war has regrettably commenced".⁷ As a means of limiting the devastating consequences of war as much as possible, especially for civilians, the international community has created an international humanitarian law. In a variety of situations and in different settings, the Holy See has expressed its support for this humanitarian law, and has called for it to be respected and promptly implemented, out of the conviction that the truth of peace exists even in the midst of war. International humanitarian law ought to be considered as one of the finest and most effective expressions of the intrinsic demands of the truth of peace. Precisely for this reason, respect for that law must be considered binding on all peoples. Its value must be appreciated and its correct application ensured; it must also be brought up to date by precise norms applicable to the changing scenarios of today's armed conflicts and the use of ever newer and more sophisticated weapons.

8. Here I wish to express gratitude to the international organizations and to all those who are daily engaged in the application of international humanitarian law. Nor can I fail to mention the many soldiers engaged in the delicate work of resolving conflicts and restoring the necessary conditions for peace. I wish to remind them of the words of the Second Vatican Council: "All those who enter the military in service to their

⁷ No. 79.

country should look upon themselves as guardians of the security and freedom of their fellow-countrymen, and, in carrying out this duty properly, they too contribute to the establishment of peace".⁸ On this demanding front the Catholic Church's military ordinariates carry out their pastoral activity: I encourage both the military Ordinaries and military chaplains to be, in every situation and context, faithful heralds of the truth of peace.

9. Nowadays, the truth of peace continues to be dramatically compromised and rejected by terrorism, whose criminal threats and attacks leave the world in a state of fear and insecurity. My predecessors Paul VI and John Paul II frequently pointed out the awful responsibility borne by terrorists, while at the same time condemning their senseless and deadly strategies. These are often the fruit of a tragic and disturbing nihilism which Pope John Paul II described in these words: "Those who kill by acts of terrorism actually despair of humanity, of life, of the future. In their view, everything is to be hated and destroyed".⁹ Not only nihilism, but also religious fanaticism, today often labeled fundamentalism, can inspire and encourage terrorist thinking and activity. From the beginning, John Paul II was aware of the explosive danger represented by fanatical fundamentalism, and he condemned it unsparingly, while warning against attempts to impose, rather than to propose for others freely to accept, one's own convictions about the truth. As he wrote: "To try to impose on others by violent means what we consider to be the truth is an offence against the dignity of the human being, and ultimately an offence against God in whose image he is made".¹⁰

10. Looked at closely, nihilism and the fundamentalism of which we are speaking share an erroneous relationship to truth: the nihilist denies the very existence of truth, while the fundamentalist claims to be able to impose it by force. Despite their different origins and cultural backgrounds, both show a dangerous contempt for human beings and

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Message for the 2002 World Day of Peace*, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

human life, and ultimately for God himself. Indeed, this shared tragic outcome results from a distortion of the full truth about God: nihilism denies God's existence and his provident presence in history, while fanatical fundamentalism disfigures his loving and merciful countenance, replacing him with idols made in its own image. In analyzing the causes of the contemporary phenomenon of terrorism, consideration should be given, not only to its political and social causes, but also to its deeper cultural, religious and ideological motivations.

11. In view of the risks which humanity is facing in our time, all Catholics in every part of the world have a duty to proclaim and embody ever more fully the "Gospel of Peace", and to show that acknowledgment of the full truth of God is the first, indispensable condition for consolidating the truth of peace. God is Love which saves, a loving Father who wants to see his children look upon one another as brothers and sisters, working responsibly to place their various talents at the service of the common good of the human family. God is the unfailing source of the hope which gives meaning to personal and community life. God, and God alone, brings to fulfilment every work of good and of peace. History has amply demonstrated that declaring war on God in order to eradicate him from human hearts only leads a fearful and impoverished humanity toward decisions which are ultimately futile. This realization must impel believers in Christ to become convincing witnesses of the God who is inseparably truth and love, placing themselves at the service of peace in broad cooperation with other Christians, the followers of other religions and with all men and women of good will.

12. Looking at the present world situation, we can note with satisfaction certain signs of hope in the work of building peace. I think, for example, of the decrease in the number of armed conflicts. Here we are speaking of a few, very tentative steps forward along the path of peace, yet ones which even now are able to hold out a future of greater serenity, particularly for the suffering people of Palestine, the land of Jesus, and for those living in some areas of Africa and Asia, who have waited for years for the positive conclusion of the ongoing processes of pacification and reconciliation. These are reassuring signs which need to be confirmed and consolidated by tireless cooperation and activity, above all on the

part of the international community and its agencies charged with preventing conflicts and providing a peaceful solution to those in course.

13. All this must not, however, lead to a naive optimism. It must not be forgotten that, tragically, violent fratricidal conflicts and devastating wars still continue to sow tears and death in vast parts of the world. Situations exist where conflict, hidden like flame beneath ashes, can flare up anew and cause immense destruction. Those authorities who, rather than making every effort to promote peace, incite their citizens to hostility towards other nations, bear a heavy burden of responsibility: in regions particularly at risk, they jeopardize the delicate balance achieved at the cost of patient negotiations and thus help make the future of humanity more uncertain and ominous. What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of good will, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all —whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them— agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.

14. In this regard, one can only note with dismay the evidence of a continuing growth in military expenditure and the flourishing arms trade, while the political and juridic process established by the international community for promoting disarmament is bogged down in general indifference. How can there ever be a future of peace when investments are still made in the production of arms and in research aimed at developing new ones? It can only be hoped that the international community will find the wisdom and courage to take up once more, jointly and with renewed conviction, the process of disarmament, and thus concretely ensure the right to peace enjoyed by every individual and every people. By their commitment to safeguarding the good of peace, the various agencies of the international community will regain the authority needed to make their initiatives credible and effective.

15. The first to benefit from a decisive choice for disarmament will be the poor countries, which rightly demand, after having heard so many promises, the concrete implementation of their right to development. That right was solemnly reaffirmed in the recent General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, which this year celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation. The Catholic Church, while confirming her confidence in this international body, calls for the institutional and operative renewal which would enable it to respond to the changed needs of the present time, characterized by the vast phenomenon of globalization. The United Nations Organization must become a more efficient instrument for promoting the values of justice, solidarity and peace in the world. For her part, the Church, in fidelity to the mission she has received from her Founder, is committed to proclaiming everywhere "the Gospel of peace". In the firm conviction that she offers an indispensable service to all those who strive to promote peace, she reminds everyone that, if peace is to be authentic and lasting, it must be built on the bedrock of the truth about God and the truth about man. This truth alone can create a sensitivity to justice and openness to love and solidarity, while encouraging everyone to work for a truly free and harmonious human family. The foundations of authentic peace rest on the truth about God and man.

16. At the conclusion of this Message, I would like to address a particular word to all believers in Christ, inviting them once again to be attentive and generous disciples of the Lord. When we hear the Gospel, dear brothers and sisters, we learn to build peace on the truth of a daily life inspired by the commandment of love. Every community should undertake an extensive process of education and witness aimed at making everyone more aware of the need for a fuller appreciation of the truth of peace. At the same time I ask for an increase of prayers, since peace is above all a gift of God, a gift to be implored incessantly. By God's help, our proclamation and witness to the truth of peace will be all the more convincing and illuminating. With confidence and filial abandonment let us lift up our eyes to Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace. At the beginning of this New Year, let us ask her to help all God's People, wherever they may be, to work for peace and to be guided by the light of the truth that sets man free (cf. *Jn* 8:32). Through Mary's

intercession, may all mankind grow in esteem for this fundamental good and strive to make it ever more present in our world, and, in this way, to offer a safer and more serene future to generations yet to come.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2005.

DOKUMENTI MILL-KURJA

FESTA TA' KRISTU SULTAN 2005

Messaġġ ta' Mons. Arcisqof Ġuzeppi Mercieca

Kristu hu l-Verità li tagħti l-libertà

Inġbarna flimkien, sacerdoti, reliġjużi u lajċi biex naghmlu festa. Qeghdin niċċelebraw b'ferħ u entusjażmu s-solenità ta' Kristu Sultan. Huwa jum ta' ferħ kbir għalina.

Irridu niringrazzjaw l-ewwelnett lill-Mulej li l-gzejjer tagħna ghadhom jgħożžu hafna l-festa ta' Kristu Sultan. Il-lum tohroġ tigri hafifa mill-qalb u l-fomm ta' kull Malti u Maltija l-għajta ta' "Viva Kristu Re".

Niringrazzjaw lill-Mulej u nitolbuh jagħtina l-kuraġġ biex din l-għożża li għaddewlna missirijietna nghadduha lil uliedna halli Malta tagħna tibqa' dejjem tagħraf u tistqarr bla biża', quddiem kulhadd, li Ġesu' ta' Nazaret huwa s-Sultan u r-Re wahdieni tagħna.

Il-wirt Malti tal-fidi

Minn mindu Pawlu ta' Tarsu ġie fostna u habbrilna l-Bxara t-Tajba li Alla l-Missier ihobbna tant li tana l-grazzja ta' l-adozzjoni, li permezz tagħha aħna nissejhu u aħna tassew ulied Alla li qieghed fis-smewwiet, it-tagħlim nisrani li rċivejna lahaq habbat wiċċu ma' halel ta' maltemp. Iżda missirijietna komplew dejjem jemmnu li Ġesu' Kristu, veru Alla u veru bniedem, bil-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħu salva l-bnedmin kollha. Baqgħu wkoll dejjem fidili lejn l-unika Knisja ta' Kristu u għaddewlna, minn generazzjoni għall-oħra, stil ta' hajja mibni fuq it-tagħlim ta' Kristu u l-Knisja tiegħu.

Madankollu, jeħtieġ nistqarru li minn xi żmien 'il hawn, il-fidi tagħna f'Ġesu' Kristu, fil-Knisja u fil-morali nisranija bdiet tiġi attakkata. Dawn l-attakki baqgħu dejjem sejrini mingħajr hafna hoss u storbju.

Ġesu' Sultan ċertament japprezza li qed insehulu s-Sultan tagħna, iżda wkoll jistenna minna li nagħrfu nilqghu l-isfidi kontra l-fidi nisranija li qed imissu anke lil pajjiżna.

M'għandniex għalfejn nitbezzgħu. Ġesu' rebaħ id-dnub u l-mewt. Ġesu' huwa dejjem magħna bl-umanità u d-divinità tiegħu fl-Ewkaristija. Jeħtieġ nissieħbu ma' Kristu biex miegħu nohorgu rebbieħa fuq kull taqbida. Jeħtieġ li nkunu veru dixxipli tiegħu biex nagħrfu l-qerq ta' dawn l-isfidi u nimxu dejjem fuq id-dawl tal-verità.

Verità u helsien

Ġesu' Sultan il-lum qed intennilna dak li darba qal lil-Lhud li emmnu. Fil-Vangelu ta' San Ġwann (8,31) insibu li Ġesu' qalilhom: "Jekk iżzommu fil-kelma tiegħi, tkunu tassew dixxipli tiegħi u tagħrfu l-verità u l-verità tehliskom." Fi kliem iehor, Ġesu' qed jgħidilna li jekk irridu nkunu dixxipli tiegħu, jeħtieġ li nemmnu fih, inżommu fil-kelma tiegħu u nemmnu li l-liberta' hija mibnija fuq il-verità, u fejn tonqos il-verità tkun nieqsa wkoll il-liberta'. Il-liberta' hija frott tal-verità.

Jiena nħoss li dan il-kliem ta' Ġesu' huwa provvidenzjali għalina. F'pajjiżna, il-kelma "Ġesu'" għadha fuq fomm kulhadd, iżda fil-hajja ta' għadd ta' hutna Maltin, Ġesu' ma għadx għandu il-post li jisthoqqlu, meta mhuwiex ukoll assenti. Biżżejjed ngħidu li s-socjetà ta' madwarna hija wahda sekolarizzata li spiss tibbumbardjana b'messaġġi li huma f'kontradizzjoni ċara tal-messaġġ nisrani. Donnu qed ngħixu fi żmien ta' dak li nistgħu nsejhulu "emorraġija reliġjuża".

Sitwazzjoni bħal din hija perikoluża hafna u ddgħajjed il-hegġa u l-interess fit-twemmin nisrani u gġib konfużjoni fil-hajja nisranija. Forsi mingħajr ma qed nindunaw, diehel sieket sieket fostna tagħlim totalment żbaljat u falz, bħal meta wiehed jgħid li r-religjonijiet huma kollha ndaqs u li kulhadd għandu d-dritt li jimxi skond ma jemmen jew ihoss li jkun l-aħjar.

Qed jissemma hafna wkoll id-dritt għal-liberta' tal-bniedem, għal-liberta' tal-kuxjenza, li hija spiss ankrata mal-principju, fih innifsu tajjed, li hadd m'għandu jimponi l-fidi tiegħu, u l-konsegwenzi morali li johorgu

minnha fuq haddiehor. Minn dan x'uhud jaslu biex jiġġustifikaw kull sura ta' diżordni morali u ksur ta' ġustizzja għaliex iħossu li l-bniedem għandu jkollu l-kodiċi morali tiegħu, imfassal minnu stess skond kif jixtieq u jrid jgħix hajtu minghajr ma jħares lejn xejn aktar.

Sentimenti bħal dawn jista' jkollhom konsegwenzi hżiena u koroh fuq l-individwu kif ukoll fis-soċjetà. Id-deni jaf ikun kbir; forsi lanqas biss nistgħu nimmaginawh. Biżżejjed insemmu l-approvazzjoni tal-liġijiet dwar iż-żwieġ bejn membri ta' l-istess sess kif ġara fil-Belġju, l-Olanda u pajjiżi oħrajn.

Sentimenti bħal dawn ifasslu stili ta' hajja li flok ma jaghtuna liberta' vera, iwaqqgħuna fil-jasar tad-dnub u ta' tant idoli foloz oħrajn. Il-bniedem jidhol fi kwalità ta' hajja li hija nieqsa mil-liberta' għaliex nieqsa mill-verità.

Ir-relattivizmu modern

Qieghed jirfes bis-skiet ukoll fuq xtutna r-relattivizmu modern. Dan ir-relattivizmu, li fuq kollox huwa mġiba Prattika, jagħmel ħsara tant kbira li, fejn jaħkem, il-ħsara li jġib isejnhulha d-dittatura tar-relattivizmu modern. Din twarrab għal kollox l-istess verità, saħansitra lill-istess Alla. Ir-relattivizmu etiku jgħid, per eżempju, li jeżistu biss opinjonijiet fl-imhuh ta' l-individwu, iżda fiha nnifisha l-verità ma teżistix. Dak li jikkostitwixxi l-bniedem hija l-liberta' tiegħu u għalhekk ma hu sugġett għal ebda norma morali li ġejja minn barra minnu nnifsu, jiġifieri minghand Alla. F'din il-viżjoni, l-Assolut mhux aktar Alla iżda l-bniedem. Dawn huma aberazzjonijiet, diżordnijiet serji li jwasslu l-bniedem għall-qerda tiegħu nnifsu. Dan juri fejn jista' jasal il-bniedem li jwarrab il-verità.

X'inhi l-verità? Din il-mistoqsija saret ukoll lil Ġesu' minghand Pilatu; iżda Pilatu baqa' bla twegiba għax ma qagħadx jistenna twegiba. Madankollu, bħala nsara aħna nafu li l-Verità mhix xi teorija jew filosofija astratta. Qabel xejn hija Persuna; għandha isem, għandha wiċċ, għandha storja: hija Ġesu' Kristu.

Meta ngħidu li l-verità huwa Ġesu' Kristu nifhmu mhux tant il-verità tal-ħaġa daqs kemm ir-relazzjoni li hemm bejn Ġesu' u l-bniedem, fis-sens

li Ġesu' jisthoqqlu ta' min tassew joqghod fuqu, ghaliex huwa l-istess verità.

Fl-ewwel Ittra ta' Timotju (2,4) naqraw li "Alla jrid li l-bnedmin kollha jsalvaw u jaslu biex jagħrfu l-verità." Fi kliem iehor Alla jrid is-salvazzjoni ta' kulhadd permezz ta' l-gharfien tal-verità. Is-salvazzjoni tinsab fil-verità. Fil-fatt, Ġesu' ma jwieghedx sempliċement li jagħmilna liberi, iżda jgħid: il-verità tagħtikom il-liberta'. Għalhekk, għalkemm m'għandniex definizzjoni tal-verità, il-verità hija konkretizzata fl-Iben: "Jiena hu l-verità" (Ġw. 14,6), Il-verità hija r-riġal ta' l-Iben, huwa l-Iben stess, Ġesu' Kristu.

Il-verità hi li Alla tant habb id-dinja li tana l-istess Ibnu l-Waħdieni. Din hija l-verità: li kull min jemmen f'Ġesu' jgħix u ma jmutx.

Dan juri li jekk irridu nkunu dixxipli ta' Ġesu' u ngħaddu lil uliedna t-tagħlim nisrani, li hija l-verità li tnisel il-liberta' tal-bniedem, jeħtieġ li nistqarru pubblikament, f'din l-okkażjoni sabiha, it-tweemmin tagħna.

Bħala Kattoliċi nemmnu li l-Knisja mwaqqfa minn Ġesu' Kristu hija waħda u tghix fil-Knisja Kattolika. Din hija l-unika Knisja ta' Kristu. Huwa Ġesu' il-medjatur waħdieni u r-Redentur universali, ta' kulhadd. Huwa l-uniku Salvatur. Fl-Atti ta' l-Appostli (4,12) naqraw: "F'hadd hliefu ma hemm salvazzjoni, għax imkien taħt is-sema ma hemm isem iehor mogħti lill-bniedem li bih aħna għandna nkunu salvi."

Il-Knisja mwaqqfa minn Ġesu' hija t-triq, l-istrument għas-salvazzjoni ta' kulhadd. Hija għandha rrispett kbir għar-religjonijiet tad-dinja, iżda fl-istess waqt tiċhad għal kollox dak li jgħid ir-relattivizmu religjuż, li religjon tiswa daqs l-oħra, li kull religjon tghodd. Bħala nsara rridu nirrispettaw ir-religjonijiet, iżda bejn ir-religjonijiet ma hemmx parità f'dak li jirrigwarda l-kontenut dottrinali u wisq inqas fil-każ ta' Ġesu', li huwa Alla li sar bniedem, u l-fundatur ta' religjonijiet oħrajn. Kristu hu t-Triq, il-Verità u l-Hajja u li fih il-bnedmin isibu l-milja tal-hajja.

Il-liberta' tal-kuxjenza

Il-lum jissemma hafna d-dritt għal-liberta' tal-kuxjenza. Il-Knisja Kattolika tghallem dan u hadd ma jista' jiċhad dan id-dritt. Fl-istess hin, pero', jeħtieġ inżommu quddiemna xi tffisser din il-liberta'.

Huwa veru li Alla halaq il-bnedmin bhala esseri intelligenti u liberi. Dan id-don tal-liberta' jaghmilna hielsa quddiem bnedmin ohra, li ma jistghux u ma ghandhomx dritt igieghluna naghmlu xi haġa kontra l-kuxjenza taghna. Izda ma nistghux nghidu "le" lir-rieda ta' Alla. Alla jrid li ahna, kull wiehed u wahda, skond is-sejha tieghu, naqdu dmirna b'responsabbilta' ta' bnedmin u ta' nsara. Huwa l-bniedem li jrid jiffirma l-gudizzju tieghu quddiem Alla. Izda bhala nsara nafu li ma nistghux nimxu arbitrarjament; ghandna nimxu skond il-kuxjenza li ghandha tkun taqbel ma' l-istess ligi ta' Alla. Irridu wkoll inkunu, fl-istess hin, fidili ghat-tagħlim tal-Magisteru li jinterpretaw awtentikament dik il-ligi ta' Alla fid-dawl ta' l-Evangelju.

Il-kuxjenza, għalhekk, mhijiex minnha nfisha għajn waħdanija adatta biex tgħid x'hinu t-tajeb u x'inhu l-hażin. Imma permezz tal-kuxjenza tieghu, il-bniedem jagħraf ligi li ma jagħtihix hu lilu nnifsu, izda hija ligi miktuba minn Alla f'qalbu u li hu għandu jobdi.

Meta wiehed ikun fidil lejn il-kuxjenza tieghu, wiehed ikun fit-triq t-tajba biex ifittex il-verità halli fil-verità wiehed iholl hafna problemi morali li jinbtu fil-hajja ta' kull wiehed u fil-hajja soċjali. Għalhekk, aktar ma nagħtu widen lill-kuxjenza retta, aktar nimxu fuq in-normi oġġettivi tal-morali u jkollna l-liberta'.

X'nhi din il-liberta'? Skond San Ġwann, liberta' tindika stil, kwalità ta' hajja li tagħti l-liberta'. U l-kwalità ta' hajja li tagħtina l-liberta' hija li nkunu fi stat ta' wlied u mhux ta' lsira, u preċiżament ulied Alla, u għalhekk hbieb ta' Alla u ahwa ta' Ġesu', meħlusin mill-jasar tad-dnub. Din it-tifsira għandha sens kbir meta naraw li d-dinja li ngħixu fiha hija maħkuma minn bosta kundizzjonamenti, bħalma huma l-poter, l-ghira, il-mibegħda, il-ġlied, l-idoli tas-suċċess, il-flus, il-prestiġju u l-pjaċiri. Fl-Ittra lill-Galkatin naqraw: "Kristu hełisna biex inkunu ngħixu ta' nies hielsa. Intom ġejtu msejhin għall-helsien biex taqdu lil xulxin fl-imħabba."

Fedelta' lejn Kristu

Kristu Sultan qed joffrilna jdejh. Huwa jistedinna nimxu 'l quddiem flimkien miegħu fl-għajxien tal-Verità li tagħtina l-liberta'. Jiddependi

minna jekk naċċettawx l-istedina tiegħu jew le. It-talb, li għandna bżonnu hafna f'ħajjietna, jgħinna nifhmu li l-aċċettazzjoni ta' din l-istedina rridu nsarrfuha f'fedelta' shiha lejn Kristu bhala l-Iben il-Wahdieni ta' Alla u l-Feddej uniku ta' kull bniedem.

Celebrazzjoni ta' Kristu Sultan
Il-Marsa, 20 ta' Novembru 2005

STQARRIJA TA' L-ISQFIJET MALTIN

Il-fenomeni ta' l-omosesswalità

Fi żminijietna l-omosesswalità huwa fenomenu soċjali u morali li qiegħed iqajjem hafna tħassib u nkwieta. Għalhekk inhossu l-htieġa li nindirizzaw din in-nota li tista' tinteressa lil kulhadd. Din is-sejha tagħna għandha tolqot u ddawwal il-kuxjenza mhux biss ta' dawk li jemmnu fi Kristu, iżda wkoll ta' dawk li għandhom għal qalbhom u jiddefendu l-ġid komuni jiġifieri id-dinjità taż-żwieġ, il-bini u l-istabilità tal-familja u s-saħħa tas-soċjetà.

Żwieġ biss bejn raġel u mara

L-ewwelnett huwa verità evidenti u fatt innegabbli t-tagħlim tal-Knisja dwar iż-żwieġ bhala għaqda bejn raġel u mara u l-komplimentarjetà tassessi. Dan it-tagħlim huwa magħruf u aċċettat mill-kulturi ewlenin tad-dinja. Il-kelma “żwieġ” ma tfissirx semplicement xi relazzjoni bejn żewġ bnedmin, iżda tfisser unjoni bejn raġel u mara għal għanijiet determinati mill-istess natura.

L-Iskrittura Mqaddsa tikkundanna l-għemil omosesswali bhala ħwejjeġ bla ġieħ (*Rom. 1, 24-27; 1 Tim. 1, 10*). L-Iskrittura, waqt li tikkundanna dan l-għemil ma tippermettix, ma trid lil hadd jikkonkludi li dawk li għandhom din it-tendenza huma personalment responsabbli għal dan; iżda hija tgħid li l-għemil omosesswali huwa minnu nnifsu diżordinat (*Kongregazzjoni għad-Duttrina tal-Fidi, Persona Humana, Doc. 29*,

1975). Dan il-gudizzju morali jinsab f'hafna kittieba nsara ta' l-ewwel żminijiet u hu aċċettat unanimament mit-Tradizzjoni Kattolika.

Kif jgħallem il-Katekiżmu tal-Knisja Kattolika, l-omosesswalità hi r-relazzjoni ta' rġiel jew nisa li jhossu ġibda sesswali, esklussiva jew predominanti għall-persuni ta' l-istess sess tagħhom. L-omosesswalità kellha hafna suriet tul iż-żminijiet u fil-kulturi. Fuq il-bażi ta' l-Iskrittura, li turi l-għemil omosesswali bħala għemil l-aktar hażin, it-Tradizzjoni dejjem għallmet li "kull għemil omosesswali hu fih innifsu diżordinat." Hu għemil kontra l-liġi naturali. Jagħlaq l-att sesswali għall-ġhoti tal-hajja. Ma jiġix minn komplimentarjetà affettiva u minn sesswalità vera. Ma jistax jiġi approvat għall-ebda raġuni. (*Katekiżmu, 2357*)

Ebda ideoloġija m'għandha l-qawwa li tħassar mill-bniedem iċ-ċertezza li ż-żwieġ jeżisti biss bejn raġel u mara, li permezz tar-rigal personali tagħhom li jagħtu b'mod speċjali u esklussiv lil xulxin, jahdmu għall-qdusija ta' xulxin u jikkoperaw ma' Alla fit-tniissil u l-formazzjoni ta' hajjiet umani godda.

Alla halaq il-bniedem u halqu raġel u mara; bħala persuni huma ugwali u huma komplimentari bħala raġel u mara. Dan juri li ma hemm assolutament ebda bażi biex wieħed jikkunsidra l-għaqdiet omosesswali bħallikieku huma b'xi mod simili jew anke jindikaw fil-bogħod li għandhom x'jaqsmu mal-pjan ta' Alla dwar iż-żwieġ u l-familja. Iż-żwieġ huwa qaddis, waqt li l-għemil omosesswali jikser l-istess liġi morali naturali. L-għemejjel omosesswali jimblokkaw l-atti sesswali għar-rigal tal-hajja; lanqas huma frott ta' komplimentarjetà sesswali. Taħt ebda ċirkustanza dawn l-atti omosesswali ma jistgħu jiġu approvati.

Imħabba u rispettt

Minkejja din is-sitwazzjoni, il-Knisja tgħallem li lejn l-irġiel u n-nisa b'tendenzi omosesswali għandu jkollna mħabba.

Il-Katekiżmu tal-Knisja jfakkarna li fil-waqt li numru mhux żgħir ta' rġiel u nisa juru tendenzi omosesswali fil-fond, il-qagħda omosesswali tagħhom ma għażluhiex huma. Għal hafna minnhom, din l-inklinazzjoni, li fiha nfisha hi diżordni, hi diffikulta' kbira. Għandna nilqgħuhom

b'rispett, moghdrija u attenzjoni kbira. Ma ghandux ikun hemm ghalihom ebda sinjal ta' diskriminazzjoni mhux g'usta. Dawn il-persuni huma msejhin biex jaghmlu r-rieda ta' Alla f'hajjithom u, jekk huma nsara ghandhom jghaqqdu mas-salib ta' Kristu d-diffikultajiet li maghhom jistghu jiltaqghu minhabba l-qagħda tagħhom. (*Katekizmu, 2356*).

Ukoll il-persuni omosesswali huma msejhin biex iħarsu l-kastità. Permezz tal-virtujiet tal-kontroll tagħhom infushom, li jharrġuom fl-użu tal-liberta' interjuri tagħhom, xi kultant ukoll bl-ghajjuna ta' hbiberija bla interessi, bit-talb u l-grazzja tas-sagramenti, jistghu u ghandhom jersqu bil-mod il-mod u b'fehma shiha, għall-perfezzjoni nistranija. (*Katekizmu, 2359*).

✠ Ġużeppi Mercieca, Arcisqof ta' Malta

✠ Nikol Ġ. Cauchi, Isqof ta' Ghawdex

✠ Annetto Depasquale, Isqof Awżiljarju ta' Malta

25 ta' Novembru 2005

MESSAĠĠ TAL-MILIED MINN MONS. ARĊISQOF
GUŻEPPI MERCIECA LILL-MISSJUNARJI MALTIN

Gheżież saċerdoti, reliġjużi u lajċi Maltin li qeghdin taħdmu għall-Knisja bogħod mix-xtajtiet tagħna.

Wasal Milied iehor u bħal kull sena, flimkien ma' l-awguri tiegħi u tal-kleru Malti lilkom u lill-hidmiet tagħkom, qiegħed inwasslilkom messaġġ qasir.

Is-Sena ta' l-Ewkaristija li ċċelebrajna din is-sena, tgħaqqad lid-Djocesijiet tagħna magħkom, is-saċerdoti li qed taħdmu għall-Knisja bogħod minn artna, b'mod partikulari. Dan għaliex intom qed twasslu l-ikel li l-Mulej stedinna nieklu -- "ħudu u kulu" għaliex "dan" hu l-ikel li neħtiegu: l-imħabba Tiegħu fl-aqwa tagħha għall-maħfra tad-dnubiet -- fl-artijiet nieqsa mis-saċerdoti. Intom twettqu l-kmand tal-Mulej, "Aghmlu dan b'tifkira Tiegħi" b'mod aktar wiesgħa mis-saċerdoti f'arthom.

Propriu f'din is-sena ta' l-Ewkaristija garrabna l-mewt tal-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II li stieden lill-fidili jiddedikaw din is-sena lill-Ewkaristija. Dan il-Papa qaddis jibqa' mfakkar minna l-Maltin għall-imħabba li wera lejkom u lejn l-gheżież ġenituri tagħkom fil-laqgħa li kellu ma' qrabatkom hdejn is-Santwarju tal-Madonna tal-Mellieħa fis-sena 1990. Hu stess stqarr li fiż-żjarat kollha li għamel qatt ma kellu opportunità bħal din. Dakinhar bierek lil ommijietkom u missirijietkom u wera l-apprezzament kbir tiegħu għall-hidma tagħkom għall-Knisja.

Il-Papa suċċessur tiegħu, Benedettu XVI, tana x-xorti nisimghu minn fomm l-isqfijiet imlaqqgħin madwaru fis-Sinodu, dwar il-hidma siewja li saċerdoti, reliġjużi u lajċi bħalkom qed iwettqu fid-djoċesijiet tagħhom. L-istess Papa kompli sebbah is-Sena ta' l-Ewkaristija bl-appell għall-preparazzjoni għaliha bis-Sagrament tal-Qrar.

F'dawn il-ġranet thabbret in-nomina ta' Mons. Mario Grech bhala Isqof tad-Djoċesi ta' Ghawdex. Filwaqt li minn qalbna nifirhulu f'isimkom

ilkoll, jixraq li niringrazzjaw lill-Isqof Nikol Cauchi li dejjem inkoraġġixxa l-hidma missjunarja, u għall-imhabba li dejjem wera lejn il-Maltin ta' barra u dawk kollha li jahdmu magħhom u għalihom. Ta' għieh għalina l-Maltin kienet ukoll in-nomina ta' Patri Albert Brincat O.Carm bhala Amministratur Apostoliku fil-Bolivja. Fl-istess hin, din is-sena rritorna lura fostna l-Isqof Francis Adeodatus Micallef O.C.D. wara snin ta' hidma bhala Vigarju Apostoliku fil-Kuwajt. Napprezzaw mill-qalb il-hidma tieghu u nagħtuh merħba fostna.

Insellem lill-erba' saċerdoti missjunarji Maltin li mietu din is-sena: Dun Mikiel Balzan li kien jahdem fid-Djoċesi ta' Osasco, Amerika Latina; Dun Peter Paul Borda li hadem fl-Awstralja u fl-Istati Uniti ta' l-Amerika; Dun Frank Lewis li wara snin ta' hidma mal-Maltin fl-Egittu, Inghilterra, Kanada u Stati Uniti ta' l-Amerika, kien irtirat fid-Dar tal-Kleru; u Patri Herculan deMaria O.F.M.Cap li hadem fl-Indja, Etjopja u Stati Uniti ta' l-Amerika. Niringrazzjawhom mill-qalb għall-hidma li taw, nitolbu għalihom u nitolbuhom jitolbu għal aktar vokazzjonijiet missjunarji.

Ingedded bil-qalb l-awguri tiegħi lilkom, lill-gheziez tagħkom u lil dawk li qegħdin taħdmu fosthom, għal Milied hieni u qaddis u sena ġdida mimlija b'kull barka tas-sema.

✠ Ġużeppi Mercieca, Arcisqof ta' Malta

16 ta' Diċembru 2005

MESSAĠĠ TA'

MONS. ARĊISQOF ĠUŻEPPI MERCIECA

LILL-EMIGRANTI FL-OKKAŻJONI TAL-MILIED 2005

L-Ewkaristija f'Jum il-Mulej

Għezież hutna emigranti,

Insellem lilkom u lill-familji kollha tagħkom.

Insellem ukoll lis-saċerdoti li qed jaħdmu fostkom.

Il-Milied it-Tajjeb lilkom ilkoll.

Kull min jemmen li t-Tarbija Ġesu' li twieled f'għar f'Betlem elfejn sena ilu huwa l-Iben ta' Alla magħmul bniedem li ġie fid-dinja biex jehles lill-bnedmin kollha mill-jasar tad-dnub, żmien il-Milied ikun qed jistennieh b'herqa kbira.

Meta joqrob żmien il-Milied, aħna nawguraw xewqat sbieħ lil xulxin. Ġewwa fina nħossu qawwa li ma nkunux nistgħu nirreżistuha. Hija qawwa li timbuttana biex ninqatgħu ftit mill-problemi u d-diffikultajiet tal-hajja ta' kuljum biex nifthu qlubna għall-ferħ li tnissel fina t-Tarbija ta' Betlem u naqsmu dan il-ferħ ma' haddiehor.

Waħda mid-drawwiet sbieħ tal-Milied li writna minghand dawk ta' qabilna, hija li noffru lil xulxin x-xewqat ta' Milied Hieni. Din hija drawwa sabiħa u tajba li tista' tghinna hafna biex nergħu nersqu lejn xulxin jekk inkunu mxellfin bejnietna.

Nitheggu hafna wkoll għall-Ikla tal-Milied, fejn qraba u hbieb ningabru flimkien biex waqt li niċcelebraw il-festa tat-twelid tal-Mulej Feddej, nghinu lil xulxin biex nikbru fl-imhabba tal-Hallieq u ta' xulxin. Din ukoll hija drawwa sabiħa u ta' min jinkuraġġiha. Meta l-familji u l-hbieb

jingabru madwar l-istess mejda biex jieklu flimkien waqt li jaqsmu ma' xulxin il-ferh li Ġesu' Bambin jiggarrantixxi lil min jemmen tassew fih, l-ispirtu tal-Milied żgur li jhalli fina l-marka sabiha tiegħu.

F'dan il-messaġġ, pero', aktar milli fuq l-Ikla tal-Milied, xtaqt niffoka fuq Ikla oħra li hija importanti hafna mhux biss fi żmien il-Milied imma f'kull mument tal-hajja nisranija. Qed ngħid għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Ewkaristija, speċjalment l-Ewkaristija f'Jum il-Mulej.

Sejha għal tiġdid

Nahseb li lkoll kemm intom smajtu dwar is-Sinodu ta' l-Isqfijiet li ltaqa' f'Ruma f'Ottubru li għadda, dwar l-Ewkaristija.

Sinodu hija kelma Griega li tfisser "mixja flimkien".

Fis-Sinodu, id-diskussjonijiet ta' l-Isqfijiet kienu wkoll dwar il-bżonn li l-Insara jiġgeddu fit-tqaddis ta' Jum il-Mulej, quddiemnett biċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Ewkaristija.

Jiena u nsegwi dak li ntqal fis-Sinodu dwar Jum il-Mulej, ġejtu quddiem għajnejja intom, l-emigranti minn dawn il-gżejjer, li meta mortu fl-artijiet li laqgħukom u li fihom intom bnejtu l-ġejjieni tagħkom u tal-familji tagħkom, hadtu magħkom għożża speċjali għaċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Ewkaristija f'Jum il-Mulej.

Il-Jum tal-Hadd huwa l-jum li fih li ahna niċċelebraw lil Kristu Rxoxt. Huwa jum qaddis konsagrat lill-Hallieq.

Jiena nifhem li għal hafna mill-emigranti mhux faċli li tmorru għall-Quddiesa kuljum. Imma jiena naf ukoll li hafna minnkomp thossu tassew il-bżonn li almenu darba fil-ġimgħa, f'Jum il-Mulej, tiehdu hsieb li tisimgħu Quddiesa u tiehdu sehem fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Ewkaristija.

Dan hu sabih. Nixtieq ninkuraġġikom hafna f'din id-drawwa qaddisa.

Waqt li qed niċċelebraw Milied iehor, jiġifieri l-miġja ta' l-Iben ta' Alla f'din id-dinja biex jifdina mill-jasar tad-dnub, inħoss li għandi nistedinkom biex taraw li l-ispirtu tal-Milied iġedded fikom ukoll dik l-imhabba għall-

Ewkaristija u ghal Jum il-Mulej li intom hadtu maghkom meta emigrajtu minn art twelidna.

Il-ferh taċ-ċelebrazzjoni tat-twelid ta' Ġesu' Bambin ghandu rabta shiha mal-ferh taċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' Qawmien ta' l-istess Ġesu' mill-Imwiet, ċelebrazzjoni li ahna naghmlu kull nhar ta' Hadd. Il-Milied huwa l-bidu tal-missjoni ta' Ġesu' f'din l-art: missjoni ta' mhabba bla tarf li lahqet il-quċċata taghha fil-helsien li l-istess Ġesu' kisbilna bil-qawmien tieghu mill-mewt li ahna niċċelebraw mhix biss fl-Ghid il-Kbir, imma kull nhar ta' Hadd.

Nahseb li hafna minnkom ghadkom tiftakru dak l-innu sabih li spiss inkantaw fil-bidu tal-Quddiesa tal-Hadd – innu li fih nistiednu lil xulxin biex ninghaqdu f'tifhir lill-Mulej ghall-gid li ghamel maghna, kif ukoll biex flimkien nifirhu fit-tifkira ta' meta Ġesu' hareġ rebbieh fuq is-setgħa tal-mewt.

L-ghaqda tal-familja

L-Isqfijiet li ngabru flimkien fis-Sinodu esprimejna t-tama li, għall-Insara, Jum il-Mulej ikun tassew dan kollu u wkoll jum ta' mistrieħ mix-xogħol, kif ukoll ta' tiġdid fl-imhabba fi hdan il-familja.

Iva, għandna naghmlu hilitna kollha biex Jum Il-Mulej ikun tassew riservat għall-Mulej billi l-ewwelnett ninghaqdu għaċ-Ċelebrazzjoni ta' l-Ewkaristija, fejn nieklu mill-istess ġisem ta' Ġesu' u nixorbu mill-istess demmu, waqt li nistrieħu wkoll mix-xogħol ta' kuljum u ngħixu kemm nistgħu l-ghaqda tal-familja tagħna.

Il-Jum tal-Hadd, infatti, għandu jkun jum speċjali għall-familja: jum li fih il-membri kollha tal-familja jieħdu hsieb li jersqu aktar lejn xulxin bil-hsieb li l-familja tkun tista' tgħix u tikber tassew bhala familja.

Dan jghodd għal kull familja. Imma forsi jghodd iżjed għal dawk il-familji li minhabba n-natura tax-xogħol tal-membri tagħhom u d-distanzi, f'it li xejn ikollhom l-okkażjoni li jkunu flimkien.

Inhegġigkom hafna biex tistinkaw halli dan il-hin ta' flimkien, speċjalment f'Jum il-Mulej, tghożżuh kemm tistgħu.

Bil-mistrieħ tal-Hadd, inkunu nistgħu naraw flimkien il-ħsbijiet u l-ħidmiet ta' kuljum fil-verità proprja tagħhom: il-ħwejjeġ materjali li jħabblulna rasna jċedu posthom għall-valuri spiritwali.

Il-mistrieħ tal-Jum tal-Hadd jgħinna wkoll nagħrfu u ngawdu aħjar u flimkien il-ġmiel tan-natura. Bħala l-jum li fih il-bniedem hu paċi ma' Alla, miegħu nnifsu u ma' l-oħrajn, il-Hadd isir mument li fih in-nies jistgħu jergġgħu jħarsu lejn l-gheġubijiet tan-natura u jgawduhom flimkien.

Jalla ċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-Milied tkun għalikom opportunità ta' tiġdid dejjiemi fl-ghożża tagħkom għall-Ewkaristija f'Jum il-Mulej – ghożża li mingħajr dubju tgħinkom tikbru fl-imħabba tagħkom għal Alla, għall-familja, għall-proxxmu u għall-ħolqien.

Il-hena veru tal-Milied iheġġiġna biex nemmnu fi Kristu Ġesu u jkollna fiduċja fih u fil-Knisja li hu stess waqqaf biex tkompli l-missjoni tiegħu. Il-Milied jgħinna nifhmu li, aħna min aħna, huma x'inhuma n-nuqqasijiet tagħna fil-ħajja, Alla jħobbna u joffrilna jdejh biex jerfagħna halli nkunu nistgħu ngħixu dejjem aħjar l-imħabba li Ġesu' jistenna minna lkoll għall-Hallieq u għall-proxxmu tagħna kollu.

Nawgura mill-ġdid u mill-qalb Milied Qaddis u Sena Ġdida mimlija barka tal-Mulej lill-emigranti kollha u lill-familji kollha tagħkom.

Nitlob lill-Mulej jieqaf magħkom u jagħtikom l-barka u l-paċi tiegħu.

✠ Ġuzeppi Mercieca, Arcisqof ta' Malta

23 ta' Diċembru 2005

Ċirkulari Numru 485

Lir-Reverendi Arċiprieti, Kappillani, Retturi ta' knejjes u Superjuri Reliġjużi

INDULĠENZA PLENARJA FIS-SOLENNITÀ TAL-KUNĊIZZJONI

Il-Papa Benedittu XVI qed jaghti Indulġenza Plenarja għas-Solennità ta' l-Immakulata Kunċizzjoni (8 ta' Dicembru 2005). Id-Digriet jgħid li t-8 ta' Dicembru jimmarka l-40 sena minn meta l-Qaddej ta' Alla l-Papa Pawlu VI, f'għeluq il-Konċilju Vatikan II iddedika tifhir kbir lill-Verġni Marija li, bħala Omm Kristu, hija Omm Alla u l-omm spiritwali tagħna lkoll.

F'din is-Solennità, il-Papa Benedittu XVI, waqt li jfahhar pubblikament lil Marija Immakulata, minn qalbu jixtieq li l-Knisja kollha tingħaqad miegħu, sabiex dawk kollha li jemmu, magħqudin f'isem l-Omm komuni, jissahhu fil-fidi, jikbru fid-devozzjoni lejn Kristu, u jhobbu lil huthom billi jithegġu aktar fil-karità. Minn dan – kif għallem b'tant ghaqal il-Konċilju Vatikan II – jinbtu hidmiet ta' hniena lejn dawk fil-bżonn, l-osservanza tal-gustizzja, u d-difiża u t-tfittxija għall-paċi.

Għal din ir-raġuni, il-Papa kkonċeda d-don ta' Indulġenza Plenarja bil-kundizzjonijiet normali tas-soltu: Qrara sacramentali, Tqarbina u talba skond l-intenzjoni tal-Papa. L-Indulġenza Plenarja tista' tinkiseb minn dawk li, b'ruħ meħlusa mir-rabta mad-dnub, fis-Solennità ta' l-Immakulata Kunċizzjoni ta' din is-sena jieħdu sehem f'celebrazzjoni liturgika f'għieh il-Verġni Marija, jew għallingas joffru xieħda bil-miftuħ ta' devozzjoni Marjana quddiem xbiha ta' Marija Immakulata li tkun għall-qima tan-nies, waqt li jgħidu wkoll il-Missierna u l-Kredu u xi invokazzjoni lil Marija. Tista' per eżempju tingħad il-ġokolatorja: *O Marija li dħalt fid-dinja mingħajr tebgħa, agħtina l-grazzja li noħorġu minnha mingħajr htija.*

Għaldaqstant il-W.R. Arciprieti, kappillani u retturi tal-knejjes għandhom jaraw li fis-Solennità ta' Marija Immakulata x-xbieha tal-Madonna tkun mżejna b' mod speċjali, b'tali mod li tiġbed aktar mis-soltu l-attenzjoni tal-insara u tgħinhom jidhlu fl-ispirtu ta' talb.

Dawk li minhabba mard jew raġuni oħra gusta ma jistgħux johorġu minn djarhom, jistgħu jiksbu l-Indulġenza Plenarja fi djarhom stess, jew fejn ikunu qegħdin, jekk jingħaqdu fl-ispirtu u x-xewqa tal-Papa f'talb lil Marija Immakulata, u jgħidu l-Missierna u l-Kredu. F'dawn il-każi, barra li jridu jkunu b'ruħ meħlusa minn kull forma ta' dnuq, il-persuni konċernati jrid ukoll ikollhom l-intenzjoni li josservaw il-kundizzjonijiet normali għall-Indulġenza Plenarja, ma' l-ewwel opportunità li tiġhom.

Mahruga mill-Kurja Arciveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana,
illum 30 ta' Novembru 2005.

✠(ft.) Annetto Depasquale
Isqof Awżiljarju – Vigarju Ġenerali

✠(ft.) Mons. Carmelo Zammit
Kancellier

QUDDIESA TA' RADD IL-HAJR

GHALL-GRADWATI L-ĠODDA

Omelija ta' Monsinjur Arċisqof Ġuzeppi Mercieca

Il-kontribut tal-gradwati fis-soċjetà

Il-lum ingbarna flimkien biex niċċelebraw Jum il-Gradwazzjoni.

Dan hu jum ta' ferħ u entusjażmu għal kulhadd.

Bir-raġun kollu, wiċċkom jilma bil-ferħ. Thossu li sehħet il-holma, ix-xewqa ta' qalbkom: li taraw jintemm b'suċċess ix-xogħol twil tagħkom bhala studenti fl-Università tagħna. Jifirhu l-ġenituri tagħkom li ghenukom bit-talb tagħhom u b'kull xorta' ta' għajjuna biex stajtu tirbħu tant diffikultajiet u xkiel li jhabbat wiċċu magħhom kull bniedem fil-hajja tiegħu. Jifirhu wkoll magħkom il-professuri u għalliema ohrajn li ghenukom, bit-tagħlim u l-eżempju tagħhom, tikbru f'nies ta' karattru u ta' servizz għall-ohrajn.

Inhoss li tridu tghidu 'grazzi' kbira wkoll lill-Università tagħna. Hi kienet mill-bidu nett tagħha istituzzjoni, realta' ta' ispirazzjoni nisranija li wasslet u ipproponiet matul iż-żmien, liż-żgħażaġh tagħna, teżori ta' dawl u gherf miż-żewġ ghejjun tar-raġuni u r-rivelazzjoni. Għallmet il-verità li x-xjenza u l-fidi nisranija mhumiex inkonċiljabbli. Bhala xiehda ta' dan hija l-produzzjoni xjentifika, ta' kwalità superjuri li harġet mill-fomm u l-kitba ta' riċerkaturi u studjużi Maltin magħrufin għall-fidi nisranija tagħhom. Dan kabbar dejjem il-ġieħ ta' l-Università tagħna.

Intom il-gradwanti riċevjtu hafna minghand l-Università tagħna matul is-snin. Intom midjunin magħha. L-Università tistenna minghandkom li intom tkabbrulha l-ġieħ tagħha billi tkomplu tikbru fix-xjenza u l-veru gherf ta' Alla u taħdmu dejjem biex fl-Università tinghata l-primat u l-ewwel importanza lir-riċerka xjentifika. Università li ma taħdimx għal dan il-primat tirriskja li tiġi ridotta għal fabbrika ta' diplomi. Aħdmu,

agħtu s-servizz professjonali tagħkom b'generożità bħala xhieda u għalliema ta' kull ma hu veru, sabiħ u tajjeb. Warrbu l-individwalizmu, l-ambizzjoni żejda u r-reghba għall-flus jew prestiġju, u Alla jkun magħkom.

Intom midjunin ukoll mas-soċjetà, li għandha bżonnkom il-lum iktar mill-bieraħ billi qed jinhassu qawwiet ta' tagħlim żbaljat u falz bħalma hu r-relattivizmu modern. Kull fejn jaħkem dan ir-relattivizmu tirrenja d-dittatura fuq il-moħħ u l-qalb tal-bniedem għaliex tbeghdu mill-verità u twasslu saħansitra biex bħala Assolut jitqiegħed il-bniedem minflok Alla l-Hallieq ta' kollox u ġid ta' kulhadd.

Inhegġigkom hafna biex tiegħu sehem fid-dibattiti li jkunu għaddejjin fil-pajjiż dwar oqsma li jhollu u jorbtu fil-hajja tal-bniedem. Pajjiżna u s-soċjetà tagħna jinhtiguh hafna l-kontribut ta' nies ippreparati li jtkellmu b'kompetenza, responsabbiltà u sinċerità. Ikolli nistqarr, b'dispaċir, li l-kontribut ta' nies ippreparati rari jkun dak li wiehed jistenna u li jmissu jkun. Pajjiżna għandu hafna x'jirbaħ jekk nies ippreparati fis-suġġett tagħhom jersqu 'l quddiem bil-fehma u t-tmexxija tagħhom meta jkunu qed jiġu diskussi ċerti suġġetti. Dan iżjed u iżjed jekk ikun hemm ir-riskju li l-opinjoni pubblika tiġi sgwidata minn fehmiert li ma jkunux imhejjija biżżejjed, jew minn persuni li iktar ikun jimpurtahom li jmexxu l-aġenda tagħhom milli li jgħinu biex jingharfu l-verità u l-oghla ġid komuni.

In-nies tagħna tistenna l-kelma tagħkom. Anzi, hija ghatxana li tisma' u tagħraf il-verità bl-għajnuna tagħkom. Kunu kuraġġużi, biex il-gurnata tal-lum ma tkunx biss ċerimonja ċelebrattiva, iżda dawl li jkeċċi d-dlam li qed iserrep ukoll f'pajjiżna.

Nitlob lill-Mulej Ġesu', l-Imghallem Divin, biex ikun dejjem magħkom u jgħinkom tkunu xhieda mhegġa ta' l-Evangeliu tiegħu fis-servizz tal-proxxmu kollu.

KonKattidral ta' San Ġwann
29 ta' Novembru 2005

Il-finanzjament ta' riċerki bl-embrijuni umani

Ahna, l-Isqfijiet ta' Malta u Ghawdex, ninnotaw b'sodisfazzjon id-dikjarazzjoni ċara ta' Malta, flimkien ma' hames pajjiżi oħrajn ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea, kontra li fondi ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea jintużaw għal riċerka li twassal għall-qerda ta' embrijuni umani.

Id-dikjarazzjoni li Malta għamlet flimkien ma' l-Awstrija, il-Ġermanja, l-Italja, il-Polonja u s-Slovakja, filwaqt li tistqarr li s-Seba' Qafas ta' Programm ta' Riċerka ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea huwa strument importanti biex tissaħħah il-baži xjentifika u teknoloġika tal-Komunità, turi n-nuqqas ta' qbil ta' dawn il-pajjiżi li attivitajiet li jinkludu l-konsum ta' embrijuni umani jkunu eligibbli għal fondi minn dan il-programm.

Azzjoni bħal din ta' Malta jisthoqqilha apprezzament u appoġġ, bil-qawwa kollha, minn kull min jgħożż tassew il-hajja tal-bniedem mill-bidu sat-tmien tagħha.

Huwa ta' għieħ kbir għal pajjiżna li jkun minn ta' quddiem fid-difiża u l-harsien tal-hajja tal-bniedem f'kull stadju tagħha.

Difiża u harsien bħal dawn jirriflettu l-għożża shiha li l-poplu tagħna għandu għall-valur tal-hajja umana.

Jalla ma jkun qatt li f'pajjiżna jkun hawn min b'xi mod jipproponi lill-poplu tagħna xi għažliet li ma jkunux juru r-rispett totali meħtieġ lejn il-hajja tal-bniedem f'kull mument tagħha u f'kull ċirkustanza.

✠Guzeppe Mercieca, Arċisqof ta' Malta

✠Nikol Ġ. Cauchi, Isqof ta' Ghawdex

✠Annetto Depasquale, Isqof Awżiljarju ta' Malta

02 ta' Diċembru 2005

MESSAĠĠ TA'
MONS. ARČISQOF ĠUŽEPPI MERCIECA
GHALL-MILIED 2005

L-imħabba tal-proxxmu

Gheżież huti Maltin u Ghawdxin,

Nixtieqilkom il-koll il-Milied it-Tajjeb.

Il-Milied huwa dejjem żmien speċjali għall-poplu tagħna.

L-ispirtu tal-Milied minnu nnifsu jgħinna niġgeddu fl-imħabba tagħna għal Alla u għall-proxxmu, speċjalment il-proxxmu fil-bżonn ta' solidarjetà akbar.

Il-Milied ifakkarna li l-Knisja thares lejn id-dinja tal-faqar u t-tbatija, tkun xi tkun il-kawża, b'għajnejn Ġesu' Bambin: għajnejn li jittrasmettu l-imħabba bla tarf ta' Alla għall-bniedem u jhegġuna nikbru fl-imħabba tagħna għal Missierna li qiegħed fis-smewwiet, u għal kull bniedem.

Jekk il-Milied jiġi u jmur mingħajr ma jirnexxilna nikbru u nissahhu fl-imħabba tagħna għall-Hallieq u għal hutna l-bnedmin, speċjalment dawk li qed ibatu, allura jkun qiesu li l-Milied gie għal xejn għalina.

Jiena nahseb li kulhadd jixtieq ihaddan u jgħix mill-aħjar li jista' l-ispirtu veru tal-Milied. Il-mistoqsija li rridu naghmlu lilna nfusna bhala individwu u bhala soċjetà, hija jekk din ix-xewqa aħniex ngħixuha tassew, kif irid minna Ġesu' Bambin, f'kull żmien u f'kull ċirkustanza.

It-test ta' l-immigrazzjoni

Ejjew inharsu ftit lura lejn is-sena li qed niġu fi tmiemha.

Il-poplu tagħna għandu qalb kbira. Ix-xieħda ta' solidarjetà Maltija mal-proxxmu fil-bżonn ta' l-imħabba u l-għajjnuna hija waħda mill-karatteristiċi sbieħ tal-poplu tagħna.

Din is-sena, il-qalb u s-solidarjetà Maltija ġew wiċċ'imb wiċċ ma' test u esperjenzi mhux tas-soltu. Ġraw ċerti affarijiet li nisslu tħassib ġustifikat. Kien hemm mumentu meta ċertu kliem li beda jingħad u ċerti attitudnijiet li bdew ifeġġu minn ċerti oqsma, dwar kif għandna nġibu rwieħna ma' l-immigranti li jaslu f'pajjiżna, xejn ma kienu feliċi. Nibtu wkoll ċerti reazzjonijiet. Xi estremitajiet ma naqsux. Sahansitra kien hemm min, minkejja dak li ilha tghallem u ttenni l-Knisja f'Malta, bil-kelma u bl-eżempju, dwar l-imħabba li għandna nuru mal-proxxmu kollu mingħajr distinzjoni, beda forsi jaħseb li l-Knisja mhix tinduna x'qed jiġri.

Dan, naturalment, ma kienx il-każ. Il-Knisja f'Malta ilha titkellem fuq l-imħabba tal-proxxmu kollu. Il-Knisja titkellem bit-tagħlim ċar tagħha u wkoll bil-hidma tagħha man-nies konċernati -- impenn li, fil-każ tar-refuġjati u nies f'qagħda simili, ilu sejjer minn ferm qabel ma feġġgħet il-mewġa ta' immigrazzjoni ta' l-aħħar snin. Il-Knisja tkellmet ukoll, b'mod li jħares fil-bogħod, permezz tas-Sinodu Djoċesan.

Ċertament, il-Knisja qatt ma tista' taqbel ma' ċerti mġibiet, iżjed u iżjed jekk min ikun warajhom jipprova jinterpretat tagħlimha kif jaqbillu skond l-aġenda tiegħu. Iżda kif jiena kelli l-okkażjoni ngħid fi Frar li għadda, meta tkellimt fuq is-sitwazzjoni li kienet qed tiżviluppa dakinhar, m'għandniex nħaġġu. M'għandniex inħallu l-emozzjonijiet jiġru bina u dak li ġara narawh bħallikieku l-poplu tagħna nfixel u nħakem mir-razziżmu.

Ir-razziżmu mhux f'demm il-poplu Malti, u aħna għandna naħdmu, speċjalment bl-edukazzjoni, biex ma jkun qatt li r-razziżmu jidhol f'demm il-poplu tagħna.

Is-saħħa tal-valuri

Hija kwistjoni ta' valuri bażiċi. Il-bniedem, kull bniedem, hu min hu, huwa maħluq fix-xbiha ta' Alla. Għalhekk, kull bniedem, ikun ġej minn fejn ikun ġej, għandu dritt għad-dinjità tiegħu. Dan huwa l-mod kif għandna nħarsu lejn l-immigrant li jasal f'pajjiżna: għandna naghmlu kull ma nistgħu biex lill-immigrant ngħinuh jikseb id-dinjità u d-drittijiet umani tiegħu, f'qafas ta' ġustizzja soċjali b'saħħtu kemm jista' jkun.

Għandna naħdmu, bil-kalma u bil-għaqal, biex l-imħabba li l-poplu tagħna dejjem wera għal kulhadd, tibqa' shiha. L-ospitalità u l-generożità tradizzjonali tagħna, minsuġin kif inhuma ma' l-imħabba tagħna għal Ġesu', li ġie fid-dinja mhux biss biex jifdina mill-jasar tad-dnub imma wkoll biex jagħtina lilu nnifsu bhala ikel fl-Ewkaristija, inkomplu nuruhom ma' kulhadd, mingħajr distinzjoni, f'kull żmien. Lill-immigrant, speċjalment lill-immigrant li jkun verament qed jaħrab mill-persekuzzjoni, għandna ngħibu ruhna miegħu bħallikieku kien Ġesu' nnifsu: dak Ġesu' li, fi ċkunitu, hu stess kellu jaħrab mill-persekuzzjoni ta' min ried joqflu.

Kif qalilna l-Papa Benedittu XVI fil-messaġġ tiegħu għal jum l-emigranti u r-refuġjati, li se jiġi ċcelebrat f'nofs Jannar li ġej, fl-impenn tagħna li ngħinu lir-refuġjat fit-tbatija għandna nkunu ispirati mit-tama, il-kuraġġ u "l-kreattività fil-karità".

Iktar ma aħna, bhala poplu, inkunu kapaċi nuru sens haġ ta' solidarjetà mal-bniedem li jasal f'pajjiżna fil-vjaġġ tiegħu 'l bogħod mill-moħqrija, it-traġedja, it-tbatija u l-faqar, iktar pajjiżna jkun jista' jsaħħaħ leħnu u jishaq, fil-fora internazzjonali, biex f'dan l-impenn insibu l-għajjnuna kollha li nkunu ninhtieġu.

Pajjiżna għandu raġun bis-shih jirsisti u jinsisti biex il-komunità internazzjonali taħdem iżjed bis-serjetà ħalli jitfejq u l-pjagi li qed iġieghlu tant bnedmin jitolqu minn art twelidhom, spiss fil-fjur ta' haġjithom.

Tant flus li għadhom jintefqu fil-produzzjoni u t-tixrid ta' armi u armamenti jmisshom imorru fl-investment meħtieġ biex il-popli li għadhom kastigati minn reġimi li ma jirrispettawx id-drittijiet tal-bniedem, jew inkella popli li għadhom jgħixu fil-faqar, ikunu jistgħu jaraw is-sebħ ta' jum ġdid: jum fejn ma jkollhomx għalfejn jimxu lejn pajjiżi jew kontinenti oħrajn biex ikollhom haġja kif jixraq lid-dinjità tal-bniedem.

Sadattant, huwa xieraq ukoll li l-pajjiżi l-kbar juru b'fatti ferm akbar is-solidarjetà tagħhom ma' pajjiżi oħrajn li, bħalma hu l-każ ta' pajjiżna, il-fenomeni ta' l-immigrazzjoni qed jagħfas wisq fuqhom u fuq ir-riżorsi tagħhom. Il-bżonn li min jiflah jgħin lil min qed ibati jgħodd ukoll bejn

il-popli u l-ġnus. Hekk ukoll jitlob il-kunċett magħruf bhala “burden sharing”, jiġifieri qsim tal-piż ta’ l-immigrazzjoni bejn il-pajjiżi, kulhadd skond ma jiflah. Nawguraw li l-eżempju tajjeb tal-pajjiżi li diġa’ resqu l-quddiem biex jghinu lil Malta f’dan ir-rigward, ikun segwit minn pajjiżi oħrajn.

Festa ta’ tiġdid fl-imħabba

Nemmen li, bl-ghajjnuna tal-wirt tiegħu ta’ valuri nsara, il-poplu tagħna se jibqa’ poplu ta’ qalb kbira, b’sens kbir ta’ solidarjetà, bhalma kien minn dejjem.

Qalbi qawwija li iktar ma nhobbu lil Ġesu’ Bambin, l-Iben il-Wahdieni ta’ Alla u l-uniku Salvatur tal-bnedmin kollha, iktar nissahhu fl-imħabba ta’ Alla u tal-proxxmu, jiena nitlob lill-Mulej biex dan il-Milied ikun għalina lkoll esperjenza ta’ mħabba, tiġdid, u konverżjoni.

Nawgura lil kulhadd Milied mogħni bil-ferħ veru u qaddis li joffrilna Ġesu’ Tarbija.

Dan nixtiequ b’mod speċjali:

- lit-tfal, li jixirqilhom trobbija mill-ġenituri tagħhom flimkien f’familja magħquda;
- liż-żgħażaġh, li quddiem l-isfidi dejjem akbar tal-hajja, għandhom bżonn hafna komprensioni, kuraġġ, għajjnuna u harsien;
- lill-ġenituri, li jinħtieġu kull appoġġ possibbli biex ikollhom il-qawwa li jghixu f’fedelta’ dejiema lejn xulxin u jkunu dejjem lesti biex jahfru u jiġgeddu fl-imħabba;
- lill-anzjani, lill-morda u lill-persuni b’diżabilità, li Ġesu’ Tarbija joffrilhom il-konferma ta’ l-imħabba ta’ Alla għal kulhadd;
- lill-emigranti, lir-refuġjati u lill-immigranti, li mbegħdin minn art twelidhom spiss ikunu jiddependu mill-imħabba u s-solidarjetà tal-proxxmu.

Nixtieq il-Milied it-Tajjed b' mod speċjali wkoll lill-aħwa li jinsabu fil-habs u lill-familji tagħhom, lill-vittmi tal-vjolenza jew ta' l-ingustizzja, lill-imġarrbin, lil min iħossu wahdu jew imwarrab, u lil kull min b'xi mod għandu qalbu mtaqqla.

Jalla Ġesu' Tarbija jieqaf magħhom ilkoll u jagħtihom il-faraġ, il-wens u s-sliem qaddis tiegħu.

Mill-ġdid, il-Milied it-Tajjed lil kulhadd.

✠ Ġużeppi Mercieca, Arcisqof ta' Malta

24 ta' Dicembru 2005

STQARRIJET OĦRA MILL-KURJA

IS-SAĊERDOTI JIDDISKUTU L-FAMILJA

Madwar 300 saċerdot se jattendu għal tlett ijiem ta' aġġornament li matulhom se jfittxu li jifhmu aħjar ir-realta' tal-familja Maltija fiż-żmien tal-lum, u kif is-saċerdoti jistgħu jgħinu l-familji nsara jgħixu kif imiss is-sejha tagħhom.

It-tema tal-kors ta' aġġornament se tkun, "Il-Familja: Sfida u Impenn". Fit-tlett ijiem tal-laqgħat tagħhom, is-saċerdoti se jiffokaw fuq "Dwal u dellijiet fiż-żwieġ u l-familji Maltin", "Strutturi ta' wens u appoġġ għall-familja", u "Il-missjoni tal-familja l-lum".

Is-saċerdoti se jinqasmu f'żewġ gruppi. Il-kors għall-ewwel grupp se jsir mit-8 sa l-10 ta' Novembru. Il-kors għat-tieni grupp isir bejn id-29 ta Novembru u l-1 ta' Diċembru. Iż-żewġ korsijiet ikunu f'forma ta' "live-in" fis-Seminarju, tal-Virtu'.

Fl-istess jiem ta' l-ewwel kors, bejn is-7 u d-9 ta' Novembru, fis-Seminarju se ssir l-Assemblea tal-Parroċċi li għaliha huma mistiedna jiehdu sehem il-membri tal-Kummissjoni Parrokkjali għall-Implimentazzjoni tas-Sinodu Djoċesan u l-membri tal-Kummissjoni Parrokkjali Familja. F'kull assemblea, rappreżentanti ta' għadd ta' parroċċi se jaqsmu ma' xulxin l-esperjenzi ta' dak li qed isir fil-parroċċi rispettivi tagħhom fil-qasam tal-familja. Se jaraw ukoll kif tista' tissaħħaħ il-hidma għall-ġid tal-familja.

Dawn iż-żewġ attivitajiet ta' formazzjoni se jsiru fl-isfond tad-dokument tas-Sinodu Djoċesan dwar il-familja. Fihom se ssir evalwazzjoni tat-twettiq ta' l-indikazzjonijiet li ta s-Sinodu.

01 ta' Novembru 2005

IT-TIENI SENA TAR-RIVISTA “FLIMKIEN”

Ir-rivista “Flimkien”, pubblikazzjoni tal-Kulleġġ tal-Kappillani li kull xahar titqassam f’aktar minn 95,000 dar fi 52 parroċċa f’Malta, f’Dicembru tidhol fit-tieni sena taghha.

L-iskop tar-rivista huwa li twassal il-valuri Nsara fil-familji Maltin u li tipprova tilhaq lill-membri kollha tal-familja.

Sa sena ilu, kważi kull parroċċa kienet tohroġ il-fuljett taghha. Fid-dawl tal-komunjoni mheġġa hafna mis-Sinodu Djoċesan, il-Kappillani ddecidew li jintroduċu din ir-rivista ta’ kull xahar bhala mera ta’ l-impenn taghhom li flimkien joffru lill-familji Maltin ghajjnuna ġdida ta’ kif jikbru u jissahhu fix-xieghda Nisranija.

Kull wahda mit-52 parroċċa li ssiehbu fil-proġett tar-rivista ghandha dedikata ghalha mill-inqas erba’ pagni. Dawn saru l-mezz ġdid ta’ kif huma jwasslu l-“fuljett” taghhom lin-nies tal-parroċċa.

Ir-rivista qed titmexxa minn Bord Editorjali maghmul minn rappreżentanti minn parroċċi differenti. L-editur huwa s-Sur Carmel Conti.

Il-Bord Editorjali tar-rivista “Flimkien” qal li f’ricerka li saret ftit ilu hargu kummenti pozzittivi hafna dwar ir-rivista. Ir-ricerka wriet li r-rivista hija apprezzata u tinqara minn hafna. Filwaqt li wera s-sodisfazzjon tieghu ghal dan, il-Bord Editorjali stqarr li huwa jrid li r-rivista thares ’il quddiem b’tama u fiduċja fil-Knisja u fis-socjetà Maltija, li ghandha interess fihom it-tnejn. Il-Bord Editorjali qal ukoll li ghax hija proġett ta’ hafna, ir-rivista “Flimkien” hija xieghda ta’ djalogu u ta’ komunjonu u tiehu gost b’ittri u suggerimenti minghand il-qarrejja.

11 ta’ Novembru 2005

FESTA TA' KRISTU SULTAN 2005

Fil-Festa ta' Kristu Sultan ta' din is-sena, il-Knisja f'Malta qed tistieden lill-membri kollha taghha biex jirriflettu fuq it-tema: "Flimkien mal-Mulej Ġesu' nimxu 'l quddiem".

Iċ-Ċelebrazzjoni Prinċipali se tkun manifestazzjoni quddiem il-Knisja Parrokkjali tat-Trinità Qaddisa fil-Marsa, nhar il-Hadd, 20 ta' Novembru 2005. Fl-4.00 p.m. tibda sessjoni ta' animazzjoni. Fl-4.30 p.m. jibda l-programm, li jinkludi sitt esperjenzi fuq l-ghanijiet tal-Pjan Pastoral ta' l-Arċidjoċesi 2005-2006. Il-qofol ta' l-okkażjoni jkun diskors ta' Mons. Arċisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca, li jkun segwit mill-Barka Sagramentali.

Il-manifestazzjoni qed tiġi organizzata minn sitt parroċċi flimkien: iż-żewġ parroċċi tal-Marsa, iż-żewġ parroċċi tal-Hamrun, il-parroċċa ta' Santa Venera u dik ta' Gwardamanga. F'każ ta' maltemp, il-manifestazzjoni ssir xorta, imma ġewwa l-Knisja Parrokkjali dedikata lit-Trinità.

L-attivitajiet fl-okkażjoni tal-Festa ta' Kristu Sultan jinkludu wkoll manifestazzjoni għall-adolexxenti u oħra għat-tfal. L-attività għall-adolexxenti (minn 13 sa 15-il sena) se ssir nhar il-Ġimgħa, 18 ta' Novembru 2005, fis-7.00 p.m., fil-Knisja Parrokkjali ta' Santa Venera. L-attività għat-tfal (minn tmienja sa 12-il sena) se ssir is-Sibt, 19 ta' Novembru 2005, fl-4.00 p.m. fl-Istitut Kattoliku, Floriana.

14 ta' Novembru 2005

JILTAQGHU L-ISQFIJJIET TAL-PAJJIŻI TA' L-UNJONI EWROPEA

Mons. Arcisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca se jattendi ghal-Laqgħa Plenarja tal-Harifa tal-Kummissjoni tal-Konferenzi ta' l-Isqfijiet tal-Komunità Ewropea (COMECE), li se ssir fi Brussels, il-Belġju, bejn is-16 u t-18 ta' Novembru 2005.

Il-COMECE tiġbor flimkien Isqfijiet li jirrappreżentaw il-Konferenzi Episkopali tal-pajjiżi membri ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea.

Fl-ewwel jum tal-laqgħa plenarja se ssir diskussjoni dwar l-istat ta' l-UE b'referenza partikolari għar-ratifika tat-Trattat Kostituzzjonali, il-Budget ta' l-UE u t-*tkabbir* ta' l-Unjoni. Se ssir ukoll diskussjoni ohra dwar żewġ dikjarazzjonijiet ta' l-Isqfijiet – waħda fuq il-familja u l-bidliet demografiċi fl-Ewropa u ohra dwar l-etika u r-riċerka fl-Ewropa: is-7 *Framework Programme* għar-Riċerka ta' l-UE.

It-tema ewlenija tat-tieni jum tal-laqgħa se tkun “Noħorġu mill-kriżi permezz tas-solidarjetà - Appell għalik, Knisja fl-Ewropa”. Se jsiru interventi dwar il-messaġġ tal-Konċilju Vatikan II u l-isfidi attwali ta' l-Ewropa, l-istrategija l-ġdida tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea dwar il-komunikazzjoni, u l-Promozzjoni ta' ċittadinanza attiva fl-Ewropa.

Fit-tielet jum tal-laqgħa, ikun hemm l-approvazzjoni tad-dikjarazzjonijiet u jiġu ppreżentati r-rapporti mill-Assemblea tal-Kunsill tal-Konferenzi Episkopali ta' l-Ewropa (CCEE), mill-Osservatur Permanenti tas-Santa Sede fil-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa.

Mons. Arcisqof Mercieca se jkun akkompanjat minn Dun Vanni Xuereb, President tal-Kummissjoni Knisja f'Malta u fl-Ewropa.

15 ta' Marzu 2005

KJARIFIKA DWAR ID-DJAR TAL-KNISJA
GHALL-ANZJANI

Stqarrija għall-Istampa u x-Xandir mahruġa mit-Taqsima Servizzi tas-Saħħa tal-Union Haddiema Magħqudin dwar il-Ftehim Kollettiv tal-Haddiema fid-Djar tal-Knisja għall-Anzjani tgħid li peress li l-aħħar *Aggregate Accounts* ta' l-Arċidjoċesi juru profitt, “għalhekk il-Kurja kellha turi rikonoxximent lejn dawn il-haddiema.”

Irid jiġi ċċarat li r-rendikont finanzjarju aggregat ta' l-Arċidjoċesi huwa dwar entitajiet diversi li joperaw indipendentement minn xulxin u bhala tali ma jistgħux jiffinanzjaw lil xulxin.

Fl-*Annual Report and Financial Statements* ta' l-Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta hemm spjegat ċar li għalkemm l-entitajiet inkluzi fir-rendikont finanzjarji aggregat jiffurmaw parti mill-Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta, fl-istess hin huma entitajiet ġuridikament separati bi skopijiet u obbligi varji.

Id-Djar tal-Knisja għall-Anzjani ilhom is-snin isofru telf qawwi. Ir-Rendikont Finanzjarju Aggregat għas-sena 2004 juri li d-Djar kollha f'daqqa, fis-sena 2004 biss tilfu Lm143,426.

Uhud minn dawn id-Djar għadhom miftuħin għax qed isir saġrificċju finanzjarju kbir. Dan sar u għadu jsir kemm biex jibqa' jinghata servizz lill-anzjani fid-Djar konċernati u wkoll biex l-impjegati f'dawn id-Djar ma jitilfux ix-xogħol tagħhom, li hu apprezzat hafna.

L-Awtoritajiet tal-Kurja ta' l-Arċisqof ċertament jibqgħu jagħmlu kull ma jistgħu biex id-Djar jibqgħu miftuħin. Madankollu, l-istess Awtoritajiet ma jistgħux jaqbd u jiehdu mill-finanzi ta' entitajiet oħrajn biex jagħmlu tajjeb għat-telf finanzjarju ta' dawn id-Djar.

L-Awtoritajiet tal-Kurja qed jittamaw li tirbah ir-raġuni u ma jsir xejn li jista' jikkaguna tbatija u forsi jkompli jaggrava s-sitwazzjoni.

21 ta' Novembru 2005

AWGURI TAL-ISTAGUN TAL-FESTI LILL-ISQFIJJIET

Fl-okkazjoni tal-festi ta' żmien il-Milied u tal-bidu tas-Sena l-Ġdida, Monsinjur Arcisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca u Mons. Isqof Annetto Depasquale nhar is-Sibt, 31 ta' Diċembru 2005, filgħodu, se jkunu l-Palazz ta' l-Arcisqof, Valletta, biex jilqgħu lil kull min ikun jixtieq iżurhom għal bdil ta' l-awguri ta' l-istagun. Il-hin ikun mid-9.00 a.m. sal-11.30 a.m.

Fl-Ewwel tas-Sena, filgħodu, l-Isqfijiet se jkunu fil-Palazz ta' l-Arcisqof, Valletta. Minhabba l-limitazzjoni tal-hin, nhar l-Ewwel tas-Sena l-Isqfijiet se jkunu jistgħu jilqgħu biss lil dawk li jkunu talbu u jkun inghatalhom appuntament.

Id-dirigenti ta' istituzzjonijiet, korpi kostitwiti u organizazzjonijiet li fl-Ewwel tas-Sena jixtiequ jiltaqgħu ma' l-Isqfijiet bl-appuntament, huma mitluba jikkomunikaw kmieni kemm jista' jkun mas-Segretarju Privat ta' Mons. Arcisqof għall-arrangament mehtieg għal nhar l-Ewwel tas-Sena
(Telefon: 21234317 – Telefax: 21223307

E-Mail: fr.mario.camilleri@maltachurch.org.mt

02 ta' Diċembru 2005

FESTA TAL-MADONNA TA' CARAFFA

Fil-KonKattidral ta' San Ġwann, nhar il-Hamis, 8 ta' Diċembru se tiġi celebrata l-Festa tal-Madonna ta' Caraffa. Mons. Arcisqof Ġ. Mercieca fod-9.15 a.m. jmexxi Pontifikal. Fl-4.00 p.m. ikun hemm il-Kant ta' l-Għasar, waqt li fl-4.30 p.m. issir proċessjoni bix-xbiha tal-Madonna. Fil-5.30 p.m. tibda Quddiesa.

3 ta' Diċembru 2005

KAPPILLAN ĠDID GHALL-PARROĊĊA
TA' MARSAXLOKK

Mons. Arċisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca nnomina lil Dun VicGeorge Vassallo bhala Kappillan tal-Parroċċa ta' Marsaxlokk.

Dun VicGeorge tweled fil-25 ta' Marzu 1963, is-Sigġiewi. Huwa ġie ordnat saċerdot fis-6 ta' Lulju 1990.

Mill-ordinazzjoni saċerdotali tiegħu 'l hawn Dun VicGeorge ta servizz fil-parroċċi tal-Gżira, H' Attard, is-Sigġiewi, iż-Żejtun, il-Ġudja u Haż-Żebbuġ.

Bejn l-1996 u l-2003 kien ukoll Kappillan tal-Forzi Armati ta' Malta.

03 ta' Diċembru 2005

ŻJARA TA' L-ARĊISQOF F'RUMA

Mons. Arċisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca ġhada, il-Hadd, 04 ta' Diċembru 2005, se jmur għal żjara qasira f'Ruma. Waqt li Mons. Mercieca jkun imsiefer, id-dmirijiet ta' Arċisqof ikunu f'idejn Mons. Annetto Depasquale, Isqof Awżiljarju.

03 ta' Diċembru 2005

APPLIKAZZJONIJIET GHAD-DHUL
FL-ISKEJJEL TAL-KNISJA

L-applikazzjonijiet ghad-dhul fl-iskejjel tal-Knisja f'Malta fil-klassijiet Kindergarten, Pregrade u Year One, fis-sena 2006 se jkunu f'Centru wiehed: is-Segretarjat ghall-Edukazzjoni u Kultura Nisranija, Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof, Floriana. Il-kriterji ta' l-għażla se jibqgħu kif kienu fl-aħħar snin, jiġifieri: ahwa fl-istess skola, tfal mid-Djar tal-Knisja, tlett itfal f'kull klassi minn familji fi bżonnijiet speċjali, u l-bqija bil-polza.

Skond is-sistema li giet introdotta fl-1995, għal kull tifel u tifla se ssir applikazzjoni wahda biss. F'din l-applikazzjoni, il-ġenituri jindikaw il-preferenzi tagħhom dwar f'liema skola jixtiequ jdahhlu lil uliedhom. Wara t-tluġ tal-polza, it-tfal jitqegħdu fl-iskejjel skond l-ordni li jkunu telgħu, skond il-postijiet disponibbli f'kull skola u skond il-preferenza tal-ġenituri.

Il-formoli ta' l-applikazzjonijiet ikunu jistgħu jinkisbu mill-Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof, Floriana, kif ġej:

09 ta' Jannar 2006 - għall-Kindergarten, jiġifieri tfal li twieldu fis-sena 2003

10 ta' Jannar 2006 - għall-Pregrade, jiġifieri tfal li twieldu fis-sena 2002

11 ta' Jannar 2006 - għal Year One, jiġifieri tfal li twieldu fis-sena 2001

Il-hinijiet ikunu mid-9.00 a.m. sa nofsinhar u mit-3.00 p.m. sal-5.00 p.m.

Id-dati li fihom l-applikazzjonijiet ikunu jridu jiġu pprezentati, fil-Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof, jithabbru mal-ħruġ tal-formoli ta' l-applikazzjoni.

12 ta' Diċembru 2005

MESSAĠĠ TAL-PAPA GHALL-JUM DINJI
TAL-PAĊI 2006

Il-Messaġġ tal-Papa ghall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi 2006, li iġi celebrat fl-ewwel jum tas-sena, huwa mibni fuq it-tema “Fil-verità, il-paċi”.

Il-Messaġġ ta' Benedittu XVI ghandu erba' partijiet: L-ewwel parti, li hija ta' natura spiritwali u teoloġika, tittratta t-tifsira u l-valur tar-rabta li hemm bejn il-paċi, il-verità u l-gideb. It-tieni parti tqis il-paċi fil-kontest ta' sitwazzjonijiet reali ta' gwerra. Fit-tielet parti, il-verità tal-paċi hija meqjusa f'relazzjoni mill-qrib mat-terroriżmu. Ir-raba parti tikkunsidra l-verità tal-paċi mil-lenti tal-htieġa li jitnieda mill-ġdid il-proċess tad-żarm.

Fl-ewwel parti tal-Messaġġ tiegħu, il-Papa jinsisti li t-temi tal-paċi u l-gideb m'għandhomx jiġu kunsidrati bħala passatempi bla sugu, imma bħala grajjet storiċi deċiżivi li fuqhom jiddependu l-hena jew il-miżerja tal-bnedmin.

Il-Papa jishaq li l-paċi “hija l-frott ta' ordni li giet imhawla fis-soċjeta umana mill-Fundatur divin tagħha.” Benedittu XVI imbagħad jintroduċi r-riflessjonijiet tiegħu fuq il-gideb bħala dnuw b'konsegwenzi devastanti fuq il-hajjiet ta' individwi u nazzjonijiet. Il-Papa jikkonkludi l-ewwel parti tal-Messaġġ tiegħu billi jishaq li l-htieġa tal-paċi hija intrinsika għall-bnedmin, u hija dritt li l-bnedmin kollha jaqsmu bejniethom sa minn twelidhom.

Fit-tieni parti tal-Messaġġ, il-Papa jikkunsidra l-verità tal-paċi f'każi ta' gwerer. F'każi bħal dawn, għandu jkun hemm rispett shiħ u osservanza kompleta tal-liġi umanitarja internazzjonali, li għandha tibqa' punt ta' riferenza għall-komunità internazzjonali.

Fit-tielet parti tal-Messaġġ, wara li jikkonferma l-kundanna tiegħu għat-terroriżmu, Benedittu XVI joffri interpretazzjoni differenti tal-fenomeni tat-terroriżmu. Skond din l-interpretazzjoni, l-ispirazzjoni tat-

terroriżmu tinsab fin-nikiliżmu u fil-fundamentiżmu fanatiku, li għandhom approwč kompletament żbaljat kemm dwar il-pači u wkoll dwar il-verità tal-pači.

Fir-raba' parti, il-Papa jirreferi għas-sitwazzjonijiet fejn hemm konflitt, Huwa jsemmi speċifikament l-awtoritajiet li jużaw il-poter biex ixewxu lič-čittadini tagħhom għal ostilità lejn nazzjonijiet oħrajn. Isemmi wkoll il-programmi ta' čerti gvernijiet li jużaw l-enerġija nukleari biex johlqu l-armi, fil-konvinzjoni falza li dan jiggarrantixxi s-sigurta' tal-popli tagħhom.

14 ta' Diċembru 2005

KUMMISSJONI DJOČESANA FAMILJA ĠDIDA

Wara li ntemm it-terminu ta' sentejn ta' l-ewwel Kummissjoni Djočesana Familja ta' wara s-Sinodu Djočesan, Mons. Arcisqof Ġuzeppi Mercieca hatar Kummissjoni Djočesana Familja ġdida li se tibda tiffunzjona fil-bidu tas-sena 2006.

Il-membri ta' din il-kummissjoni ġdida huma: Marselle u Servolo Delicata (*chairpersons*), it-tobba Josianne u Oscar Aquilina, Jacqueline Casha, Fiona u John Degiorgio, Dun Joe Mizzi, Anna u John Scerri, Rose Ann u James Trapani, Agnes u Max Zerafa.

Il-Kummissjoni għandha l-ħsieb li fi ħdanha jitwaqqaf bord magħmul minn persuni esperti fil-materja tal-familja, biex ikunu jistgħu jsegwu aktar mill-qrib l-*issues* li jinqalghu minn żmien għal żmien fis-soċjetà Maltija f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam maż-żwieġ u l-familja.

20 ta' Diċembru 2005

L-ARĊISQOF FI ŻMIEN IL-MILIED
U L-EWWEL TAS-SENA

Il-funzjonijiet religjuzi li Mons. Arċisqof Ġuzeppi Mercieca se jmessi fl-okkażjoni tal-Milied jibdeu nhar Lejlet il-Milied, b'Ghasar Pontifikali mal-Kapitlu Metropolitan, fil-KonKattidral ta' San Ġwann, fil-4.45 p.m. Fil-Lejl tal-Milied, Mons. Mercieca jmessi wkoll Quddiesa Stazzjonali Konċelebrata, fil-Kattidral, l-Imdina. Din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tibda fil-11.30 p.m..

Nhar il-Milied, Mons. Arċisqof imexxi Quddiesa Stazzjonali Konċelebrata fil-KonKattidral ta' San Ġwann, fid-9.15 a.m.

Is-Sibt, 31 ta' Diċembru, mid-9.00 a.m. sal-11.30 a.m., Mons. Arċisqof se jkun fil-Palazz ta' l-Arċisqof, Valletta, biex jilqa' lil kull min ikun jixtieq iżuru personalment biex jagħtih l-awguri ta' Żmien il-Milied u l-bidu ta' Sena Ġdida. Mons. Arċisqof ikun akkompanjat minn Mons. Annetto Depasquale, Isqof Awżiljarju.

Fil-31 ta' Diċembru wkoll, Mons. Arċisqof imexxi l-Konċelebrazzjoni ta' Jum il-Paċi 2006, li ssir fil-KonKattidral, fil-5.30 p.m. Jitkanta t-Te Deum. Jum il-Paċi jiġi ċelebrat fl-Ewwel Jum tas-sena.

Il-Quddiesa li Mons. Arċisqof jiċċelebra fil-bidu ta' kull sena ġdida għall-koppji li jkunu żżewġu fis-sena ta' qabel, se ssir nhar is-Sibt, 14 ta' Jannar 2006, fil-KonKattidral ta' San Ġwann, fis-6.30 p.m.

16 ta' Diċembru 2005

FUNZJONIJIET TAL-MILIED FIL-KATTIDRAL

Il-Quddiesa Pontifikali Solenni Konċelebrata tal-Lejl tal-Milied fil-Knisja Kattidrali, Imdina, se tibda f'nofs il-lejl. Iċ-ċerimonja se tkun presjeduta minn Mons. Arcisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca, akkompanjat mill-membri tal-Kapitlu tal-Kattidral. Iċ-ċelebrazzjoni tibda fil-11.00 p.m. b'kant ta' ghanjiet tal-Milied. Fil-11.30 p.m. tibda l-Proċessjoni tal-Bambin u jsir l-Uffiċċju tal-Qari. Wara tibda l-Quddiesa.

Nhar il-Milied, fid-9.00 a.m. jkun hemm il-Kant tat-Tifhir ta' Sbieh il-Jum. Fid-9.30 a.m. tibda Quddiesa Solenni Konċelebrata. Fl-4.30 p.m. isir il-Kant tat-Talb ta' Filghaxija. Il-Quddiesa ta' filghaxija tkun fis-6.00 p.m.

Il-funzjoni ta' l-aħħar jum tas-sena tibda fil-5.30 p.m. bil-Kant tat-Talb ta' Filghaxija. Fis-6.00 p.m. tibda Quddiesa Solenni Konċelebrata. Wara jitekanta Te Deum u ssir Ċelebrazzjoni Ewkaristika.

16 ta' Dicembru 2005

IL-KURJA FI ŻMIEN IL-MILIED

Fi żmien il-Festi tal-Milied u ta' l-Ewwel tas-Sena, l-uffiċċji kollha tal-Kurja ta' l-Arcisqof, Floriana, inklużi l-Uffiċċju taż-Żwigġijiet u t-Taqsima ta' l-Amministrazzjoni, kif ukoll l-uffiċċji tat-Tribunal Ekkleżjastiku, Valletta, se jkunu maghluqin għall-pubbliku minn nhar is-Sibt, 24 ta' Dicembru. Dawn l-uffiċċji jergħu jifthu kollha għall-pubbliku nhar it-Tlieta, 3 ta' Jannar 2006.

16 ta' Dicembru 2005

L-ISQFIJJET JILQGHU LILL-PUBBLIKU
FL-OKKAŻJONI TAL-MILIED U S-SENA L-ĠDIDA

Nhar is-Sibt, 31 ta' Diċembru 2005, Mons. Arċisqof Ġużeppi Mercieca u Mons. Isqof Annetto Depasquale se jkunu l-Palazz ta' l-Arċisqof, Valletta, mid-9.00 a.m. sal-11.30 a.m. biex jilqghu lill-membri tal-pubbliku għal skambju ta' awguri ta' l-istaġun.

Peress li din is-sena giet iċċelebrata s-Sena ta' l-Ewkaristija u f'Malta sar ukoll Kungress Ewkaristiku, f'din l-okkażjoni l-Isqfijiet se jilqghu b'mod speċjali l-Ministri Straordinarji tat-Tqarbin.

Nhar l-Ewwel tas-Sena, minhabba l-limitazzjoni tal-hin, Mons. Arċisqof u Mons. Isqof Awżiljarju se jkunu jistgħu jaraw biss lil min ikollu appuntament.

27 ta' Diċembru 2005

ikompli mill-qoxra ta' barra

STQARRIJET OHRA MILL-KURJA

Is-Saċerdoti jiddiksutu l-Familja	726
It-Tieni sena tar-Rivista "Flimkien"	727
Festa ta' Kristu Sultan 2005	728
Jiltaqgħu l-Isqfijiet tal-pajjiżi ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea	729
Kjarifika dwar id-Djar tal-Knisja għall-Anzjani	730
Awguri tal-istaġun tal-Festi lill-Isqfijiet Maltin	731
Festa tal-Madonna ta' Caraffa.....	731
Kappillan ġdid għall-parroċċa ta' Marsaxlokk.....	732
Żjara ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof f' Ruma	732
Applikazzjonijiet għad-dhul fl-iskejjel tal-Knisja	733
Messaġġ tal-Papa għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi 2006	734
Kummissjoni Djoċesana Familji ġdida	735
L-Arċisqof fi żmien il-Milied u l-Ewwel tas-Sena	736
Funzjonijiet tal-Milied fil-Kattidral.....	737
Il-Kurja fi żmien il-Milied.....	737
L-Isqfijiet jilqgħu lill-pubbliku fl-okkażjoni tal-Milied u s-Sena l-Ġdida	738

WERREJ

MILL-KNISJA UNIVERSALI

Instruction From Congregation for Catholic Education: "Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with regard to persons with homosexual tendencies in view of their admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders."	673
Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care: Message for the World Day Against Aids.....	680
Solennità dell'Immacolata Concezione della Beata Vergine Maria Giovedì, 8 dicembre 2005: Omelia di Sua Santità Benedetto XVI	685
On the Real Spirit of Christmas "The Crib Can Help Us": Message of Pope Benedict XVI at the recitation of the midday Angelus	691
World Day of Peace 2006: Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI	693

DOKUMENTI MILL-KURJA

Festa ta' Kristu Sultan 2005: Messagg ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof	702
Il-Fenomenu ta' l-Omosesswalità: Stqarrija ta' l-Isqfijiet Maltin.....	707
Messagg tal-Milied minn Monsinjur Arcisqof lill-Missjunarji Maltin.....	710
Messagg tal-Milied minn Monsinjur Arcisqof lill-emigranti Maltin	712
Cirkolari 485: Indulgenza Plenarja fis-Solennità tal-Kuncizzjoni.....	716
Quddiesa ta' Radd il-Hajr għall-Gradwati l-Godda: Omelija ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof	718
Il-Finanzjament ta' Ricerki bl-Embrijuni Umani: Stqarrija ta' l-Isqfijiet Maltin.....	720
Messagg ta' Monsinjur Arcisqof għall-Milied 2005.....	721

ikompli għewwa