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THE HOLY FATHER'S VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

INTERVIEW DURING THE FLIGHT

As you said in the Angelus last Sunday, the Czech Republic is located not only geographically but also historically in the heart of Europe. Could you explain better what you mean by "historically", and tell us how and why you think that this Visit can be significant for the continent overall in its cultural, spiritual and eventually also its political path to building the European Union?

Over all the centuries the Czech Republic, the territory of the Czech Republic, has been the meeting place for cultures. Let us start in the ninth century: on the one hand, in Moravia we have the great mission of the brothers Cyril and Methodius who brought Byzantine culture from Byzantium but created a Slavic culture with Cyrillic characters and a liturgy in the Slavic language. On the other, in Bohemia, the Dioceses of Regensburg and Passau brought to it the Gospel in the Latin language, so it was through the connection with the Roman-Latin culture that the two cultures met. Every encounter is difficult but also fruitful, as can easily be demonstrated by this example. I take a great leap: in the 14th century it was Charles IV who created here, in Prague, the first university in Central Europe. The university itself is a meeting place for cultures. In this case it also became a place of encounter between the Slavic and the German-speaking cultures. As in the century and at the time of the Reformation, it was precisely in this territory that the encounters and conflicts became decisive and powerful, as we all know.

I will now take a leap into the present: in the past century, the Czech Republic suffered under a particularly harsh Communist dictatorship but also had a high-level resistance movement, both

Catholic and secular. I am thinking of the writings of Václav Havel, of Cardinal Vlk, of figures such as Cardinal Tomášek, who truly gave Europe a message of what freedom is and of how we must live and work in liberty. From this encounter of cultures down the centuries and precisely from this last phase of reflection, and not only that, but of suffering for a new concept of freedom and a free society important messages emerged for us, which can and must be fruitful in the building of Europe. We must be very attentive to the message of this country.

Twenty years have passed since the fall of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe; John Paul II, in visiting several countries that survived Communism, encouraged them to use their regained freedom responsibly. What is your message today for the peoples of Eastern Europe in this new phase of history?

As I said, these countries suffered tremendously under the dictatorship, but in their suffering they developed concepts of freedom which are timely and which must now be further developed and applied. I am thinking, for example, of a text by Václav Havel which says: "Dictatorship is based on falsehood, and if falsehood is overcome, if no one lies any longer and if the truth comes to light, there is also freedom". And so it was that he elaborated this nexus between truth and freedom, where freedom is not libertinism or arbitrariness but is linked to and conditioned by the great values of truth and love, solidarity and of the good in general. Thus, I think that these concepts, these ideas which developed during the period of dictatorship must not be lost: precisely now we must return to them! And, in freedom that is often somewhat empty and lacking in values, we must once again recognize that freedom and values, freedom and goodness, freedom and truth, go together: otherwise freedom is destroyed as well. This seems to me to be the message that comes from these countries and must be actualized at this time.

Your Holiness, the Czech Republic is a heavily secularized country in which the Catholic Church is a minority. In this situation how can the Church effectively contribute to the common good of the country?

I would say that usually it is creative minorities who determine the future, and in this regard the Catholic Church must understand that she is a creative minority who has a heritage of values that are not things of the past, but a very lively and relevant reality. The Church must modernize, she must be present in the public debate, in our struggle for a true concept of freedom and peace. Thus she can contribute in various sectors. I would say that the first is precisely the intellectual dialogue between agnostics and believers. They both need each other: the agnostic cannot be satisfied with not knowing whether God exists or not, but must seek and perceive the great heritage of faith; the Catholic cannot be content with having faith but must seek God even more, and in dialogue with others must re-learn God more deeply. This is the first level: the great intellectual, ethical and human dialogue.

Then, in the area of education, the Church has much to do and to give, with regard to formation. In Italy we talk about the problem of the educational emergency. It is a problem common to the whole of the West: here the Church must once again actualize her great legacy, putting it into practice and opening it to the future. A third sector is "*Caritas*". The Church has always had this as a sign of her identity: to go to the aid of the poor, of being an instrument of charity. *Caritas* does a great deal in the Czech Republic, in the various communities, in situations of need, and also offers much to suffering humanity on the different continents, thereby setting an example for others of responsibility and of international solidarity, which is also a condition for peace.

Your Holiness, your latest Encyclical, “Caritas in Veritate”, has received much attention throughout the world. How can these attentions be evaluated? Are you pleased with them? Do you think that the recent world crisis is essentially an opportunity on which humanity has become readier to reflect on the importance of moral and spiritual values, in order to face the great problems of its future? And will the Church continue to offer guidelines with this in view?

I am very pleased with this extensive discussion. This was exactly the aim: to stimulate and motivate a discussion on these problems, not to leave things as they are but to find new models for a responsible economy, both in the individual countries and for the totality of unified humanity. It seems to me to be really visible today that ethics are not something *foreign* to the economy, which like a technique could function on its own, but rather an *inner* principle of the economy, which does not work if it fails to take into account the human values of solidarity and reciprocal responsibility and if it does not integrate ethics into the construction of the economy itself: this is the great challenge of this moment. I hope, with the Encyclical, to have contributed to this challenge. The discussion underway seems encouraging to me. Of course, we want to continue to respond to the challenges of the moment and to help make the sense of responsibility stronger than the desire for profit, to make responsibility for others stronger than selfishness; in this regard, we also want to contribute to a humane economy in the future.

And, to conclude, one slightly more personal question: during the summer you had a small accident to your wrist. Do you feel you have completely recovered from it now? Have you been able to resume all your activities and work on the second part of your book on Jesus, as you wished?

It has not yet recovered completely, but you see that my right

hand functions and I can do the essential: I can eat and, above all, I can write. My thoughts develop especially in writing; so for me, not to be able to write for six weeks was truly a hardship, a school of patience. Yet I was able to work, to read, and to do many other things, and I even went ahead slightly with the book. However, I still have a great deal to do. I think that with the bibliography and all that is still to come, "*Deo adiuvante*", it might be finished by next spring. But this is a hope!

Papal Flight

Saturday, 26 September 2009

WELCOMING CEREMONY

ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER

Mr President, Dear Cardinals, Brother Bishops, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great joy to be here with you today in the Czech Republic, and I am most grateful to all of you for the warmth of your welcome.

I thank the President, Mr Václav Klaus, for inviting me to visit the country and for his kind words. I am honoured by the presence of representatives of the civil and political Authorities, and I greet them along with all the people of the Czech Republic. As it is principally the Catholic communities of Bohemia and Moravia that I am here to visit, I extend a warm fraternal greeting to Cardinal Vlk, Archbishop of Prague, to Archbishop Graubner of Olomouc, President of the Czech

Bishops' Conference, as well as all the Bishops and faithful here today. I was particularly touched by the gesture of the young couple who brought me gifts typical of this nation's culture, together with an offering of your native soil. I am reminded how deeply Czech culture is permeated by Christianity since, as you know, these items of bread and salt have a particular significance in New Testament imagery.

While the whole of European culture has been profoundly shaped by its Christian heritage, this is especially true in the Czech lands, since it was through the missionary labours of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the ninth century that the old Slavonic language first came to be written down. Apostles of the Slavic peoples and founders of their culture, they are rightly venerated as Patrons of Europe. Yet it is also worth recalling that these two great saints from the Byzantine tradition here encountered missionaries from the Latin West. Throughout its history, this territory at the heart of the continent, at a crossroads between north and south, east and west, has been a meeting-point for different peoples, traditions and cultures. Undeniably this has sometimes led to friction, but in the longer term it has proved to be a fruitful encounter. Hence the significant part played by the Czech lands in Europe's intellectual, cultural and religious history – sometimes as a battleground, more often as a bridge.

The coming months will see the twentieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, which happily brought a peaceful end to a time of particular hardship for this country, a time in which the flow of ideas and cultural influences was rigidly controlled. I join you and your neighbours in giving thanks for your liberation from those oppressive regimes. If the collapse of the Berlin Wall marked a watershed in world history, it did so all the more for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, enabling them to take their rightful place as sovereign actors in the concert of nations.

Nevertheless, the cost of forty years of political repression

is not to be underestimated. A particular tragedy for this land was the ruthless attempt by the Government of that time to silence the voice of the Church. Throughout your history, from the time of Saint Wenceslaus, Saint Ludmila and Saint Adalbert to the time of Saint John Nepomuk, there have been courageous martyrs whose fidelity to Christ spoke far louder and more eloquently than the voice of their executioners. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the death of the Servant of God Cardinal Josef Beran, Archbishop of Prague. I wish to pay tribute both to him and to his successor Cardinal František Tomášek, whom I had the privilege of knowing personally, for their indomitable Christian witness in the face of persecution. They, and countless brave priests, religious and lay men and women kept the flame of faith alive in this country. Now that religious freedom has been restored, I call upon all the citizens of this Republic to rediscover the Christian traditions which have shaped their culture, and I invite the Christian community to continue to make its voice heard as the nation addresses the challenges of the new millennium. “Without God, man neither knows which way to go, nor even understands who he is” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 78). The truth of the Gospel is indispensable for a healthy society, since it opens us to hope and enables us to discover our inalienable dignity as God’s children.

Mr President, I know that you wish to see a greater role for religion in this country’s affairs. The Presidential flag flying over Prague Castle proclaims the motto “*Pravda Vítězí* - the Truth wins”: it is my earnest hope that the light of truth will continue to guide this nation, so blessed throughout its history by the witness of great saints and martyrs. In this scientific age, it is instructive to recall the example of Johann Gregor Mendel, the Augustinian Abbot from Moravia whose pioneering research laid the foundations of modern genetics. Not for him the reproach of his patron, Saint Augustine, who regretted that so many were “more concerned with admiring facts than seeking their causes” (*Epistula* 120:5; cf. John Paul II, *Address for the Commemoration of Abbot Gregor Mendel on the First Centenary of*

his Death, 10 March 1984, 2). The authentic progress of humanity is best served by just such a combination of the wisdom of faith and the insights of reason. May the Czech people always enjoy the benefits of that happy synthesis.

It remains only for me to renew my thanks to all of you, and to say how much I have been looking forward to spending these days among you in the Czech Republic, which you are proud to call “*země Česká, domov můj*”. Thank you very much.

Stará Ruzyně International Airport - Prague
Saturday, 26 September 2009

**VISIT TO THE “HOLY INFANT OF PRAGUE”
GREETING BY THE HOLY FATHER**

Dear Cardinals,
Your Excellencies,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear Children,

I greet all of you warmly and I want you to know what joy it gives me to visit this Church, dedicated to Our Lady of Victory, where the faithful venerate the statue of the Infant Jesus, known throughout the world as the “Holy Infant of Prague”. I thank Archbishop Jan Graubner, President of the Episcopal Conference, for his words of welcome spoken on behalf of all the Bishops. I offer respectful greetings to the Mayor and to the other civil and religious authorities present at this gathering. I greet you, dear families, who have come in such large numbers to be here with me.

The image of the Child Jesus calls to mind the mystery of the Incarnation, of the all-powerful God who became man and who lived for thirty years in the lowly family of Nazareth, entrusted by Providence to the watchful care of Mary and Joseph. My thoughts turn to your own families and to all the families in the world, in their joys and difficulties. Our reflections should lead us to prayer, as we call upon the Child Jesus for the gift of unity and harmony for all families. We think especially of young families who have to work so hard to offer their children security and a decent future. We pray for families in difficulty, struggling with illness and suffering, for those in crisis, divided or torn apart by strife or infidelity. We entrust them all to the Holy Infant of Prague, knowing how important their stability and harmony is for the true progress of society and for the future of humanity.

The figure of the Child Jesus, the tender infant, brings home to us God's closeness and his love. We come to understand how precious we are in his eyes, because it is through him that we in our turn have become children of God. Every human being is a child of God and therefore our brother or sister, to be welcomed and respected. May our society grasp this truth! Every human person would then be appreciated not for what he has, but for who he is, since in the face of every human being, without distinction of race or culture, God's image shines forth.

This is especially true of children. In the Holy Infant of Prague we contemplate the beauty of childhood and the fondness that Jesus Christ has always shown for little ones, as we read in the Gospel (cf. Mk 10:13-16). Yet how many children are neither loved, nor welcomed nor respected! How many of them suffer violence and every kind of exploitation by the unscrupulous! May children always be accorded the respect and attention that are due to them: they are the future and the hope of humanity!

Dear children, I now want to say a special word to you and to

your families. You have come here in large numbers to meet me, and for this I thank you most warmly. You are greatly loved by the Child Jesus, and you should return his love by following his example: be obedient, good and kind. Learn to be, like him, a source of joy to your parents. Be true friends of Jesus, and always turn to him in trust. Pray to him for yourselves, for your parents, relations, teachers and friends, and pray also for me. Thank you once again for your welcome. I bless you from my heart and I invoke upon all of you the protection of the Holy Infant Jesus, his Immaculate Mother and Saint Joseph.

*Church of Our Lady Victorious, Prague
Saturday, 26 September 2009*

**MEETING WITH THE CIVIL AND POLITICAL
AUTHORITIES AND WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE
DIPLOMATIC CORPS**

ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER

*Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am grateful for the opportunity to meet, in such a remarkable setting, the political and civil authorities of the Czech Republic and the members of the diplomatic community. I warmly thank President Klaus for his kind words of greeting in your name. I also express my appreciation to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra for the musical performance which opened our gathering, and which eloquently expressed both the roots of Czech culture and the outstanding contribution which this nation has made to European culture.

My pastoral visit to the Czech Republic coincides with the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, and the “Velvet Revolution” which restored democracy to this nation. The euphoria that ensued was expressed in terms of freedom. Two decades after the profound political changes which swept this continent, the process of healing and rebuilding continues, now within the wider context of European unification and an increasingly globalized world. The aspirations of citizens and the expectations placed on governments called for new models of civic life and solidarity between nations and peoples without which the long desired future of justice, peace and prosperity would remain elusive. Such desires continue to evolve. Today, especially among the young, the question again emerges as to the nature of the freedom gained. To what end is freedom exercised? What are its true hallmarks?

Every generation has the task of engaging anew in the arduous search for the right way to order human affairs, seeking to understand the proper use of human freedom (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 25). And while the duty to strengthen “structures of freedom” is vital, it is never enough: human aspirations soar beyond the self, beyond what any political or economic authority can provide, towards a radiant hope (cf. *ibid.*, 35) that has its origin beyond ourselves yet is encountered within, as truth and beauty and goodness. Freedom seeks purpose: it requires conviction. True freedom presupposes the search for truth – for the true good – and hence finds its fulfilment precisely in knowing and doing what is right and just.

Truth, in other words, is the guiding norm for freedom, and goodness is freedom’s perfection. Aristotle defined the good as “that at which all things aim”, and went on to suggest that “though it is worthwhile to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more godlike to attain it for a nation or for city-states” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1; cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 2). Indeed, the lofty responsibility to awaken receptivity to truth and goodness falls to all leaders – religious, political

and cultural, each in his or her own way. Jointly we must engage in the struggle for freedom and the search for truth, which either go together hand in hand or together they perish in misery (cf. *Fides et Ratio*, 90).

For Christians, truth has a name: God. And goodness has a face: Jesus Christ. The faith of Christians, from the time of Saints Cyril and Methodius and the early missionaries, has in fact played a decisive role in shaping the spiritual and cultural heritage of this country. It must do likewise in the present and into the future. The rich patrimony of spiritual and cultural values, each finding expression in the other, has not only given shape to the nation's identity but has also furnished it with the vision necessary to exercise a role of cohesion at the heart of Europe. For centuries this territory has been a meeting point between various peoples, traditions, and cultures. As we are all aware, it has known painful chapters and carries the scars of tragic events born of misunderstanding, war and persecution. Yet it is also true, that its Christian roots have nourished a remarkable spirit of forgiveness, reconciliation and cooperation which has enabled the people of these lands to find freedom and to usher in a new beginning, a new synthesis, a renewal of hope. Is it not precisely this spirit that contemporary Europe requires?

Europe is more than a continent. It is a home! And freedom finds its deepest meaning in a spiritual homeland. With full respect for the distinction between the political realm and that of religion – which indeed preserves the freedom of citizens to express religious belief and live accordingly – I wish to underline the irreplaceable role of Christianity for the formation of the conscience of each generation and the promotion of a basic ethical consensus that serves every person who calls this continent, “home”! In this spirit, I acknowledge the voice of those who today, across this country and continent, seek to apply their faith respectfully yet decisively in the public arena, in the expectation that social norms and policies be informed by the desire

to live by the truth that sets every man and woman free (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 9).

Fidelity to the peoples whom you serve and represent requires fidelity to the truth which alone is the guarantee of freedom and integral human development (cf. *ibid.*, 9). Courage to articulate the truth in fact serves all members of society by shedding light on the path of human progress, indicating its ethical and moral foundations, and ensuring that public policy draws upon the treasury of human wisdom. Sensibility to universal truth should never be eclipsed by particular interests, important though they may be, for such would lead only to new examples of the social fragmentation or discrimination which those very interest or lobby groups purport to overcome. Indeed, far from threatening the tolerance of differences or cultural plurality, the pursuit of truth makes consensus possible, keeps public debate logical, honest and accountable, and ensures the unity which vague notions of integration simply cannot achieve. In the light of the Church's tradition of temporal, intellectual, and spiritual charity, I am confident that members of the Catholic community – together with members of other Churches, ecclesial communities, and religions – will continue to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value both in this nation and beyond (cf. *ibid.*, 9).

Dear friends, our presence in this magnificent capital, which is often spoken of as the heart of Europe, prompts us to ask in what that "heart" consists. While there is no simple answer to that question, surely a clue is found in the architectural jewels that adorn this city. The arresting beauty of its churches, castle, squares and bridges cannot but draw our minds to God. Their beauty expresses faith; they are epiphanies of God that rightly leave us pondering the glorious marvels to which we creatures can aspire when we give expression to the aesthetic and the noetic aspects of our innermost being. How tragic it would be if someone were to behold such examples of beauty, yet ignore the transcendent mystery to which they point. The creative

encounter of the classical tradition and the Gospel gave birth to a vision of man and society attentive to God's presence among us. In shaping the cultural patrimony of this continent it insisted that reason does not end with what the eye sees but rather is drawn to what lies beyond, that for which we deeply yearn: the Spirit, we might say, of Creation.

At the present crossroads of civilization, so often marked by a disturbing sundering of the unity of goodness, truth and beauty and the consequent difficulty in finding an acceptance of common values, every effort for human progress must draw inspiration from that living heritage. Europe, in fidelity to her Christian roots, has a particular vocation to uphold this transcendent vision in her initiatives to serve the common good of individuals, communities, and nations. Of particular importance is the urgent task to encourage young Europeans with a formation that respects and nurtures their God-given capacity to transcend the very limits which are sometimes presumed to entrap them. In sports, the creative arts and academic pursuit, young people welcome the opportunity to excel. Is it not equally true that when presented with high ideals they will also aspire to moral virtue and a life of compassion and goodness? I warmly encourage parents and community leaders who expect authorities to promote the values which integrate the intellectual, human and spiritual dimensions of a sound education worthy of the aspirations of our young.

“Veritas vincit”. This is the motto that the flag of the President of the Czech Republic bears: In the end, truth does conquer, not by force, but by persuasion, by the heroic witness of men and women of firm principle, by sincere dialogue which looks beyond self-interest to the demands of the common good. The thirst for truth, beauty and goodness, implanted in all men and women by the Creator, is meant to draw people together in the quest for justice, freedom and peace. History has amply shown that truth can be betrayed and manipulated in the service of false ideologies, oppression and injustice. But do not the challenges facing the human family call us to look beyond those

dangers? For in the end, what is more inhuman, and destructive, than the cynicism which would deny the grandeur of our quest for truth, and the relativism that corrodes the very values which inspire the building of a united and fraternal world? Instead, we must reappropriate a confidence in the nobility and breadth of the human spirit in its capacity to grasp the truth, and let that confidence guide us in the patient work of politics and diplomacy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these sentiments I offer prayerful good wishes that your service be inspired and sustained by the light of that truth which is a reflection of the eternal Wisdom of God the Creator. Upon you and your families I cordially invoke an abundance of divine blessings.

*Presidential Palace of Prague
Saturday, 26 September 2009*

**CELEBRATION OF VESPERS WITH PRIESTS,
MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS, SEMINARIANS
AND LAY MOVEMENTS**

ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I greet all of you in the words of Saint Paul that we have just heard in our Scripture reading: *Grace and peace to you from God our Father!* First of all I address these words to the Cardinal Archbishop, whom I thank for his gracious words. I extend my greeting to the other Cardinals and Bishops present, to the priests and deacons, the

seminarians, men and women religious, to the catechists and pastoral workers, to the young people, the families, and to the representatives of ecclesial associations and movements.

We are gathered this evening in a place that is dear to you, a place that is a visible sign of the power of divine grace acting in the hearts of believers. The beauty of this thousand-year-old church is indeed a living testimony to your people's rich history of faith and Christian tradition: a history that is illuminated in particular by the faithfulness of those who sealed their adherence to Christ and to the Church by martyrdom. I am thinking of Saint Wenceslaus, Saint Adalbert and Saint John Nepomuk, milestones in your Church's history, to whom we may add the example of the young Saint Vitus, who preferred to die a martyr's death rather than betray Christ, and the examples of the monk Saint Procopius and Saint Ludmila. From the twentieth century, I recall the experiences of two Archbishops of this local Church, Cardinals Josef Beran and František Tomášek, and of many Bishops, priests, men and women religious, and lay faithful, who resisted Communist persecution with heroic fortitude, even to the sacrifice of their lives. Where did these courageous friends of Christ find their strength if not from the Gospel? Indeed, they were captivated by Jesus who said: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). In the hour of trial they heard another saying of Jesus resounding deep within them: "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you" (Jn 15:20).

The heroism of these witnesses to the faith reminds us that only through personal intimacy and a profound bond with Christ is it possible to draw the spiritual vitality needed to live the Christian vocation to the full. Only the love of Christ can make the apostolate effective, especially in moments of difficulty and trial. Love for Christ and for one's fellow men and women must be the hallmark of every Christian and every community. In the *Acts of the Apostles* we read that "the

company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (4:32). Tertullian, an early Church writer, noted that pagans were impressed by the love that bound Christians together (cf. *Apologeticum* XXXIX).

Dear brothers and sisters, imitate the divine Master who “came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45). Let love shine forth in each of your parishes and communities, and in your various associations and movements. According to the image used by Saint Paul, let your Church be a well-structured body with Christ as Head, in which every member acts in harmony with the whole. Nourish your love for Christ by prayer and listening to his word; feed on him in the Eucharist, and by his grace, be builders of unity and peace wherever you go.

Twenty years ago, after the long winter of Communist dictatorship, your Christian communities began once more to express themselves freely, when, through the events triggered by the student demonstration of 17 November 1989, your people regained their freedom. Yet you are well aware that even today it is not easy to live and bear witness to the Gospel. Society continues to suffer from the wounds caused by atheist ideology, and it is often seduced by the modern mentality of hedonistic consumerism amid a dangerous crisis of human and religious values and a growing drift towards ethical and cultural relativism. In this context there is an urgent need for renewed effort throughout the Church so as to strengthen spiritual and moral values in present-day society. I know that your communities are already actively engaged on several fronts, especially in charitable work, carried out under the auspices of *Caritas*. Your pastoral activity in the field of educating new generations should be undertaken with particular zeal. Catholic schools should foster respect for the human person; attention should also be given to the pastoral care of young people outside the school environment, without neglecting other groups of the faithful. Christ is for everyone! I sincerely hope that

there will be a growing accord with other institutions, both public and private. It is always worth repeating that the Church does not seek privileges, but only to be able to work freely in the service of all, in the spirit of the Gospel.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Lord in his goodness make you like the salt spoken of in the Gospel, salt that gives savour to life, so that you may be faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard. Dear Bishops and priests, it is your task to work tirelessly for the good of those entrusted to your care. Always draw inspiration from the Gospel image of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep, calls them by name, leads them to safe pastures, and is prepared to give his life for them (cf. Jn 10:1-19). Dear consecrated persons, by professing the evangelical counsels you recall the primacy that each of us must give to God in our lives. By living in community, you bear witness to the enrichment that comes from practising the commandment of love (cf. Jn 13:34). By your fidelity to this vocation, you will help the men and women of today to let themselves be captivated by God and by the Gospel of his Son (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, 104). And you, dear young people in seminaries or houses of formation, be sure to acquire a solid cultural, spiritual and pastoral preparation. In this Year of Priests, with which I chose to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of the Curé d'Ars, may you learn from the example of this pastor who was completely dedicated to God and to the care of souls; he was well aware that it was his ministry, nourished by prayer, that constituted his path to sanctification.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, with gratitude to the Lord, we shall be marking a number of anniversaries this year: the 280th anniversary of the canonization of Saint John Nepomuk, the 80th anniversary of the dedication of Saint Vitus' Cathedral, and the 20th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Agnes of Bohemia, the event which heralded your country's deliverance from atheist oppression. All these are good

reasons for persevering in the journey of faith with joy and enthusiasm, counting on the maternal intercession of Mary, Mother of God, and all your Patron Saints. Amen!

*Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslaus and Adalbert - Prague
Saturday, 26 September 2009*

HOLY MASS
HOMILY BY THE HOLY FATHER

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). Jesus invites each of his disciples to spend time with him, to find comfort, sustenance and renewal in him. This invitation is addressed in a special way to our liturgical assembly which, in accordance with the ecclesial ideal, brings the whole of your local Church together with the Successor of Peter. I greet each and every one of you: firstly the Bishop of Brno, to whom I am grateful for the kind words he addressed to me at the start of the Mass, and also the Cardinals and the other Bishops present. I greet the priests, deacons, seminarians, men and women religious, the catechists and pastoral workers, the young people and the many families here. I pay my respects to the civil and military authorities, particularly to the President of the Republic and the First Lady, to the Mayor of the City of Brno and the President of the Region of Southern Moravia, a land rich in history and in cultural, industrial and commercial activity. I should also like to extend warm greetings to the pilgrims from the entire region of Moravia and the nearby dioceses of Slovakia, Poland, Austria and Germany.

Dear friends, regarding the character of today's liturgical assembly, I gladly supported the decision, mentioned by your Bishop, to base the Scripture readings for Mass on the theme of hope: I supported it in consideration of the people of this beloved land as well as Europe and the whole of humanity, thirsting as it does for something on which to base a firm future. In my second Encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, I emphasized that the only "certain" and "reliable" hope (cf. no. 1) is founded on God. History has demonstrated the absurdities to which man descends when he excludes God from the horizon of his choices and actions, and how hard it is to build a society inspired by the values of goodness, justice and fraternity, because the human being is free and his freedom remains fragile. Freedom has constantly to be won over for the cause of good, and the arduous search for the "right way to order human affairs" is a task that belongs to all generations (cf. *ibid.*, 24-25). That, dear friends, is why our first reason for being here is to listen, to listen to a word that will show us the way that leads to hope; indeed, we are listening to the only word that can give us firm hope, because it is God's word.

In the first reading (Is 61:1-3a), the Prophet speaks as one invested with the mission of proclaiming liberation, consolation and joy to all the afflicted and the poor. Jesus took up this text and re-applied it to himself in his preaching. Indeed, he stated explicitly that the prophet's promise was fulfilled in him (cf. Lk 4:16-21). It was completely fulfilled when by dying on the cross and rising from the dead he freed us from our slavery to selfishness and evil, to sin and death. And this is the message of salvation, ancient and ever new, that the Church proclaims from generation to generation: Christ crucified and risen, the Hope of humanity!

This word of salvation still resounds with power today, in our liturgical assembly. Jesus addresses himself lovingly to you, sons and daughters of this blessed land, in which the seed of the Gospel has been

sown for over a thousand years. Your country, like other nations, is experiencing cultural conditions that often present a radical challenge to faith and therefore also to hope. In fact, in the modern age both faith and hope have undergone a “shift”, because they have been relegated to the private and other-worldly sphere, while in day-to-day public life confidence in scientific and economic progress has been affirmed (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 17). We all know that this progress is ambiguous: it opens up possibilities for good as well as evil. Technical developments and the improvement of social structures are important and certainly necessary, but they are not enough to guarantee the moral welfare of society (cf. *ibid.*, 24). Man needs to be liberated from material oppressions, but more profoundly, he must be saved from the evils that afflict the spirit. And who can save him if not God, who is Love and has revealed his face as almighty and merciful Father in Jesus Christ? Our firm hope is therefore Christ: in him, God has loved us to the utmost and has given us life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10), the life that every person, even if unknowingly, longs to possess.

“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” These words of Jesus, written in large letters above the entrance to your Cathedral in Brno, he now addresses to each of us, and he adds: “Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt 11:29-30). Can we remain indifferent in the face of his love? Here, as elsewhere, many people suffered in past centuries for remaining faithful to the Gospel, and they did not lose hope; many people sacrificed themselves in order to restore dignity to man and freedom to peoples, finding in their generous adherence to Christ the strength to build a new humanity. In present-day society, many forms of poverty are born from isolation, from being unloved, from the rejection of God and from a deep-seated tragic closure in man who believes himself to be self-sufficient, or else merely an insignificant and transient datum; in this world of ours

which is alienated “when too much trust is placed in merely human projects” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 53), only Christ can be our certain hope. This is the message that we Christians are called to spread every day, through our witness.

Proclaim it yourselves, dear priests, as you remain intimately united to Jesus, as you exercise your ministry enthusiastically, certain that nothing can be lacking in those who put their trust in him. Bear witness to Christ, dear religious, through the joyful and consistent practice of the evangelical counsels, indicating where our true homeland lies: in Heaven. And you, dear young people, dear lay faithful, dear families, base on the firm foundation of faith in Christ whatever plans you have for your family, for work, for school, for activities in every sphere of society. Jesus never abandons his friends. He assures us of his help, because nothing can be done without him, but at the same time, he asks everyone to make a personal commitment to spread his universal message of love and peace.

May you draw encouragement from the example of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the principal patrons of Moravia, who evangelized the Slavic peoples, and of Saints Peter and Paul, to whom your Cathedral is dedicated. Look to the shining testimony of Saint Zdislava, mother of a family, rich in works of religion and works of mercy; of Saint John Sarkander, priest and martyr; of Saint Clement Maria Hofbauer, priest and religious, born in this diocese and canonized one hundred years ago, and of Blessed Restituta Kafkova, a religious sister born in Brno and killed by the Nazis in Vienna. May you always be accompanied and protected by Our Lady, Mother of Christ our Hope. Amen!

Tuřany Airport, Brno
Sunday, 27 September 2009

ECUMENICAL MEETING
ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER

*Dear Cardinals,
Your Excellencies,
Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

I am grateful to Almighty God for the opportunity to meet with you who are here representing the various Christian communities of this land. I thank Doctor Černý, President of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic, for the kind words of welcome which he has addressed to me on your behalf.

My dear friends, Europe continues to undergo many changes. It is hard to believe that only two decades have passed since the collapse of former regimes gave way to a difficult but productive transition towards more participatory political structures. During this period, Christians joined together with others of good will in helping to rebuild a just political order, and they continue to engage in dialogue today in order to pave new ways towards mutual understanding, cooperation for peace and the advancement of the common good.

Nevertheless, attempts to marginalize the influence of Christianity upon public life – sometimes under the pretext that its teachings are detrimental to the well-being of society – are emerging in new forms. This phenomenon gives us pause to reflect. As I suggested in my Encyclical on Christian hope, the artificial separation of the Gospel from intellectual and public life should prompt us to engage in a mutual “self-critique of modernity” and “self-critique of modern Christianity,” specifically with regard to the hope each of them can offer mankind (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 22). We may ask ourselves, what does the Gospel have to say to the Czech Republic and indeed all of Europe today in a period marked by proliferating world views?

Christianity has much to offer on the practical and ethical level, for the Gospel never ceases to inspire men and women to place themselves at the service of their brothers and sisters. Few would dispute this. Yet those who fix their gaze upon Jesus of Nazareth with eyes of faith know that God offers a deeper reality which is nonetheless inseparable from the “economy” of charity at work in this world (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, 2): He offers *salvation*.

The term is replete with connotations, yet it expresses something fundamental and universal about the human yearning for well-being and wholeness. It alludes to the ardent desire for reconciliation and communion that wells up spontaneously in the depths of the human spirit. It is the central truth of the Gospel and the goal to which every effort of evangelization and pastoral care is directed. And it is the criterion to which Christians constantly redirect their focus as they endeavour to heal the wounds of past divisions. To this end – as Doctor Černý has noted – the Holy See was pleased to host an International Symposium in 1999 on Jan Hus to facilitate a discussion of the complex and turbulent religious history in this country and in Europe more generally (cf. Pope John Paul II, *Address to the International Symposium on John Hus*, 1999). I pray that such ecumenical initiatives will yield fruit not only in the pursuit of Christian unity, but for the good of all European society.

We take confidence in knowing that the Church’s proclamation of salvation in Christ Jesus is ever ancient and ever new, steeped in the wisdom of the past and brimming with hope for the future. As Europe listens to the story of Christianity, she hears her own. Her notions of justice, freedom and social responsibility, together with the cultural and legal institutions established to preserve these ideas and hand them on to future generations, are shaped by her Christian inheritance. Indeed, her memory of the past animates her aspirations for the future.

This is why, in fact, Christians draw upon the example of figures such as Saint Adalbert and Saint Agnes of Bohemia. Their commitment to spreading the Gospel was motivated by the conviction that Christians should not cower in fear of the world but rather confidently share the treasury of truths entrusted to them. Likewise Christians today, opening themselves to present realities and affirming all that is good in society, must have the courage to invite men and women to the radical conversion that ensues upon an encounter with Christ and ushers in a new life of grace.

From this perspective, we understand more clearly why Christians are obliged to join others in reminding Europe of her roots. It is not because these roots have long since withered. On the contrary! It is because they continue – in subtle but nonetheless fruitful ways – to supply the continent with the spiritual and moral sustenance that allows her to enter into meaningful dialogue with people from other cultures and religions. Precisely because the Gospel is not an ideology, it does not presume to lock evolving socio-political realities into rigid schemas. Rather, it transcends the vicissitudes of this world and casts new light on the dignity of the human person in every age. Dear friends, let us ask the Lord to implant within us a spirit of courage to share the timeless saving truths which have shaped, and will continue to shape, the social and cultural progress of this continent.

The salvation wrought by Jesus suffering, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven not only transforms us who believe in him, but urges us to share this Good News with others. Enlightened by the Spirit's gifts of knowledge, wisdom and understanding (cf. Is 11:1-2; Ex 35:31), may our capacity to grasp the truth taught by Jesus Christ impel us to work tirelessly for the unity he desires for all his children reborn through Baptism, and indeed for the whole human race.

With these sentiments, and with fraternal affection for you

and the members of your respective communities, I express my deep thanks to you and commend you to Almighty God, who is our fortress, our stronghold and our deliverer (cf. Ps 144:2). Amen.

*Throne Hall of the Archbishop's House of Prague
Sunday, 27 September 2009*

**MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC
COMMUNITY
*ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER***

*Mr President,
Distinguished Rectors and Professors,
Dear Students and Friends,*

Our meeting this evening gives me a welcome opportunity to express my esteem for the indispensable role in society of universities and institutions of higher learning. I thank the student who has kindly greeted me in your name, the members of the university choir for their fine performance, and the distinguished Rector of Charles University, Professor Václav Hampl, for his thoughtful presentation. The service of academia, upholding and contributing to the cultural and spiritual values of society, enriches the nation's intellectual patrimony and strengthens the foundations of its future development. The great changes which swept Czech society twenty years ago were precipitated not least by movements of reform which originated in university and student circles. That quest for freedom has continued to guide the work of scholars whose *diakonia* of truth is indispensable to any nation's well-being.

I address you as one who has been a professor, solicitous of

the right to academic freedom and the responsibility for the authentic use of reason, and is now the Pope who, in his role as Shepherd, is recognized as a voice for the ethical reasoning of humanity. While some argue that the questions raised by religion, faith and ethics have no place within the purview of collective reason, that view is by no means axiomatic. The freedom that underlies the exercise of reason – be it in a university or in the Church – has a purpose: it is directed to the pursuit of truth, and as such gives expression to a tenet of Christianity which in fact gave rise to the university. Indeed, man's thirst for knowledge prompts every generation to broaden the concept of reason and to drink at the wellsprings of faith. It was precisely the rich heritage of classical wisdom, assimilated and placed at the service of the Gospel, which the first Christian missionaries brought to these lands and established as the basis of a spiritual and cultural unity which endures to this day. The same spirit led my predecessor Pope Clement VI to establish the famed Charles University in 1347, which continues to make an important contribution to wider European academic, religious and cultural circles.

The proper autonomy of a university, or indeed any educational institution, finds meaning in its accountability to the authority of truth. Nevertheless, that autonomy can be thwarted in a variety of ways. The great formative tradition, open to the transcendent, which stands at the base of universities across Europe, was in this land, and others, systematically subverted by the reductive ideology of materialism, the repression of religion and the suppression of the human spirit. In 1989, however, the world witnessed in dramatic ways the overthrow of a failed totalitarian ideology and the triumph of the human spirit. The yearning for freedom and truth is inalienably part of our common humanity. It can never be eliminated; and, as history has shown, it is denied at humanity's own peril. It is to this yearning that religious faith, the various arts, philosophy, theology and other scientific disciplines, each with its own method, seek to respond, both on the level of disciplined reflection and on the level of a sound praxis.

Distinguished Rectors and Professors, together with your research there is a further essential aspect of the mission of the university in which you are engaged, namely the responsibility for enlightening the minds and hearts of the young men and women of today. This grave duty is of course not new. From the time of Plato, education has been not merely the accumulation of knowledge or skills, but *paideia*, human formation in the treasures of an intellectual tradition directed to a virtuous life. While the great universities springing up throughout Europe during the middle ages aimed with confidence at the ideal of a synthesis of all knowledge, it was always in the service of an authentic *humanitas*, the perfection of the individual within the unity of a well-ordered society. And likewise today: once young people's understanding of the fullness and unity of truth has been awakened, they relish the discovery that the question of what they can know opens up the vast adventure of how they ought to be and what they ought to do.

The idea of an integrated education, based on the unity of knowledge grounded in truth, must be regained. It serves to counteract the tendency, so evident in contemporary society, towards a fragmentation of knowledge. With the massive growth in information and technology there comes the temptation to detach reason from the pursuit of truth. Sundered from the fundamental human orientation towards truth, however, reason begins to lose direction: it withers, either under the guise of modesty, resting content with the merely partial or provisional, or under the guise of certainty, insisting on capitulation to the demands of those who indiscriminately give equal value to practically everything. The relativism that ensues provides a dense camouflage behind which new threats to the autonomy of academic institutions can lurk. While the period of interference from political totalitarianism has passed, is it not the case that frequently, across the globe, the exercise of reason and academic research are – subtly and not so subtly – constrained to bow to the pressures of ideological interest groups and the lure of short-term utilitarian or

pragmatic goals? What will happen if our culture builds itself only on fashionable arguments, with little reference to a genuine historical intellectual tradition, or on the viewpoints that are most vociferously promoted and most heavily funded? What will happen if in its anxiety to preserve a radical secularism, it detaches itself from its life-giving roots? Our societies will not become more reasonable or tolerant or adaptable but rather more brittle and less inclusive, and they will increasingly struggle to recognize what is true, noble and good.

Dear friends, I wish to encourage you in all that you do to meet the idealism and generosity of young people today not only with programmes of study which assist them to excel, but also by an experience of shared ideals and mutual support in the great enterprise of learning. The skills of analysis and those required to generate a hypothesis, combined with the prudent art of discernment, offer an effective antidote to the attitudes of self-absorption, disengagement and even alienation which are sometimes found in our prosperous societies, and which can particularly affect the young. In this context of an eminently humanistic vision of the mission of the university, I would like briefly to mention the mending of the breach between science and religion which was a central concern of my predecessor, Pope John Paul II. He, as you know, promoted a fuller understanding of the relationship between faith and reason as the two wings by which the human spirit is lifted to the contemplation of truth (cf. *Fides et Ratio*, Proemium). Each supports the other and each has its own scope of action (cf. *ibid.*, 17), yet still there are those who would detach one from the other.

Not only do the proponents of this positivistic exclusion of the divine from the universality of reason negate what is one of the most profound convictions of religious believers, they also thwart the very dialogue of cultures which they themselves propose. An understanding of reason that is deaf to the divine and which relegates religions into the realm of subcultures, is incapable of entering into the dialogue of

cultures that our world so urgently needs. In the end, “fidelity to man requires fidelity to the truth, which alone is the guarantee of freedom” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 9). This confidence in the human ability to seek truth, to find truth and to live by the truth led to the foundation of the great European universities. Surely we must reaffirm this today in order to bring courage to the intellectual forces necessary for the development of a future of authentic human flourishing, a future truly worthy of man.

With these reflections, dear friends, I offer you my prayerful good wishes for your demanding work. I pray that it will always be inspired and directed by a human wisdom which genuinely seeks the truth which sets us free (cf. Jn 8:28). Upon you and your families I invoke God’s blessings of joy and peace.

*Vladislav Hall in the Prague Castle
Sunday, 27 September 2009*

**HOLY MASS ON THE LITURGICAL MEMORIAL
OF SAINT WENCESLAUS,
PATRON SAINT OF THE CZECH NATION**

HOMILY BY THE HOLY FATHER

*Dear Cardinals,
My Brother Bishops and Priests,
Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Dear Young People,*

It gives me great joy to be with you this morning, as my apostolic visit to the beloved Czech Republic draws to a close, and I offer all of you my heartfelt greeting, especially the Cardinal Archbishop, to

whom I am grateful for the words that he addressed to me in your name at the start of Mass. My greeting goes also to the other Cardinals, the Bishops, the priests and consecrated persons, the representatives of lay movements and associations, and especially the young people. I respectfully greet the President of the Republic, to whom I offer cordial good wishes on the occasion of his name-day; and I gladly extend these wishes to all who bear the name of Wenceslaus and to the entire Czech people on the day of this national feast.

This morning, we are gathered around the altar for the glorious commemoration of the martyr Saint Wenceslaus, whose relics I was able to venerate before Mass in the Basilica dedicated to him. He shed his blood in your land, and his eagle, which – as the Cardinal Archbishop has just mentioned – you chose as a symbol for this visit, constitutes the historical emblem of the noble Czech nation. This great saint, whom you are pleased to call the “eternal” Prince of the Czechs, invites us always to follow Christ faithfully, he invites us to be holy. He himself is a model of holiness for all people, especially the leaders of communities and peoples. Yet we ask ourselves: in our day, is holiness still relevant? Or is it now considered unattractive and unimportant? Do we not place more value today on worldly success and glory? Yet how long does earthly success last, and what value does it have?

The last century – as this land of yours can bear witness – saw the fall of a number of powerful figures who had apparently risen to almost unattainable heights. Suddenly they found themselves stripped of their power. Those who denied and continue to deny God, and in consequence have no respect for man, appear to have a comfortable life and to be materially successful. Yet one need only scratch the surface to realize how sad and unfulfilled these people are. Only those who maintain in their hearts a holy “fear of God” can also put their trust in man and spend their lives building a more just and fraternal world. Today there is a need for believers with credibility, who are ready to spread in every area of society the Christian principles and ideals by

which their action is inspired. This is holiness, the universal vocation of all the baptized, which motivates people to carry out their duty with fidelity and courage, looking not to their own selfish interests but to the common good, seeking God's will at every moment.

In the Gospel we heard Jesus speaking clearly on this subject: "What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" (Mt 16:26). In this way we are led to consider that the true value of human life is measured not merely in terms of material goods and transient interests, because it is not material goods that quench the profound thirst for meaning and happiness in the heart of every person. This is why Jesus does not hesitate to propose to his disciples the "narrow" path of holiness: "whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (16:25). And he resolutely repeats to us this morning: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (16:24).

Without doubt, this is hard language, difficult to accept and put into practice, but the testimony of the saints assures us that it is possible for all who trust and entrust themselves to Christ. Their example encourages those who call themselves Christian to be credible, that is, consistent with the principles and the faith that they profess. It is not enough to appear good and honest: one must truly be so. And the good and honest person is one who does not obscure God's light with his own ego, does not put himself forward, but allows God to shine through.

This is the lesson we can learn from Saint Wenceslaus, who had the courage to prefer the kingdom of heaven to the enticement of worldly power. His gaze never moved away from Jesus Christ, who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps, as Saint Peter writes in the second reading that we just heard. As an obedient disciple of the Lord, the young prince Wenceslaus

remained faithful to the Gospel teachings he had learned from his saintly grandmother, the martyr Ludmila. In observing these, even before committing himself to build peaceful relations within his lands and with neighbouring countries, he took steps to spread the Christian faith, summoning priests and building churches. In the first Old Slavonic “narration”, we read that “he assisted God’s ministers and he also adorned many churches” and that “he was benevolent to the poor, clothed the naked, gave food to the hungry, welcomed pilgrims, just as the Gospel enjoins. He did not allow injustice to be done to widows, he loved all people, whether poor or rich”. He learned from the Lord to be “merciful and gracious” (*Responsorial Psalm*), and animated by the Gospel spirit he was even able to pardon his brother who tried to kill him. Rightly, then, you invoke him as the “heir” of your nation, and in a well-known song, you ask him not to let it perish.

Wenceslaus died as a martyr for Christ. It is interesting to note that, by killing him, his brother Boleslaus succeeded in taking possession of the throne of Prague, but the crown placed on the heads of his successors did not bear his name. Rather, it bears the name of Wenceslaus, as a testimony that “the throne of the king who judges the poor in truth will remain firm for ever” (cf. today’s *Office of Readings*). This fact is judged as a miraculous intervention by God, who does not abandon his faithful: “the conquered innocent defeated the cruel conqueror just as Christ did on the cross” (cf. *The Legend of Saint Wenceslaus*), and the blood of the martyr did not cry out for hatred or revenge, but rather for pardon and peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, together let us give thanks to the Lord in this Eucharist for giving this saintly ruler to your country and to the Church. Let us also pray that, like him, we too may walk along the path of holiness. It is certainly difficult, since faith is always exposed to multiple challenges, but when we allow ourselves to be drawn towards God who is Truth, the path becomes decisive, because

we experience the power of his love. May the intercession of Saint Wenceslaus and of the other patron saints of the Czech Lands obtain this grace for us. May we always be protected and assisted by Mary, Queen of Peace and Mother of Love. Amen!

*Esplanade on the Way to Melnik in Stará Boleslav
Monday, 28 September 2009*

**MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE
ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER**

Dear Young Friends,

At the conclusion of this celebration I turn to you directly and I greet you warmly. You have come here in great numbers from all over the country and from neighbouring countries; you camped here yesterday evening and you spent the night in tents, sharing an experience of faith and companionship. Thank you for your presence here, which gives me a sense of the enthusiasm and generosity so characteristic of youth. Being with you makes the Pope feel young! I extend a particular word of thanks to your representative for his words and for the wonderful gift.

Dear friends, it is not hard to see that in every young person there is an aspiration towards happiness, sometimes tinged with anxiety: an aspiration that is often exploited, however, by present-day consumerist society in false and alienating ways. Instead, that longing for happiness must be taken seriously, it demands a true and comprehensive response. At your age, the first major choices are made,

choices that can set your lives on a particular course, for better or worse. Unfortunately, many of your contemporaries allow themselves to be led astray by illusory visions of spurious happiness, and then they find themselves sad and alone. Yet there are also many young men and women who seek to transform doctrine into action, as your representative said, so as to give the fullness of meaning to their lives. I invite you all to consider the experience of Saint Augustine, who said that the heart of every person is restless until it finds what it truly seeks. And he discovered that Jesus Christ alone is the answer that can satisfy his and every person's desire for a life of happiness, filled with meaning and value (cf. *Confessions*, I.1.1).

As he did with Augustine, so the Lord comes to meet each one of you. He knocks at the door of your freedom and asks to be welcomed as a friend. He wants to make you happy, to fill you with humanity and dignity. The Christian faith is this: encounter with Christ, the living Person who gives life a new horizon and thereby a definitive direction. And when the heart of a young person opens up to his divine plans, it is not difficult to recognize and follow his voice. The Lord calls each of us by name, and entrusts to us a specific mission in the Church and in society.

Dear young people, be aware that by Baptism you have become children of God and members of his Body, the Church. Jesus constantly renews his invitation to you to be his disciples and his witnesses. Many of you he calls to marriage, and the preparation for this Sacrament constitutes a real vocational journey. Consider seriously the divine call to raise a Christian family, and let your youth be the time in which to build your future with a sense of responsibility. Society needs Christian families, saintly families!

And if the Lord is calling you to follow him in the ministerial priesthood or in the consecrated life, do not hesitate to respond to his invitation. In particular, in this Year of Priests, I appeal to you,

young men: be attentive and open to Jesus call to offer your lives in the service of God and his people. The Church in every country, including this one, needs many holy priests and also persons fully consecrated to the service of Christ, Hope of the world.

Hope! This word, to which I often return, sits particularly well with youth. You, my dear young people, are the hope of the Church! She expects you to become messengers of hope, as happened last year in Australia, during World Youth Day, that great manifestation of youthful faith that I was able to experience personally, and in which some of you took part. Many more of you will be able to come to Madrid in August 2011. I invite you here and now to participate in this great gathering of young people with Christ in the Church.

Dear friends, thank you again for being here and thank you for your gift: the book of photographs recounting the lives of young people in your dioceses. Thank you also for the sign of your solidarity towards the young people of Africa, which you have presented to me. The Pope asks you to live your faith with joy and enthusiasm; to grow in unity among yourselves and with Christ; to pray and to be diligent in frequenting the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession; to take seriously your Christian formation, remaining ever obedient to the teachings of your Pastors. May Saint Wenceslaus guide you along this path through his example and his intercession, and may you always enjoy the protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother. I bless all of you with affection!

*Esplanade on the Way to Melnik, Stará Boleslav
Monday, 28 September 2009*

FAREWELL CEREMONY
ADDRESS BY THE HOLY FATHER

Mr President,
Dear Cardinals,
Brother Bishops,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I come to bid farewell, I wish to thank you for your generous hospitality during my short stay in this beautiful country.

I am especially grateful to you, Mr President, for your words and for the time spent at your residence. On this feast of Saint Wenceslaus, your country's guardian and patron, allow me once again to offer you my sincere good wishes for your name-day. As today is also the name-day of Bishop Václav Malý, I offer my greetings to him too, and I wish to thank him for all his hard work in coordinating the arrangements for my pastoral visit to the Czech Republic. To Cardinal Vlk, Archbishop Graubner, and all who did so much to ensure the smooth unfolding of the series of meetings and celebrations, I am deeply grateful. Naturally I include in my thanks the public authorities, the media, the many volunteers who helped to direct the crowds, and all the faithful who have been praying that this visit might bear fruit for the good of the Czech nation and for the Church in the region.

I shall treasure the memory of the moments of prayer that I was able to spend together with the Bishops, priests and faithful of this country. It was particularly moving this morning to celebrate Mass at Stará Boleslav, site of the martyrdom of the young duke Wenceslaus, and to venerate him at his tomb on Saturday evening in the majestic Cathedral that dominates Prague's skyline. Yesterday in Moravia, where Saints Cyril and Methodius launched their apostolic mission, I was able

to reflect in prayerful thanksgiving on the origins of Christianity in this region, and indeed throughout the Slavic territories. The Church in this country has been truly blessed with a remarkable array of missionaries and martyrs, as well as contemplative saints, among whom I would single out Saint Agnes of Bohemia, whose canonization just twenty years ago providentially heralded the liberation of this country from atheist oppression.

My meeting yesterday with representatives of other Christian communities brought home to me the importance of ecumenical dialogue in this land which suffered so much from the consequences of religious division at the time of the Thirty Years' War. Much has already been achieved in healing the wounds of the past, and decisive steps have been taken along the path towards reconciliation and true unity in Christ. In building further on these solid foundations, there is an important role for the academic community to play, through its uncompromising search for truth. I was glad to have the opportunity to spend time yesterday with representatives of the nation's universities, and to express my esteem for the noble vocation to which they have dedicated their lives.

I was especially delighted to meet the young people, and to encourage them to build on the best traditions of this nation's past, particularly its Christian heritage. According to a saying attributed to Franz Kafka, "Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old" (Gustav Janouch, *Conversations with Kafka*). If our eyes remain open to the beauty of God's creation and our minds to the beauty of his truth, then we may indeed hope to remain young and to build a world that reflects something of that divine beauty, so as to inspire future generations to do likewise.

Mr President, dear friends: I thank you once again and I promise to remember you in my prayers and to carry you in my heart.

May God bless the Czech Republic!

May the Holy Infant of Prague continue to inspire and guide you and all the families of this nation! May God bless all of you!

Stará Ruzyně International Airport - Prague
Monday, 28 September 2009

**THE OPENING OF A SYNODAL ASSEMBLY
DEDICATED TO AFRICA
*HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI***

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

Pax vobis peace to you! With this liturgical greeting I address you all, gathered in the Vatican Basilica, where 15 years ago, on 10 April 1994, the Servant of God John Paul II opened the First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The fact that today we are here to inaugurate the Second one means that it was indeed a historic event, but not an isolated one. It marked the arrival point of a journey that subsequently continued and is now reaching a significant new milestone in the process of assessment and relaunching. Let us praise the Lord for this! I address my most cordial welcome to the Members of the Synod Assembly who are concelebrating this Holy Eucharist with me, with the Experts and with the Auditors, and in particular to those who come from Africa. I extend a special greeting to the General Secretary of the Synod and his collaborators. I am very happy to

have with us His Holiness Abuna Paulos, Patriarch of the Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Ethiopia, whom I warmly thank, and the Fraternal Delegates of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities. I am also glad to greet the Civil Authorities and Ambassadors who have wished to take part in this celebration; I greet with affection the priests, the men and women religious, the representatives of organizations, movements and associations, and the Congolese Choir which, together with the Sistine Chapel Choir, is enlivening our Eucharistic Celebration.

The biblical Readings of this Sunday speak of marriage. However, more radically, they speak of the design of Creation, of the origins and hence, of God. The Second Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews confirms this design, where it says: "For he who sanctifies", namely Jesus Christ, and "those who are sanctified", that is, human beings, "have all one origin". "That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2: 11). Thus the primacy of God the Creator visibly stands out in both Readings, with the eternal validity of his original imprint and the absolute priority of his lordship, that lordship which children can welcome better than adults; for this reason Jesus holds them up as a model for entering the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Mk 10: 13-15).

Now, recognition of the absolute lordship of God is certainly one of the salient and unifying features of the African culture. There are of course many different cultures in Africa but they all seem to agree on this point: God is the Creator and the source of life. Now life as we well know is essentially expressed in the union between the man and the woman and in the birth of children; the divine law, written into nature, is therefore stronger and pre-eminent with respect to any human law, according to Jesus' clear and concise affirmation: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mk 10: 9). Thus the perspective is not primarily moral: it concerns being, the order inscribed in creation, before duty.

Dear brothers and sisters, in this regard beyond the first impression today's liturgy of the Word appears particularly suited to accompanying the opening of a Synodal Assembly dedicated to Africa. I would like to stress in particular certain aspects that emerge forcefully and call into question the work that awaits us. The first, already mentioned: the primacy of God, Creator and Lord. The second: marriage. The third: children. As regards the first aspect, Africa is the depository of a priceless treasure for the whole world: its profound sense of God, which I have been able to perceive first hand at my meetings with the African Bishops on their *ad limina* visits, and especially during my recent Apostolic Visit in Cameroon and Angola, of which I retain pleasant and moving memories. It is precisely this pilgrimage to Africa that I would now like to recall, because during those days I opened this Synod Assembly in spirit by presenting the *Instrumentum Laboris* to the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences and the Heads of the Synods of Bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

When Africa's treasures are mentioned one immediately thinks of the abundant riches of the territory which have unfortunately become and continue to be a cause of exploitation, conflict and corruption. The Word of God, instead, makes us look at another patrimony: the spiritual and cultural heritage, which humanity needs even more than raw materials. "For what does it profit a man", Jesus was to say, "to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mk 8: 36). From this viewpoint Africa constitutes an immense spiritual "lung" for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope. But this "lung" can also become ill. And at this moment at least two dangerous pathologies are infecting it: in the first place, a disease that is already widespread in the Western world, in other words practical materialism, combined with relativist and nihilistic thought. Without discussing the genesis of such sickness of the spirit, it is nevertheless indisputable that the so-called "first" world has sometimes exported and is exporting toxic spiritual refuse which contaminates the peoples of other continents, including

in particular the population of Africa. In this sense, colonialism finished at a political level has never really ended. But, precisely in this perspective, a second “virus” should be pointed out that could strike Africa too, that is, religious fundamentalism, combined with political and economic interests. Groups that relate to various religious affiliations are spreading on the African continent; they do so in the name of God but according to a logic opposed to divine logic, in other words, not by teaching and practicing love and respect for freedom but rather by intolerance and violence.

As regards the subject of marriage, the text of chapter 2 of the Book of Genesis has recalled the perennial foundation that Jesus himself confirmed: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gn 2: 24). How is it possible not to recall the wonderful cycle of catecheses that the Servant of God John Paul II dedicated to this subject, based on a particularly deeply studied exegesis of this biblical text? Today, in proposing it to us again at the opening of the Synod, the liturgy offers us the superabundant light of the truth revealed and incarnate in Christ with which it is possible to consider the complex topic of marriage in the African ecclesial and social context.

On this point too, however, I would like briefly to mention a thought that precedes any reflection or indication of a moral order, and which is nevertheless still connected to the primacy of the meaning of the sacred and of God. Marriage, as the Bible presents it to us, does not exist outside the relationship with God. Conjugal life between a man and a woman, and hence the life of the family that results from it, is inscribed in communion with God and, in the light of the New Testament, becomes an icon of Trinitarian Love and the sacrament of Christ’s union with the Church. To the extent in which it preserves and develops its faith, Africa will be able to draw on immense resources for the benefit of the family founded on marriage.

Furthermore, by including in the Gospel passage the text on Jesus and the children (Mk 10: 13-15), the liturgy invites us from this moment to bear in mind in our pastoral concern the reality of children who constitute a great and unfortunately often suffering part of the African population. In the scene where Jesus welcomes the children, even indignantly opposing the disciples who sought to keep them away from him, we see the image of the Church which in Africa, and in every other part of the earth, expresses her own motherhood especially to the smallest ones, even when they are not yet born. Like the Lord Jesus, the Church does not see them principally as recipients of assistance and even less of pietism or exploitation but rather as people in every sense, who through their own way of being show the main road by which to enter the Kingdom of God, the road, that is, of unconditional entrustment to his love.

Dear Brothers, these indications that come from the Word of God fit into the broad horizon of the Synodal Assembly that is beginning today and that is the follow-up of the former Synod dedicated to the African continent, whose fruits were presented to Pope John Paul II, of venerable memory, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. Although the first duty of evangelization remains valid and timely, there is need of a new evangelization that takes into account the rapid social changes of our epoch and of the phenomenon of world globalization. The same can be said of the pastoral decision to build the Church as God's family (cf. *ibid.*, n. 63). In this broad wake comes the Second Assembly whose theme is: "The Church in Africa at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world' (Mt 5: 13, 14)".

In recent years the Catholic Church in Africa has experienced great dynamism and the Synodal Meeting is an opportunity to thank the Lord. And since the growth of the ecclesial community in all fields also entails challenges *ad intra* and *ad extra*, the Synod is a favourable moment for rethinking pastoral activity and renewing the thrust of

evangelization. In order to become the light of the world and the salt of the earth it is therefore always necessary to aim at the “high standard” of Christian living, in other words, at holiness. Pastors and all the members of the ecclesial community are called to be holy; the lay faithful are called to spread the fragrance of holiness in the family, in the work place, at school and in every other social and political context. May the Church in Africa always be a family of authentic disciples of Christ where the difference between ethnic groups becomes a cause and an incentive for reciprocal human and spiritual enrichment.

With her work of evangelization and human advancement, the Church can certainly make a great contribution in Africa to the whole of society which, unfortunately, is experiencing poverty, injustice, violence and war in various countries. The vocation of the Church, a community of people who are reconciled with God and with one another, is that of being a prophesy and a leaven of reconciliation between the different ethnic, linguistic and even religious groups, within single nations and throughout the continent. Reconciliation, a gift of God that men and women must implore and receive, is a stable basis on which to build peace, an indispensable condition for the authentic progress of people and of society, in accordance with the project of justice wanted by God. Open to the redeeming grace of the Risen Lord, Africa will thus be illuminated increasingly by his light and, letting itself be guided by the Holy Spirit, will become a blessing for the universal Church, making its own qualified contribution to building a more just and fraternal world.

Dear Synod Fathers, thank you for the contribution that each one of you will make to the work in the coming weeks, which will be for us a renewed experience of fraternal communion that will redound to the benefit of the whole Church, especially in the context of the Year for Priests. And I ask you, dear brothers and sisters, to accompany us with your prayers. I ask it of those present: I ask it of the cloistered monasteries and religious communities scattered throughout Africa

and in other parts of the world, of the parishes and movements, of the sick and the suffering: I ask all to pray that the Lord may make this Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops fruitful. Let us invoke upon it the protection of St Francis of Assisi whom we are commemorating today, that of all the African Saints and, in a special way, that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Our Lady of Africa. Amen!

Vatican Basilica

Sunday, 4 October 2009

HOMILY ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYNODAL ASSEMBLY DEDICATED TO AFRICA

Venerable Brothers !

Dear brothers and sisters !

Here is a message of hope for Africa: We have just heard it from the Word of God. It is the message that the Lord of history does not tire of repeating to the oppressed and overwhelmed humanity of every age and land, from the time that he revealed to Moses his will for the Israelite slaves of Egypt: "I have witnessed the affliction of my people ... I have heard their cry ... I know their suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them ... and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey."

What is this land? Is it not perhaps the kingdom of reconciliation, of justice and peace, to which the whole of mankind is called? God's plan does not change. It is the same one that was prophesied by Jeremiah, in the magnificent oracles called "The Book of Con-

solation,” from which the first reading is taken today. It is an announcement of hope for the people of Israel, laid low by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar’s army, by the devastation of Jerusalem and the Temple and by the deportation in Babylon. It is a message of joy for the remnant of the sons of Jacob that announces a future for them, because the Lord will bring them back to their land by way of a straight and smooth road. Persons in need of support, like the blind man and the cripple, the pregnant woman and the one giving birth, will experience the power of the Lord’s tenderness: He is a father for Israel, ready to take care of Israel as the firstborn (cf. Jeremiah 31:7-9).

God’s plan does not change. Through the centuries and the upheavals of history, he always points to the same goal: the Kingdom of freedom and of peace for all. And this implies his predilection for those who are deprived of freedom and peace, for those whose dignity as human persons is violated. We think in particular of the brothers and sisters in African who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice, war and violence, forced migrations.

These favored children of the heavenly Father are like the blind man of the Gospel, Bartimaeus, who “sat begging by the road” (Mark 10:46) at the gates of Jericho. It is just along this road that Jesus the Nazarene passes. It is the road that leads to Jerusalem, where the Passover will be celebrated, his Passover sacrifice, to which the Messiah goes for us. It is the road of his exodus, which is also ours: it is the only road that leads to the land of reconciliation, of justice and of peace.

The Lord meets Bartimaeus, who has lost his sight, on that road. Their paths meet and they become the one path. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” the blind man confidently says. Jesus answers: “Call him!” and adds: “What do you want me to do for you?” God is light and the creator of light. Man is son of the light, made to see the light, but he has lost his sight, and he finds himself forced to

beg. The Lord, who has made himself a beggar for our sake, passes by him: hungry for our faith and our love. "What do you want me to do for you?" God knows but asks; it wants that it be man who speaks.

He wants man to stand up on his feet, to rediscover the courage to ask for what belongs to his dignity. The Father wants to hear from the living voice of the son the free decision to see the light again, that light for which he created him. "Master, that I can see again!" And Jesus says to him: "'Go your way; your faith has saved you.' And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way" (Mark :51-52).

Dear brothers, we give thanks because this "mysterious meeting between our poverty and the grandeur" of God has been realized even in this synodal assembly for Africa that concludes today. God has renewed his call: "Courage! Get on your feet!" (Mark 10:49). And also the Church that is in Africa, through her Pastors, who have come from every country on the continent, from Madagascar and from the other islands, has welcomed the message of hope and the light to walk along the road that leads to the Kingdom of God. "Go, your faith has saved you" (Mark 10:52).

Yes, the faith in Jesus Christ -- when it is well understood and practiced -- guides men and nations to freedom in truth, or, to use the three words of the Synod's theme, to reconciliation, to justice and to peace.

Bartimaeus who, after he is healed, follows Jesus along the road, is the image of humanity that, enlightened by faith, sets out on the journey to the promised land. Bartimaeus, in turn, becomes a witness of the light, recounting and showing in the first person that he has been healed, renewed, reborn. This is the Church in the world: the community of reconciled persons, workers for peace and justice; "salt and light" in the midst of the society of men and the nations.

For this reason the Synod has forcefully reemphasized -- and has manifested -- that the Church is the Family of God, in which there cannot be ethnic, linguistic or cultural divisions. Moving testimonies have shown us that, even in the darkest moments of human history, the Holy Spirit is at work and transforms hearts of the victims and persecutors so that they recognize each other as brothers. The reconciled Church is a powerful leaven of reconciliation in individual countries and in the whole African continent.

The second reading offers us another perspective: the Church, the community that follows Christ on the way of love, has a sacerdotal form. The category of the priesthood, as interpretive key of the mystery of Christ and, in consequence, the Church, was introduced into the New Testament by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. His intuition has its origin in Psalm 110, cited in today's passage, where the Lord God, with a solemn pledge, assures the Messiah: "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" (110:4). The reference, which recalls another, taken from Psalm 2, in which the Messiah announces the Lord's decree about him: "You are my son, today I have begotten you" (2:7).

From these texts comes the attribution of a priestly character to Jesus Christ, not in a generic sense, rather "according to the order of Melchizedek." In other words the supreme and eternal priesthood that is not of human but of divine origin. If every high priest "is chosen from among men and is made their representative before God" (Hebrews 5:1), only he, the Christ, the Son of God, possesses a priesthood that is identified with his Person itself, a singular and transcendent priesthood, on which universal salvation depends.

Christ has transmitted this priesthood of his to the Church through the Holy Spirit; thus the Church has in herself, in each of

her members, in virtue of Baptism, a sacerdotal character. But -- here is a decisive aspect -- Jesus Christ's priesthood is no longer primarily a ritual one but an existential one. The ritual dimension is not abolished, but, as clearly appears in the institution of the Eucharist, it takes its significance from the paschal mystery, which brings the ancient sacrifices to fulfillment and surpasses them.

Thus, a new sacrifice, a new priesthood and also a new temple are born simultaneously and all three coincide with the mystery of Jesus Christ. United to him through the Sacraments, the Church prolongs his salvific action, permitting men to be restored through faith, like the blind Bartimaeus. In this way the ecclesial community, in the footsteps of her Master and Lord, is called to take the road of service in a decisive manner, to share completely in the situation of the men and women of her time, to witness before all to God's love and thus to sow hope.

Dear friends, the Church transmits this message of salvation always joining together evangelization and human promotion. Let us take, for example, the historic encyclical "Populorum Progressio": that which the Servant of God Paul VI elaborated in terms of reflection, missionaries have realized and continue to realize in the field, promoting a development respectful of local cultures and the environment, according to a logic that now, after 40 years, appears to be the only one able to bring the African people out of the slavery of hunger and disease.

This means transmitting the announcement of hope according to a "priestly form," that is, living the Gospel in the first person, trying to translate it into projects and deeds consistent with the fundamental dynamic principle that is love.

In these three weeks, the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops has confirmed that which my venerable predecessor John Paul II had already brought well into

focus, and which I also wanted to delve into in the recent encyclical "Caritas in Veritate": It is necessary to renew the global model of development in such a way that it is capable "of including within its range all peoples and not just the better off" (no. 39).

What the social doctrine of the Church has always upheld on the basis of its vision of man and society, today is also asked of globalization (cf. *ibid.*). This -- it is necessary to recall -- must not be understood fatalistically as if its dynamics produced by anonymous impersonal forces and independently of human will. Globalization is a human reality and as such it can be changed according to one cultural position or another.

The Church works with her personalistic and communitarian conception to orient the process in terms of relationality, of fraternity and sharing (cf. *ibid.*, no. 42). "Courage! Get on your feet!" In this way the Lord of life and hope speaks to the Church and the African people, at the end of these weeks of synodal reflection.

Get up, Church in Africa, family of God, because you are being called by the heavenly Father, whom your ancestors invoked as Creator, before knowing the merciful nearness, revealed in his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Take the journey of a new evangelization with the courage that comes from the Holy Spirit.

The urgent evangelizing action that has been much discussed in these weeks also carries with it a pressing call to reconciliation, the indispensable condition for creating in Africa relationships of justice between men and for building an equitable and lasting peace in respect to every individual and every people; a peace that needs and opens up to the contribution of all persons of good will beyond the respective religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and social affiliations. You are not alone in this demanding mission, pilgrim Church in the Africa of the 3rd millennium. The whole Catholic Church is near you with prayer

and active solidarity, and you are accompanied from heaven by the men and women saints of Africa, who with their life -- sometimes to the point of martyrdom -- have witnessed to total fidelity to Christ.

Courage! Get on your feet, continent of Africa, land that welcomed the Savior of the world when as a child he had to flee with Joseph and Mary to Egypt for safety during Herod's persecution. Welcome with renewed enthusiasm the proclamation of the Gospel so that the face of Christ might illuminate with its splendor the multiplicity of the cultures and languages of your populations. As she offers the bread of the Word and the Eucharist, the Church dedicates herself also to work, with every means available, so that no African will be without daily bread. This is why, along with the task of primary urgency of evangelization, Christians are active in the interventions of human promotion.

Dear synodal fathers, at the end of these reflections of mine, I would like to offer you my most cordial greeting, thanking you for your edifying participation. Returning home, Pastors of the Church of Africa, bring my blessing to your communities. Transmit to all the call that so often resounded in this Synod, of reconciliation, justice and peace.

As this synodal assembly closes, I cannot not renew my deep gratitude to the secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops and his aides. I express a grateful thought to the choirs of the Nigerian community of Rome and the Ethiopian College, who contribute to the animation of this liturgy. And finally I would like to thank those who accompanied the synodal work with prayer. May the Virgin Mary recompense each and every one, and obtain that the Church in Africa grow in every part of that great continent, spreading the "salt" and the "light" of the Gospel everywhere.

25th October 2009

**DISKORS TAL-ARĊISQOF WAQT IL-PONTIFIKAL TA'
JUM IL-VITORJA – 8 ta' Settembru, 2009**

Eċċellenza, Sur President ta' Malta, u Sinjura Abela,
Huti,

F'dan il-jum aħna, il-Poplu ta' dawn il-gzejjer ta' Malta u Għawdex, qegħdin niċċelebraw il-Festa tat-Twelid ta' Sidtna Marija, u magħha, qegħdin niringrazzjaw lil Alla għaliex f'dan il-Jum li huwa religiożament għażiż, il-Poplu Malti ra l-helsien tiegħu wara żmien ta' tbatija fl-Assedju l-Kbir, u fit-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija.

Bħala bnedmin, aħna għandna bżonn li anki dak li hu soprannaturali ingibuh qrib għar-realta' umana u temporali tagħna billi niftakru fih u niċċelebrawh f'data partikulari. Għalhekk niċċelebraw il-misteri tal-Fidi tagħna f'Jiem partikulari.

U bħala Poplu li jemmen, aħna ninterpretaw it-temporalita' tagħna fid-dawl tal-imħabba ta' Alla l-Imbierək, li nemmnu li hu nteressat fina u jidhol fl-istorja tagħna, bħalma daħal fl-istorja umana meta l-Iben ta' Alla sar bniedem. Għalhekk illum qegħdin niringrazzjaw lil Alla fit-tifkira ta' dawn il-ġrajjet.

Dan kollu juri l-orjentazzjoni kristjana permezz tal-Knisja Kattolika ta' dawk li ġew qabilna u li aħna llum qegħdin ingeddu b'din il-Quddiesa, flimkien maċ-ċelebrazzjoni ċivili ta' dawn il-ġrajjet.

Dan kollu jfisser li dawk li ġew qabilna, u aħna, qegħdin niċċelebraw din il-Festa għaliex l-avvenimenti qegħdin ngħaqqduhom ma' viżjoni u nterpretazzjoni tar-Realta' ta' dak li nemmnu li hi l-Verita'. L-għaqda tar-realta' ma' viżjoni tal-Verita' jagħti kontinwita' liż-żmien li l-ebda relativizmu ma jista' jagħti għaliex dan jagħlaq lill-persuni fil-mumentu preżenti. L-ebda reazzjoni purament rellativa ma tista' qatt tiġi ċelebrata, għaliex ma tgħaqqadx il-preżent la mill-

imgħoddi – għax mhux kontinwazzjoni tiegħu, iżda gie sorpassat – u lanqas mal-gejjieni għax ma jippretendix li bħala valur għandu d-dritt li jiġu mgħoddi f’sitwazzjoni differenti. Ahna llum nistgħu ngawdu minn viżjoni kristjana għaliex għal elfejn sena t-tagħlim ta’ Sidna Ġesu’ Kristu kif kien imħares fil-Knisja Kattolika ma kienx soġġett għal bidliet li ġabu kulturi differenti li mbagħad għaddew.

II-Verita’

Il-Papa Benedittu XVI fl-Introduzzjoni tal-Enciklika tiegħu, *CARITAS IN VERITATE* (29 ta’ Ġunju, 2009) jagħmel xi riflessjonijiet fuq il-bżonn li norbtu il-ħidma tagħna kollha ma’ viżjoni ċara tal-Verita’ biex tkun il-qafas ta’ kull soċjeta’.

Il-Papa qiegħed jgħidilna li “l-verita tippreserva u tesprimi l-qawwa tal-karita’ biex tehles (lill-bniedem) fil-ġrajjet tal-istorja li dejjem jinbidlu... Mingħajr il-verita’, mingħajr fiduċja u imħabba għal dak li hu veru, mhemmx kuxjenza soċjali u responsabbilta’, u l-azzjoni soċjali tispicċa sservi nteressi privati u l-logika tal-poter, li jirrizulta fi tkissir soċjali” (n.5).

Il-Papa jhegġeg biex dan it-tiftix għall-verita’ jiftah orizzonti biex is-soċjeta’ kollha, forsi l-iktar dawk li jmexxu, biex jagħmluha bażi ta’ diskussjoni tagħhom: “Il-verita, fil-fatt, hija ‘logos’ (‘kelma’) li toħloq ‘dia-logos’ (‘djalogu’), u għalhekk komunikazzjoni u komunjoni” (n.4).

Il-Papa jagħmel appell lill-bnedmin kollha: “Li tiddefendi il-Verita’, li tfissirha bl-umilta’ u l-konvinzjoni, u li tagħti xhieda tagħha fil-ħajja huma għalhekk forum ta’ karita’ li jitolbu ħafna minna, u huma ndispensabbli” (1).

Iktar direttament l-Enciklika tagħmel appell lill-insara biex jgħaqqdu t-twemmin tagħhom mal-karita’ u jagħmluh mod kif

jeżerċitaw il-missjoni tagħhom fis-soċjeta': "Kull nistrani huwa msejjah biex jipprattika din il-karita', b'mod li tikkorrispondi mas-sejha tiegħu, u skond il-kejl ta' influwenza li jeżerċita fil-*polis*. Din hija t-triq istituzzjonali – nistgħu nsejħulha anki it-triq politika – tal-karita', mhux inqas eċċellenti u effettiva minn dak it-tip ta' karita' li tiltaqa' direttament mal-gar, barra l-medjazzjoni istituzzjonali tal-*polis*" (7).

"Il-Knisja m'għandix soluzzjonijiet tekniċi x'toffri (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 36), u ma tippretendix 'li tindaħal bl-ebda mod fil-politika tal-Istati' (*Populorum Progressio*, n.13). Iżda hi għandha missjoni tal-verita' xi twettaq". "Mingħajr il-verita', huwa faċli li taqa' f'vizjoni ta' ħajja emprika u xettika, li ma tkunx possibbli li togħla għal-livell ta' prassi minħabba nuqqas ta' nteress biex taħtaf il-valuri – kultant anki t-tifsira – li biha tista' tiġġudikaha u tidderiġiha" (n.9).

Sejha

Jiena nixtieq li nagħmel appell biex dejjem iktar isiru referenzi għall-valuri li johorġu mill-Verita' li għandha tkun il-qafas tas-soċjeta' tagħna. Fil-każ tal-pajjiż tagħna, il-Verita' li għabilna il-Mulej Ġesu' kienet il-qafas tal-verita' li mexxa l-Poplu tagħna. Hemm bżonn li jkollna orjentament komuni ta' dak li jikkostitwixxi l-verita', għax inkella jimtela b'influwenzi oħrajn differenti. Hsieb komuni u ċar tal-Verita' jippermetti lil kull wieħed u waħda minna biex ikollu kriterju ma' xhiex jipparaguna l-għemil tiegħu u jidhol fi djalogu ma' oħrajn.

Meta ssawret il-Kostituzzjoni tal-Istat tagħna il-Poplu Malti għażel ir-Reliġjon Kattolka biex tkun ir-Reliġjon tal-Istat tiegħu, u l-kriterju tal-Verita' wara s-soċjeta' tal-gżejjer tagħna. Forsi dak iż-żmien konna iktar qed nifhmu l-aspett reliġjuż f'dik il-għażla. Illum nistgħu nifhmu kemm kienet għaqlija dik id-deċiżjoni għaliex magħña għabtilna dawk il-valuri kristjani li kapaċi jibnu soċjeta' ġusta: onesta', solidarjeta', sens ta' komunita' eċċ.

Il-Knisja trid twassal iktar bil-qawwa l-messaġġ li nistrani sħiħ huwa dak li mal-prattika tar-reliġjon jorbot il-valuri nsara f'kull post fejn jgħix, għall-ġid tas-soċjeta' tagħna. L-istat irid jara u jivvaluta iktar jekk għandux jimla iktar il-vojt li jhalli ċertu relativizmu tal-kultura tal-lum bil-valuri li joħorġu mill-kuntest kristjan.

Nibża' li nitkellmu hafna fuq l-iżvilupp materjali u ekonomiku fis-soċjeta' tagħna u sewwa nagħmlu, iżda f'it nitkellmu fuq dawn il-valuri umani ta' lealta', rispettt, solidarjeta', u dak li jfjixkilhom: egoizmu, supervja, regħba, abbuż ta' poter. Fid-dinja finanzjarja f'it li xejn kien hemm diskors fuq l-etika u l-*mode of conduct* qabel ma faqqgħet il-kriżi finanzjarja. Wara li ġrat, kienu diversi dawk li bdew jittkellmu fuq il-bżonn ta' iktar valuri etiċi fid-dinja finanzjarja.

Anki fis-soċjeta' tagħna, naħseb li hemm sinjali biżżejjed ċari li hemm tifrik tal-valuri morali u soċjali. Hafna minn dak kollu li qiegħed ifixkel lis-soċjeta' tagħna: regħba, idejat li ma jhallux lill-bniedem u l-familja l-ewwel, nuqqas ta' rispettt għall-ambjent, konflitti fi hndan il-miżżewġin u l-familja, vjolenza, droga, alcohol...kollha juru dan in-nuqqas ta' orjentament etiku u soċjali fil-persuni. Il-biża hu li jiġu aċċettati bhala mod ta' agir u għalhekk jiġu istituzzjonalizzati. Biex ma jiġux istituzzjonalizzati, hemm bżonn viżjoni soċjali ċara li hemm it- tajjeb u l-ħażin, li hemm dak li jwassal għall-ġid tal-persuna u tas-soċjeta', u hemm dak li jkisser dan il-ġid.

Li għandu jinkwetana huwa mhux biss li naraw dawk l-affarijiet li tant idejquna fis-soċjeta', iżda li dawk li jagħmluhom ma jagħmluhomx għax iħossu li qed imorru kontra valur, iżda li jagħmluhom għaliex mhemmx kriterju f'mohħhom li bihom iħossu l-ħażin li jkunu għamli. Li jonqos huwa kriterju morali u etiku, fibra morali u jiena wisq nibża' li huwa dan li mhux qed ngħaddulhom. Dan jgħodd għall-eċċessi tagħna li forsi jidhru iktar fid-dinja taż-żgħażaġħ tagħna, fl-imġieba, fl-alkoħol, fl-għemil sesswali bla responsabbilta',

fuq l-effetti magħquda miegħu, fid-drogi, iżda jgħodd ukoll għal eżempji ta' nuqqas ta' gustizzja li aħna naraw fis-soċjeta' tagħna: kultura ta' serq, korruzzjoni, regħba li kapaċi tgħaffeg lill-persuni biex tintlaħaq. Jekk ma nitkellmux iktar fuq il-moralita' tal-għemejjel tagħna, ikun hemm il-periklu li iktar u iktar jinxterdu, u iktar ma jinxterdu, iktar ikun hemm il-periklu li jidhlu fl-istituzzjonijiet tagħna u jsiru istituzzjonalizzati u mod ta' ħajja.

Konklużjoni

Nixtieq li l-aħħar riflessjoni nagħmilha mill-esperjenza tal-Mulej Ġesu'. Hu ntbagħat minn Alla l-Missier biex iġedded lid-dinja. Sakemm kien fostna hu ma ppruvax ibiddel l-Istrutturi Soċjali ta' dak iż-żmien. Hu ġie biex iġedded lill-bnedmin, lil dawk li emmnu fih, biex imbagħad ikunu huma li jbiddu l-istrutturi bil-valuri li hu jkun għallimhom. Ħafna drabi d-diskors tagħna jkun fuq strutturi, u gustament, u l-bdil strutturali tagħhom bħala qafas. U f'dan id-dawl qiegħed ikun hemm, gustament, insistenza fuq il-taħriġ professjonali tal-membri ta' dawn l-istrutturi. Il-messaġġ li xtaqt li naqsam magħkom hu li kull wieħed u waħda minna ninsistu iktar fuq it-tnejn etika tal-persuni li jagħmlu l-istrutturi llum u għada. Nistgħu nagħtu iktar impenn kif se jkollna bennejja ta' strutturi – minn familja sa Stat – li jkunu immexxija b'valuri u b'kuxjenza li jibnuhom b'mod li tgawdi s-soċjeta' minnhom?

Nistgħu nħobbu daqshekk lill-membri tas-soċjeta' tagħna li flimkien mal-imħabba nagħtuhom ukoll il-verita' u l-valuri?

7 ta' Settembru, 2009

DISKORS TAL-ARĊISQOF WAQT IL-PONTIFIKAL TA'

JUM L-INDIPENDENZA – 2009

Eċċellenza President ta' Malta u Sinjura Abela,

Ħuti,

Aħna niċċelebraw b'diversi modi l-ġrajjet tal-Istorja tal-Pajjiż tagħna. Meta niċċelebrawhom ċivilment u soċjalment, aħna nkunu qegħdin nagħtu ġieh lil min ħa sehem f'dawk il-ġrajjet. Nippruvaw nerrġġhu naqbd u l-atmosfera ta' meta sehħew biex nerrġġhu inħallu l-ispirtu li bih ġew miksubin jew iċċelebrati jspirana llum.

Inkunu qegħdin inżidu mal-valur taċ-ċelebrazzjoni meta nħallu it-tifsira ta' dawk il-ġranet tgħinna biex nadattaw u ngħixu dawk il-valuri llum, f'ċirkustanzi differenti. Huwa b'dan il-mod li niċċelebraw Jum l-Indipendenza u l-ġranet kollha li niċċelebraw bħala pajjiż shiħ – niċċelebraw ukoll il-Vitorja, is-7 ta' Ġunju, Jum ir-Repubblika, Jum il-Ħelsien - bħala Jiem li mmarkaw l-Istorja tagħna.

Dawn il-Jiem kollha, ilkoll b'mod differenti, juru l-mixja tal-Poplu tagħna għall-kisba tal-Liberta'. Huwa fatt li dawn l-avvenimenti kollha juru l-herqa ta' dawk li ġew qabilna biex jiksbu Liberta' politika u soċjali għall-Poplu tagħna. Izda l-ħelsien qatt ma huwa punt miksub għal dejjem. Kull darba li jinkiseb aspekk tal-Liberta', mill-ewwel l-ispirtu tal-bniedem jinduna b'aspekk ieħor tal-Liberta' li għandu jiġi akkwistat.

Liberta' fl-ispirtu

Huwa ċar li il-kunċett kollu tal-Liberta' ma jiddependix biss fuq liġijiet, izda jiddependi fuq l-ispirtu ta' min ifassal u jagħmel il-liġijiet, u ta' min irid jippromovi u jiddefendi d-dritt għall-ħelsien vera u ta' min iwieġeb b'sens soċjali għal dawn il-liġijiet.

Fil-proċess għandna għazliet ta' kif persuna tfassal hajjitha.

L-ewwel mod huwa li liberament, f'xi mument tal-ħajja tiegħu, wiehed jorbot il-ħajja tiegħu ma' mod ta' ħsieb u mgieba. Din tagħtih is-saħħa biex juża l-liberta' tiegħu biex jegħleb it-tfixkil u t-tentazzjonijiet ta' dak kollu li jmur kontra dak li jkun għażel bħala valuri. Huwa jkun qiegħed iqawwi l-ispiritu tiegħu b'deċizzjonijiet – favur il-gustizzja, solidarjeta', eċċ – li jrażnu d-deċizzjonijiet ta' dak li jaqbel biss fil-mument. Dawn jistgħu jkunu tentazzjonijiet ta' ngustizzji għall-qligħ proprju, ta' offerti li jiġu minn barra, ta' egoizmu quddiem l-eżiġenzi gusti tas-soċjeta'.

It-tieni mod huwa li wiehed ma jintrabatx mal-valuri, u l-liberta' tiegħu jesprimiha biss skond ma jaqbel fil-mument. F'dan it-tieni każ huwa ferm diffiċli li timxi skond xi valuri, għaliex il-gibda ta' dak li hu tal-mument hija wisq b'saħħitha għaliex tolqot mhux l-ispiritu iżda l-qligħ momentarju biss. Hija biss għażla fl-ispiritu li tagħti l-qawwa lill-bniedem biex iqiegħed kull mument u kull deċizzjoni fil-kuntest tal-ħajja kollha tiegħu fil-valuri li jkun għażel.

In-nisrani veru huwa dak li jagħzel u jgħix l-ewwel forma ta' liberta'. Hawnhekk il-Kelma ta' Alla illum tagħtina dawl x'għandhom ikunu l-għażliet tal-ħajja tagħna.

Il-Kelma ta' Alla

Fil-Kelma ta' Alla illum, qegħdin niġu pprezentati u offruti b'vizjoni kristjana tal -kisba tal-liberta'. Hija offerta li tgħodd bħala sinjal għall-insara, iżda li tista' tiġi kkunsidrata anki għal dawk li qegħdin ifittxu l-liberta' għal pajjiżna, iżda ma jhossux li huma bilfors ispirati minn ħsibijiet Insara.

Fis-salm responsorjali (S 137, 1-5) aħna niftakru li Alla l-Imbierek huwa Alla li huwa qrib tagħna u ħalaqna liberi biex nibnu soċjeta' li tkun tirrifletti lilu fl-imħabba tiegħu. Is-Salmist juri l-fidi tiegħu f'Alla mill-esperjenza personali tiegħu b'dan il-kliem: “Fil-jum li fih seijaħtlek smajtni, kattarli l-qawwa f'ruħi”. Hija esperjenza li ħafna bnedmin ta' fidi jistgħu jaqsmu mas-salmista. Hija talba li kull nisrani li jħobb lil pajjiżu jagħmel. Il-Knisja Kattolika kontinwament titlob għal dan il-għan. Il-Knisja temmen li anki dan huwa kontribut li

hija tagħmel għall-ġid ta' pajjiżna.

Fil-fatt, fl-ewwel lezzjoni, mill-ktieb ta' Bin Sirak, (50, 22-24) għandna talba tal-Poplu għall-helsien: "Tibqa' fuqna t-tjieba u l-fedelta' tiegħu biex jagħtina l-helsien fi żminijietna". Soċjalment il-mument tal-Poplu f'dak iż-żmien huwa differenti minn tagħna. Iżda x-xewqa ta' helsien shiħ huwa l-istess.

Fil-Vanġelu ta' l-lum (Ġw 15,9-17) għandna pjan shiħ ta' kif min jemmen jista' jibni dan il-helsien fl-isptiru. Il-bniedem li jemmen jaf li dan huwa l-mod kif Alla ħalaq lill-bniedem, u l-mod li jixtieq li jgħix il-bniedem. Din ix-xewqa ta' Alla tidher fil-programm li Ġesu' qiegħed joffri lid-dixxipli tiegħu, u qiegħed jagħtiha bhala missjoni tagħhom fil-Komunita' Nisranija u eventwalment fis-soċjeta':

- "Kif ħabbni Missieri hekk ħabbejtkom jien: ibqgħu fl-imħabba tiegħi"; "Dan hu l-kmandament tiegħi: li tħobbu lil xulxin kif ħabbejtkom jien": il-helsien jitlob ċerti kundizzjonijiet fil-kwalita' ta' kif nifhmu u ngħixu l-imħabba ħalli nagħtu l-liberta' vera lill-persuni ta' hdejna. Kuncetti ta' mħabba li ma jinkludux rispett lejn il-persuna u l-integrita' tal-persuna, li ma jinkludux impenn lejn il-persuna l-oħra jfixklu lil-liberta' u mhux iġinħa. Il-ħajja u t-tagħlim ta' Ġesu huma indikazzjoni ċara ta' dan.
- "Jekk tħarsu l-kmandamenti tiegħi, tibqgħu fi mħabbi": il-kmandamenti tal-Mulej huma bbażati fuq viżjoni tar-realta': b'rispett bejn il-ġenerazzjonijiet, bla serq, bla qtil, fil-verita'. Fihom huwa qed jurina il-psikologija li hemm taħt l-għoti tal-kmandamenti mingħand il-Mulej. Kultura f'dinja li hija mfixkla bid-dnub tal-bniedem ma tistax tiġi preżunta, jew wiehed jippretendiha, iżda trid tiġi mibnija jum b'jum. U ma tistax titwettaq mingħajr ma teskludi il-ħażen li jista' jfixkel din il-kisba. Għalhekk il-kmandamenti fl-aspett soċjali

tagħhom huma mogħtijin fin-negativ, bħala projbizzjonijiet. Fil-ħajja tagħna ahna naħsbu jew nagħlqu għajnejna lejn il-ħażen li naraw madwarna. Il-kmandamenti ma jagħmlux hekk, iżda jikkonfrontawhom. Ikollok soċjeta' għusta mhux meta tippretendi li ma jisirqux, iżda meta tiddeċiedi li inti fl-ebda ċirkustanza u taħt l-ebda forma m'inti se tisraq: la fit-taxxi, la fil-poter imqiegħed f'idejk. Kull att li nagħmlu kontra l-gustizzja ikun qiegħed jibni kultura ta' serq li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, se jerga' jolqot lilek.

- “Hadd ma għandu imħabba ikbar minn din: li wiehed jagħti ħajtu għal ħbiebu”: Hija kuncett ta' mħabba ħafna differenti minn kultura ipprezentat bħala kultura ta' akkwist ta' egojiżmu, pjanijiet proprji li huma lesti li jiġu miksubin anki bi ħsara għal persuni oħrajn jew għall-ħsara tal-Istat, jew kultura ta' pjaċir proprju bħala l-ikbar valur.
- “Mhux intom għażiltu lili, iżda jien għażilt lilkom, u ħtarkom biex tagħmlu l-frott”: Nixtieq li jiena nipprezenta dan il-kliem tal-Mulej bħala Missjoni lil dawk kollha li huma membri impenjati tal-Knisja Kattolika biex jagħmlu li l-ħajja tagħhom tirrifletti dan il-kliem ta' Ġesu fis-soċjeta' tagħna. Hija l-ikbar kontribut li l-Knisja tista' tagħti lill-Poplu tagħna permezz tal-membri kollha tagħha.

Nixtieq li naqsam magħkom ukoll żewġ riflessjonijiet li jagħmel il-Professor Stefano Zamagni fuq l-Enciklika tal-Papa Benedittu XVI *Caritas in Veritate*, li hija adattament ta' dawn il-kliem ta' Ġesu' għaż-zminijiet li qed ngħixu fihom:

“Il-modernita', f'dawn l-aħħar tliet sekli, ħallitilna mudell ta' soċjeta' fejn hemm, minn naħa waħda, l-isfera tal-ekonomija bil-logika tal-ħadid tagħha, li ma taċċettax li tiġi sottomessa għall-ebda ġudizzju,

tant li jingħad “business huwa business”. Minn naħa l-oħra hemm l-isfera tas-soċjal, fejn isiru l-kompensazzjonijiet. Jiġifieri s-soċjal irid jaħseb għal dak kollu li l-ekonomija tas-suq tat-tip kapitalistiku mhux fil-grad li jipproduċi fuq il-pjan tal-ġustizzja u tal-ekwita’. Ma ninsewx li l-‘welfare state’, l-istat soċjali huwa konsegwenza ta’ din il-loġika ta’ separazzjoni.”

“L-Enciklika ta’ Benedittu XVI tgħidilna li dan huwa mod antik kif taħseb, għaliex issa dhalna fis-soċjeta’ post-industrijali, u għalhekk l-element tas-soċjal għandu jidhol ġewwa l-ekonomija, mhux fit-tarf tagħha jew jiġi wara... (dan) jista’ jippermetti għas-suq li jirritrona biex ikun strument ta’ ċivilizzazzjoni tar-rapporti u tal-istrutturi li jiġġenera.”

“Fuq il-prinċipju ta’ fraternita’: Mhijiex biżżejjed is-solidarjeta’, li hija l-kundizzjoni li timmira biex tagħmel id-diversi indaq, iżda l-fraternita’ tippermetti lil dawk indaq li jkunu diversi. Soċjeta’ fraterna hija wkoll solidali, iżda mhux veru il-kuntrarju” (Stefano Zamagni: *L’Enciclica e un mercato ‘fraterno’, Citta’ Nuova, n.15,16, 2009, p. 25*).

Konklużjoni

Huma dawn il-messaġġi li l-Knisja għandha l-missjoni li twassal u toffri lis-soċjeta’ fil-mixja tagħha għal liberta’ vera. Ma jkunx qiegħed jgħin lil-liberta’ min jgħid li l-vuċi tal-Knisja m’għandux jinstema fost l-ilhna l-oħra. Ma jkunx qiegħed jgħin il-liberta’ min ma jaċċettax li l-persuni jistgħu jiġu liberament motivati minn dawn il-prinċipji fl-għażliet tagħhom.

Nagħmel appell lill-insara impenjati kollha biex iħaddnu u jwettqu dawn il-prinċipji għall-ġid tal-mixja tal-Liberta’ ta’ pajjiżna.

21 ta’ Settembru, 2009

GĦALL-AGĦAR MHUX GĦALL-AĦJAR**Ġabra fil-Qosor tad-Dokument****For Worse not For Better**

Id-dhul tal-legislazzjoni favur id-divorzju f'pajjizi ohra ma solviet l-ebda problema li kienet qed tistenna li ssolvi (bħall-koabitazzjoni, twelid barra ż-żwieg u t-tkissir taż-żwieg). Pajjiżna m'għandux il-bżonn li jipprova soluzzjonijiet li fallelw f'pajjizi ohra. Li għandna bżonn huwa li nitgħallmu mill-esperjenzi koroh ta' haddiehor u inmaddu għonqna għall-proposti differenti bħal:

- It-Twaqqif ta' Kumitat Interministerjali biex jippjana u jwettaq strategija globali favur iż-żwieg u l-familja;
- Li fil-livelli kollha tal-edukazzjoni tidhol bhala parti mill-curriculum edukazzjoni għaž-żwieg u l-familja;
- Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Familja msaħħa biex tipproponi u tgħarbel ligijiet, deċiżjonijiet amministrattivi, curricula, u produzzjonijiet fil-media li jgħibu 'l quddiem il-familja mibnija fuq iż-żwieg u
- Politika dwar id-djar li tiffavorixxi l-familja speċjalment daww il-koppji bi dhul baxx li jixtiequ jizzewgu.

The Today Public Policy Institute (TPPI) fil-15 ta' Mejju li għadda ppubblika Rapport (For Worse, For Better) fejn ippropona lill-Gvern biex idahhal il-legislazzjoni tad-divorzju. Ir-Rapport jipprezenta d-divorzju bhala soluzzjoni għal numru ta' problemi soċjali li għandna fis-soċjetà.

Din il-kritika għar-Rapport tipprezenta numru ta' studji u ricerki dokumentati li jippruvaw jew li r-realta mhix hażina daqs kemm qed

jgħid it-TPPI; jew li d-divorzju ma joffri l-ebda soluzzjoni; jew aktar minn hekk, f'xi każi, id-divorzju għab is-sitwazzjoni aghar.

1. Ir-Rapport għandu awtur prinċipali u mbagħad jagħti lista tal-membri tal-Bord, imma imkien ma jgħid jekk dawn il-membri jaqblux mar-Rapport jew safejn jaqblu.
2. Il-qarrejja ma jsibux ir-referezi meħtieġa li jappoġġjaw dak li jgħid ir-Rapport.
3. Hemm numru ta' żballji fejn jidhlu statistiċi: in-numru ta' dikjarazzjonijiet ta' nullita mit-Tribunal Ekkleżjastiku (460 flok 181); in-numru ta' koppji li sseparaw bejn 2006 u 2008 (3,500 meta l-individwi kollha li f'dak iż-żmien kienu separati kien 13,354; l-individwi jitqiesu bħala koppji; il-persentaġġ taż-żjeda tat-tkissir taż-żwieġ ikkalkulat bla ma jagħti każ li l-popolazzjoni u n-numru ta' nies miżżewġa żdied matul għaxar snin u ma jagħtix każ li numru sewwa ta' dawk li kellhom dikjarazzjoni ta' nullita huma ġa magħduda man-numru ta' separati. Ir-Rapport ifixkel ma xulxin separazzjoni, dikjarazzjoni ta' nullità u divorzju u għalhekk jasal għal konkluzjonijiet żbaljati. L-awtur jgħid li ħafna minn dawk li jisseparaw, jikkoabitaw u jkollhom it-tfal meta fil-fatt madwar 18.7 fil-mija minnhom jikkoabitaw. Żball ieħor serju huwa li r-Rapport jgħid li l-ulied ta' koppji li jikkoabitaw m'għandhom l-ebda legġittimità.
4. Għalkemm l-awtur jinsisti li huwa bilanċjat, huwa ċar li r-Rapport huwa żbilanċjat ħafna. Fih 20 paġna favur id-divorzju u żewg paġni dwar il-valur pożittiv taż-żwieġ. Jgħid li r-relazzjonijiet godda ta' wara li jtkisser iż-żwieġ huma kuntenti, meta fil-fatt koppji miżżewġin huma aktar kuntenti minn koppji li jikkoabitaw; barra li ma jgħid xejn dwar il-kuntentizza tal-ħajja miżżewġa. Bl-istess mod ma nsemmi xejn dwar l-ulied li jgħixu ma' ġenitur li qed jikkoabita, jekk humiex kuntenti jew le.

5. Ir-Rapport jasal għal konklużjoni oħra li ma jsostnihiex bir-riċerka, li l-leġislazzjoni li ddaħħal id-divorzju ma żżidx it-tkissir taż-żwieġ. Dan minkejja li fl-istudji għaddejja diskussjoni importanti. Numru ta' studji juru li dan hu bil-maqlub u xi wħud jaslu wkoll biex jgħidu li l-leġislazzjoni tad-divorzju hija kawża ta' aktar tkissir fiż-żwieġ. Studju li ġie ppubblikat dan l-aħħar (jissemma fil-Biblijografija tar-Rapport) li sar fi 18-il pajjiż tal-Ewropa jasal biex jgħid li l-leġislazzjoni tad-divorzju tikkawza 20 fil-mija żjieda fit-tkissir taż-żwiġijiet.
6. Ir-Rapport isemmi argument komuni ħafna fost dawk li huma favur id-divorzju: li huma favur iż-żwieġ u jridu d-divorzju proprju għax iridu jerggħu jiżżewġu. Fih innifsu dan l-argument iġorr kontradizzjoni. Dawn huma favur żwieġ li jridu jidhlu fih, u fl-istess ħin, ma jagħtux każ iż-żwieġ li huma fih. Barra minn hekk, it-tieni u t-tielet żwieġ ifallu aktar mill-ewwel żwieġ.
7. Argument ieħor li spiss jintuża minn dawk favur id-divorzju huwa li bħala riżultat tad-divorzju, is-soċjeta tkun aktar stabbli għaliex jonqsu l-koabitazzjoni u t-twelid barra ż-żwieġ. Għalkemm dan jinstema' loġiku, il-fatti juru mod ieħor. Kull fejn daħal id-divorzju, ir-rata taż-żwieġ naqset waqt li l-koabitazzjoni żdiedet.
8. Il-ġenituri, minbarra li għandhom responsabbiltà lejn xulxin, għandhom ukoll responsabbiltà lejn l-ulied li ġabu fid-dinja. Ir-Rapport jiddiskuti l-ħsara li tigri lill-ulied matul iż-żmien li ż-żwieġ ikun qed jitkisser, imma ma jgħid xejn dwar l-effetti ħżiena li d-divorzju u relazzjoni oħra jġibu fuq l-ulied. Dwar dan, ir-Rapport jgħid biss li jeżistu opinjonijiet f'konflitt. Studji juru li l-ulied li jgħaddu mill-esperjenza tad-divorzju ta' wliedhom huma inklinati li jkollhom aktar problemi fl-oqsma tal-iskola, ix-xogħol u stima baxxa tagħhom infushom.

Jidher li r-Rapport tat-TPPI jipproponi lill-Gvern biex idahħal leġislazzjoni favur id-divorzju minħabba numru ta' sitwazzjonijiet soċjali negattivi li hawn fis-Soċjetà. Studji wrew b'mod ċar li bid-divorzju, l-ebda waħda minn dawn is-sitwazzjonijiet ma tfejqu, lanqas kellhom l-effetti tagħhom imnaqqsa. Għalhekk, jekk tidħol il-liġi tad-divorzju f'Malta, is-sitwazzjoni mhux aġar tkun flok aħjar?

18 ta' Awwissu, 2009

STQARRIJA MILL-KONFERENZA EPISKOPALI DWAR IL-LOGĦOB TAL-AZZARD

Bħala rgħajja spiritwali ta' Malta u Ghawdex ahna nixtiequ noffru lill-membri tas-soċjeta' tagħna u lir-Rappreżentanti tagħna fil-Parlament, din ir-riflessjoni dwar il-Liberta', b'mod speċjali issa meta qed tiġi diskussa r-regolamentazzjoni tal-Logħob tal-Azzard (*Gambling*) fil-għejjer tagħna.

Il-logħob huwa meħtieġ għall-bniedem, għax barra li jgħinu biex jistrieħ mix-xogħol, jgħinu wkoll jithallat mal-oħrajn. Infatti, għandu jhassibna l-fatt li illum hafna m'għadhomx isibu hin għal rikreazzjoni, partikolarment għal rikreazzjoni flimkien fejn wiehed jew waħda jkunu jistgħu jitkellmu, jiċċajta, jifirhu u jagħmlu festa ma' xulxin.

Min-naħa l-oħra jhassibna wkoll il-fatt li x'uħud sabu ruħhom mkaxkrin fl-estremità l-oħra għax għandhom il-vizzju tal-logħob. Fostna qed joktor b'ritmu allarmanti il-logħob tal-azzard. Dan il-logħob ifieri d-dinjità tal-peruna umana. Huwa logħob frott ta' kultura li qed tiflew is-sens veru tal-ħajja u tal-ħajja soċjali, kultura li qegħda tkejjel kollox bir-riga tal-profitt u trid tincentina biss dak li qed ikun imsejjaħ progress ekonomiku. Dan huwa logħob li johloq dipendenzi godda li huma koroh daqs id-dipendenza mill-alkoħol u d-droga. Meta l-bniedem jitlew il-kontroll fuqu nnifsu u jidhol f'dipendenza, dak il-logħob isir inuman u mmorali.

Spiss jiġri li min hu b'saħħtu ekonomikament jistagħna fuq min hu dgħajef. Liġi tkun verament demokratika meta tipprova tħares il-liberta' vera tal-membri kollha tal-komunita'. Is-soċjeta tkun taqdi iktar il-liberta meta tillimita l-liberta bla razan ta' min hu b'saħħtu li jekk tibqa mingħajr kontroll tista twassal għal qerda ta' min hu dgħajef. Kif diġa semmejna, fil-każ tal-logħob tal-azzard aktarx li l-liberta' tal-persuna tkun diġa mhedda mill-jasar tad-dipendenza. Fil-

każ ta' danni fiżiċi, il-liberta' żbaljata ta' min hu f'saħħtu, tiġi mrażżna mil-liġi biex jiġi mħares id-dgħajfef. Dan il-prinċipju għandu jgħodd ukoll għal diversi hwejjeġ oħra, bħalma huma l-isfruttar tal-mara f'xi postijiet tad-divertiment, l-abbuż fl-alkoħol, l-użu tad-droga u l-logħob tal-ażżard.

Wiehed irid joqgħod attent biex ma jkunx hemm logħob organizzat li għalkemm *prima facie* ma jkunx fih riskji u konsegwenzi negattivi, potenzjalment jista' joffri l-okkażjoni biex persuna taqbad triq li tista' twassalha għal dannu kbir. Ebda skop tajjeb ma jista' jiġġustifika dan it-tip ta' logħob għax dan imur kontra kull sens ta' gustizzja. Il-logħob huwa għall-bniedem u mhux il-bniedem għal-logħob.

Kif qatt nistgħu niġġustifikaw jew nippromwovu dak il-logħob li huwa rovina psikoloġika, morali, ekonomika, familjari u xi drabi anke fiżika ta' tant ċittadini vittmi tal-vizzju tal-logħob! Fis-soċjetà tagħna għandna xhieda biżżejjed ta' din il-qerda umana.

Din is-sitwazzjoni mhux biss għandha tqanqal riflessjoni dwar x'qafas morali u legali għandu jaddotta l-pajjiż, imma wkoll x'rimedji kliniċi qed noffru lil min huma maħkuma mill-patoloġija tal-logħob.

Għalhekk, meta l-Parlament tagħna qed jiddiskuti liġi ġdida dwar il-lotteriji u l-logħob, nappellaw għar-responsabilità tal-parlamentari tagħna biex, konxji mill-konsegwenzi gravi li din il-liġi jista' jkollha fuq l-individwi, il-familji u s-soċjetà, huma jzommu quddiem għajnejhom mhux biss il-progress ekonomiku imma wkoll il-ġid komuni ta' pajjiżna.

+ Pawlu Cremona, O.P.
Arċisqof ta' Malta

+Mario Grech
Isqof ta' Għawdex

+Annetto Depasquale
Isqof Awżiljarju

24 ta' Ottubru, 2009

L-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI

PREFAZJU

L-Istitut ta' Formazzjoni Pastorali kien twaqqaf wara li s-Sinodu Djocesani esprima l-bzonn ta' sostenn u koordinazzjoni iktar shiha f'qasam mill-aktar important għall-Knisja fi zminijietna: li jigu mhejjija persuni li jistghu jghixu l-hajja nisranija tagħhom b'mod shih fir-realtajiet soċjali kontemporanji differenti, kif ukoll li jinghataw tahrig dawk li b'xi mod huma involuti f'oqsma differenti tal-hidma pastorali tal-Knisja. *L-Istitut ta' Formazzjoni Pastorali* huwa wkoll sinjal haj li l-Knisja f'Malta trid toffri formazzjoni lil dawk il-persuni, gruppi u setturi li, għalkemm m'humiex involuti direttament fil-hidma pastorali, iħossu l-bzonn li jidhlu fil-fond fil-hsieb tal-Vangelu u fir-riflessjoni tal-Knisja.

Dan il-*Prospectus* hu xhieda tal-mod li bih il-Knisja qed tirispondi għall-bzonnijiet li qed jinhassu madwarna. Il-fatt li korsijiet differenti qed jigu offruti b'metodu ta' kollaborazzjoni bejn Segretarjati, Għaqdiet, u Organizzazzjonijiet differenti juri r-rispett shih għall-karizmi u tal-identità differenti tal-entijiet li qed joffu din il-hidma.

Il-fatt li bosta korsijiet qed isiru b'metodologija professjonali, fuq medda ta' diversi xhur jew snin, ifisser ukoll li din il-formazzjoni tista' tkun effettiva f'li jigu ffurmati *communities of learning* li jghinu ferm biex tigi arrikkita l-hidma ministerjali tal-Knisja u l-vizjoni pastorali li biha ssir din il-hidma.

Ir-rispons pozittiv għall-korsijiet li saru f'dawn l-ahhar snin flimkien mal-klima partecipativa u entuzjasta li nholqot s'issa jawguraw tajjeb għal din il-hidma fejjieda.

Nitlob li dan l-ispirtu ta' kollaborazzjoni, dixxerniment kuragguz u sincier tal-isfidi li qed niffaccjaw, u serjetà fil-formazzjoni

jkompli jsaltan filwaqt li bil-qalb naghti l-barka pastorali tiegħi fuq dan il-ministeru importanti.

PREZENTAZZJONI

Għan ewlieni ta' l-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI (IFP) johrog mill-fatt li l-Knisja f'Malta, fil-ħidma tagħha ta' evanġelizzazzjoni, tagħraf bħala impenn urgenti l-formazzjoni tal-membri tagħha. Is-sejha li harġet mis-Sinodu Djoċesan turi biċ-ċar waħda mill-ikbar sfidi li għandha quddiemha l-Knisja f'Malta bħalissa hija dik li tipprepara nsara għall-ħtigijiet veri tar-realtà soċjali kif inhi lllum.

Fid-dawl ta' dan kollu ngħata bidu għat-twaqqif ta' l-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI li l-għan ewlieni tiegħu hu li jipprovdi formazzjoni ħolistika kif meħtieġa lill-membri kollha tal-komunitaċ kattolika f'Malta.

Permezz ta' l-IFP, il-Knisja trid ukoll toffri spazji formattivi għal dawk il-kategoriji u gruppi fis-soċjetà li, għalkemm mhumiex direttament impenjati pastoralment, iħossu l-ħtieġa li fit-twettiq tal-ħidma jew tal-professjoni tagħhom jagħmlu konfront kontinwu u profund mal-messaġġ ta' Kristu u tal-Knisja tiegħu.

L-IFP għalhekk irid jipprovdi formazzjoni ħolistika kif meħtieġa lill-membri kollha tal-komunita kattolika f'Malta. Fl-isforz sabiex tissaħħaħ l-identità ta' din il-komunita ta' aħwa, l-Istitut irid: joffri opportunitajiet ta'

- (a) formazzjoni permanenti,
- (b) ta' esperjenzi spiritwali,
- (ċ) jippromwovi l-formazzjoni professjonali ta' l-operaturi pastorali għat-twettiq tal-ministeri u tal-ħidmiet tagħhom, u
- (d) kif ukoll jipprovdi esperjenzi ta' djalogu mas-soċjetà Maltija.

Ghaldaqstant, saret hafna hidma biex jitwaqqaf dan l-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI kif gej:

1. Matul is-sena 2005, intagħżel Rev. Dr. Fabio Attard SDB bħala l-ewwel direttur.
2. Fix-xahar ta' Lulju 2005 twaqqaf il-Bord li jgħin lid-Direttur fit-tmexxija ta' l-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI. Dan il-Bord beda l-hidma tiegħu fil-bidu ta' Awwissu 2005. Il-membri ta' dan il-Bord huma: Rev. Dr Fabio Attard SDB, D.D., Sr Marie Scicluna RCSJ, MA, Rev. Dr Joe Galea Curmi S.Th.D. (Lat.), Dr Adrian Gellel D.Sc.Ed. (UPS), Rev. Dr Mark Sultana S.Th.L., Ph.D. (Greg.), Ms. Bianca Chircop BA (Social Work), P.G.Dip. (Family Therapy).
3. Saru laqgħat ma' diversi entitajiet fil-Knisja, fosthom is-Segretarjati u l-Kummissjonijiet tal-Kurja Djocesana, l-Istituti ta' l-Ispiritwalità mmexxijin mir-Reliġjużi, u l-Fakultà tat-Teologija. Matul dawn il-laqgħat saret diskussjoni dwar l-identità u l-hidma proposta mill-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI.
4. L-ewwel prijorità tal-Bord kienet li tiġi fformulata *ċ-Charter* li tindika b'mod sempliċi l-viżjoni u l-missjoni ta' l-ISTITUT TA' FORMAZZJONI PASTORALI: liema huma l-linji li fuqhom se jimxi, l-istrutturi li se jgħinu b'mod siewi t-twerttiq tal-hidma tiegħu. Il-linji ġenerali ta' din *iċ-Charter* jirriflettu il-mandat tas-Sinodu Djocesan.
5. F'April 2008 intagħżel Rev. Dr Mark Sultana bħala direttur ta' l-IFP wara li Fr Fabio Attard ġie elett kunsillier ta' l-Ordni Sależjan.

HIDMIET LI SARU MATUL DAWN IT-TLETT SNIN

Matul dawn l-aħħar tlett snin ta' hidma saru diversi inizjattivi kif gejj:

A. Korsijiet

- i. Tfasslet il-proposta tal-*leadership course* għall-lajċi *leaders* fi ħdan il-movimenti u l-għaqdiet. Din il-proposta li giet milqugħa tajjeb ħafna, diġà giet offruta darbtejn. Il-ħsieb huwa li dan l-ewwel stadju jkun komplut b'żewġ livelli oħra ħalli tinħoloq dejjem aktar l-ideja ta' *on-going formation*.
- ii. Fil-kamp taż-żgħażaġh u l-adolexxenti offrejna diversi proposti. F'kollaborazzjoni mal-Kummissjoni Djoċesana Żgħażaġh (KDŽ) u l-Fakultà tat-Teoloġija għat-tieni darba gie offrut il-kors *Certificate in Youth Ministry*. Din is-sena, għal dawk li ma kellhomx l-opportunità li jsegwu dan il-kors intensiv, f'kollaborazzjoni mal-KDŽ u Segretarjat tal-Katekezi gie offrut il-kors *Short Certificate Course in Adolescent and Youth Ministry*. Iz-żewġ proposti huma ferm apprezzati mill-parteciċipanti li qed isegwuhom.
- iii. F'kollaborazzjoni maċ-Ċentru Spiritwalità Injazjana (ĊSI) qed isir kors ta' tlett snin dwar id-direzzjoni spiritwali. L-esperjenza taċ-ĊSI f'dan il-qasam u l-kollaborazzjoni ma' l-IFP qed iwasslu għal proposta bżonnjuża u apprezzata f'dan is-settur.
- iv. Flimkien maċ-Ċentru Fidi u Ġustizzja qed jigi offrut kors ta' sitt *modules* dwar it-tagħlim soċjali tal-Knisja. Il-format ta' dan il-kors u l-kontenut li fih, qed jagħmluha iktar faċli għal min jixtieq jesplora dan is-settur biex ikun aktar midħla tat-tagħlim soċjali tal-Knisja. Hija proposta li qed tilhaq persuni li huma mixtieqa li jagħmlu mpatt nisrani serju fil-kamp fejn qed jaħdmu.
- v. Fis-sena 2007 l-IFP gie mitlub biex joffri kors ta' formazzjoni

lill-membri mexxejja ta' Ċenakoli fi ħdan il-*Youth Fellowship*. Il-kors, *Short Certificate in Evangelisation and Catechesis*, qed ikun ferm apprezzat mill-partecipanti u għall-IFP hija esperjenza għdida li permezz tagħha qed ikun strument u opportunità ta' formazzjoni fuq firxa dejjem iktar wiesgħa.

B. Seminars

- i. Għal dawn l-aħħar tlett snin, f'kollaborazzjoni mal-Kunsill tal-CARITAS, saru *seminars* għall-membri professjonali u dawk impenjati fl-amministrazzjoni fi ħdan l-istituzzjonijiet tad-djkonija. Dawn is-*seminars* kellhom l-iskop li jgħatu dawl nisrani lil ħidma professjonali.
- ii. Flimkien mas-Segretarjat Hidma Parroċċi, qed ikunu offruti kull sena żewġ *seminars* għall-membri tal-Kunsilli Pastoral Parrokkjali (KPP). Is-sena l-oħra zidna wkoll l-idea li l-konferenzi li jingħataw jitqassmu f'forma ta' sussidju li fuqu l-KPP jistgħu jkomplu r-riflessjoni tagħhom matul is-sena.
- iii. Mas-Segretarjat tal-Kleru u tal-Ħajja Konsagrata l-IFP offra tlett *seminars* għal dawn l-aħħar sentejn li matulhom is-sacerdoti u r-religjużi jkollhom spazju ta' riflessjoni u qsim ta' idejat. Kienet esperjenza li għet meqjusa bħala positiva minn dawk kollha li attendew għaliha. It-temi ta' dawn is-*seminars* u tas-*seminars* tal-KPP huma mfassla b'mod li tigi offruta proposta unitarja madwar sugġett komuni. Din is-sena huwa dak tad-dixxerniment.

Ċ. Laqgħat Pubbliċi u Formazzjoni Informali

- i. L-IFP ħaseb biex joffri sussidji formattivi għall-ħruġ tal-film *Da Vinci Code*. Barra *round table conference*, konferenza stampa, u partecipazzjoni fi programmi televiżi u fuq ir-

radju. Ġew stampati 20,000 manwal bi-Ingliż u 130,000 sussidju bil-Malti li tqassmu mar-rivista *Flimkien* jew, fejn din ma tasalx, permezz tal-parroċi.

- ii. L-Istitut għandu l-missjoni li joffri spazji ta' Djalogu mas-Socjetà. Tul dawn l-aħħar sentajt saru żewġ sensiela ta' laqgħat. L-ewwel waħda kienet dwar l-Identità tal-komunità Kattolika f'Malta. Filwaqt li fit-tieni gie diskuss it-tema ta' L-ambjent. Apparti laqgħat publiċi saru diversi laqgħat ma' esperti fis-sugġett, publikazzjoni ta' artikli f'gurnali lokali, preparazzjoni ta' paper akkademika, kif ukoll esperjenza ta' djalogu bejn l-Isfqujiet u l-kelliema.

D. Kollaborazzjoni ma' enti oħra u proġettazzjoni formattiva

- i. Kien hemm kollaborazzjoni mal-Fakultà tat-Teologija, sabiex ikunu offruti l-korsijiet tal-*Masters in Spirituality* u *Masters in Spiritual Companionship*. Ta' min iżid li, fil-*Masters in Spirituality*, sar kuntatt ma' ordnijiet u kongregazzjonijiet differenti biex joffru *streams* speċjalizzati ta' spiritwalità. Fil-fatt se tkun offruta l-ispeċjalizzazzjoni ta' *Carmelite Spirituality*.
- ii. F'kollaborazzjoni bejn l-IFP, KDŻ u Segretarjat Katekezi qed tiġi formulata mappa ta' formazzjoni fil-kamp tal-*Youth Ministry*. Din il-mappa tispeċifika l-livelli different tal-misisteru fil-ħidma maż-żgħażaġh kif ukoll l-*attainment levels* tal-ministri. Fix-xhur li gejjin din se tkun ipprezentata lill-Isfqujiet għall-konsiderazzjoni tagħhom.
- iii. Fil-kamp tal-familja bħalissa qed isiru diskussjonijiet biex noffru korsijiet ta' formazzjoni li jhejju lil dak li jkun għall-ministeru fil-qasam tal-familja. Fuq linji simili għall-kamp tal-*youth ministry*, nixtiequ nipproċedu għall-viżjoni simili fil-kamp tal-*family ministry*. Hawnhekk, il-kollaborazzjoni mal-Fakultà tat-Teologija, mal-Moviment ta' Kana u mal-

Kummissjoni Djoċesana Familja (KDF) hija pożittiva ħafna u nemmnu li se tħalli l-frott mixtieq.

- iv. Flimkien mal-Kapitlu tal-Katidral qed nhejju program ta' Djalogi u ta' Formazzjoni għall-professjonisti, politiċi u persuni fil-qasam finanzjarju u mprenditorjali.

PROPOSTI GĦAL HIDMIET FUTURI

Matul is-sentejn 2009 – 2011, l-IFP qiegħed jimpenja ruħu f'dawn il-proposti formattivi li whud minnhom huma ġodda waqt li oħrajn huma tkomplija ta' programmi formattivi li diġà nbdew fis-snin ta' qabel.

- a. Bħalma saru għal dawn l-ahhar tlett snin, f'kollaborazzjoni mal-Kunsill tal-CARITAS, se jkomplu jsiru *seminars* għall-membri professjonali u daww impenjati fl-amministrazzjoni fi ħdan l-istituzzjonijiet tad-djkonija.
- b. Il-proposta tal-*leadership course* għall-lajċi *leaders* fi ħdan il-movimenti u l-għaqdiet giet milqugħa tajjeb ħafna, tant li diġà giet offruta darbtejn. Il-hsieb huwa li dan l-ewwel stadju jkun komplut b'zewg livelli oħra halli tinholoq dejjem iktar l-ideja ta' *on-going formation*.
- c. Flimkien mas-Segretarjat Hidma Parrocci, l-IFP se jkompli joffri kull sena żewġ *seminars* għall-membri tal-Kunsilli Pastoralni Parrokkjali (KPP).
- d. Mas-Segretarjat tal-Kleru u tal-Ħajja Konsagrata, l-IFP se jkompli joffri *seminars* li matulhom is-saċerdoti u r-religjużi jkollhom spazju ta' riflessjoni u qsim ta' idejat. It-temi ta' dawn is-*seminars* u tas-*seminars* tal-KPP ikunu mfassla b'mod li tiġi offruta proposta unitarja madwar suġġett komuni. Is-sena d-dieħla se nirriflettu fuq *community building*.
- e. Fil-kamp taż-żgħażaġh u l-adolexxenti, l-IFP se jkompli joffru diversi proposti. F'kollaborazzjoni mal-Kummissjoni

Djocesana Zghazagh (KDZ) u Segretarjat tal-Katekezi qed jigi offrut il-kors *Short Certificate Course in Adolescent and Youth Ministry*. Il-ħsieb huwa li fil-futur l-Fakultà toffri *Masters in Youth Ministry* u *Masters in Family Ministry*.

- f. Fil-kamp tal-familja bhalissa qed isiru diskussjonijiet biex noffru korsijiet ta' formazzjoni li jhejju lil dak li jkun għall-ministeru fil-qasam tal-familja.. Hawnhekk, il-kollaborazzjoni mal-Fakultà tat-Teologija, mal-Moviment ta' Kana u mal-Kummissjoni Djocesana Familja (KDF) hija pożittiva ħafna u nemmnu li se tħalli l-frott mixtieq.
- g. F'kollaborazzjoni maċ-Ċentru Spiritwalità Injazjana qed isir kors ta' tliet snin dwar l-ispiritwalità u d-direzzjoni spiritwali *Certificate in Spirituality and Spiritual Direction*. L-esperjenza ta-CSI f'dan il-qasam u l-kollaborazzjoni ma' l-IFP qed iwasslu għal proposta bżonnjuża u apprezzata f'dan is-settur.
- h. Flimkien maċ-Ċentru Fidi u Ġustizzja l-IFP qed joffri kors ta' sitt *modules* dwar it-tagħlim soċjali tal-Knisja. L-IFP jixtieq jiżviluppa din il-proposta, f'kollaborazzjoni mal-*Professional Ethics Programme* tal-Fakultà tat-Teologija billi joffri wkoll korsijiet aktar speċjaliżzati maħsuba għal dawk li jaħdmu fil-qasam ekonomiku.
- i. Djalogi fis-Socjetà: esperjenza ta' djalogu li qed tkun apprezzata. It-tama hija li din tkompli tizviluppa f'esperjenza ta' djalogu u smigh li turi l-identità ta' Knisja.
- j. L-IFP se jkompli joffri kors ta' formazzjoni *Certificate in Evangelisation and Catechesis*, li ntab inizzjalment mill-membri mexxejja ta-Cenakoli fi hdan il-*Youth Fellowship*. Qed jinħaseb biex dan il-kors jigi offrut fuq il-livell ta' parroċċi u jkun immirat għal dawk li qed imexxu gruppi fil-parroċċi tagħna.
- m. F'kollaborazzjoni mal-Kummissjoni Ġustizzja u Paci

nimpenjaw ruĥna li niżviluppaw xi inizzjattivi li joħolqu spazju ta' djalogu u riflessjoni – kif ukoll servizz ta' formazzjoni nisranija speċjalizzata – għal dawk involuti fil-qasam tal-politika.

- o. F'kollaborazzjoni mas-Segretarjat għall-Katekezi, f'Ottubru 2009, għandu jinbada *Short Certificate Course in Theology*. Il-kors ikun mifruq fuq sentejn u jagħti introduzzjoni ġenerali fuq it-tagħlim tal-Bibbja u fuq temi magħżula mix-xjenzi Teoloġiċi.
- q. F'kollaborazzjoni ma' l-Ufficcju Missjunarju u maċ-Ġentru Animazzjoni Missjunarja ser isir *Short Certificate Course in Missiology* għal dawk li jixtiequ jagħmlu esperjenza missjunarja jew ta' volontarjat.

KONKLUŻJONI

Nemmnu li bhala IFP fi żmien tliet snin irnexxielna nilhqu ħafna mill-miri li poġġejna quddiemna. L-impenji quddiemna mhumiex fit u lanqas żgħar. Għad fadal ħafna setturi li fihom s'issa stajna biss noħolmu x'nistgħu naghmlu.

Li jagħmlilna kuraġġ huwa l-fatt li, b'mod ġenerali, sibna atteġġjament pożittiv u rieda ta' kollaborazzjoni sinciera. Insemmu dan il-punt għax spiss nitkellmu dwar kemm tista tkun diffiċli li diversi gruppi jaħdmu flimkien.

Bhala *Board* ta' l-IFP ninnutaw dan l-aspett ta' kollaborazzjoni u ta' apprezzament reċiproku u niżzu ħajr lil dawk kollha li magħhom kellna x-xorti mhux biss noħolmu imma naħdmu u fil-fatt nipproponu mumententi formattivi għall-ġid tal-Knisja u tas-socjetà tagħna.

Dan kollu nsemmuh għax nemmnu li dan huwa pass ferm importanti biex nistgħu naqraw sewwa s-sinjali taż-żminijiet u b'hekk infasslu mixja biex nilqgħu l-isfidi li dawn igibu magħhom.

Ċirkolari Nurmu 38

ĠABRA FAVUR L-ART IMQADDSA

Nhar il-Ħadd, 20 ta' Settembru, fl-Arċidjoċesi tagħna se tiġi ċelebrata l-ġurnata ta' talb u ta' għajnuna għall-Art Imqaddsa.

Nappellaw lil kulhadd biex noffru t-talb tagħna lil Alla għal dawn ħutna. B'mod speċjali, inkomplu nitolbu lil Alla biex idawwal l-imħuħ u jmexxi l-qлуб tal-bnedmin biex tinstab soluzzjoni xierqa, ġusta u dejjiema għat-tragedja ta' ġlied u qtil li ilha tifleg lill-Art Imqaddsa

Nippruvaw ngħinu lil dawn ħutna li jgħixu fl-Art Imqaddsa wkoll materjalment, billi nagħtu l-offerta generuża tagħna fil-ġabra li sejra ssir fil-quddies kollu li jiġi ċelebrat fil-knejjes tagħna nhar is-Sibt filgħaxija u l-Ħadd, 19 u 20 ta' dan ix-xahar.

Bl-offerti tagħna ngħinu biex jinżammu miftuħa postijiet u hidmiet reliġjużi u ta' għajnuna għal dawn ħutna li jgħixu fl-Art Imqaddsa.

Il-Mulej żgur jisma' t-talb tagħna. Hu japprezza kull sagriċċju li nagħmlu u jroddilna, kif jaf Hu, ta' kull ma nagħmlu għal dawn ħutna u għall-Art Imqaddsa.

Maħruġa mill-Kurja Arċiveskovili ta' Malta, Floriana, illum 7 ta' Settembru 2009.

+ Annetto Depasquale
Isqof Awżiljarju
Vigarju Ġenerali

Mons. Lawrence Gatt
Kancellier

POSSIBILITA' LI L-PAPA BENEDITTU XVI IŻUR MALTA F'APRIL

Wara l-istedina mill-Isqfijiet ta' Malta u l-President tar-Repubblika lill-Qdusija tiegħu l-Papa Benedittu Sittax biex iżur Malta, Dr Alberto Gasbarri se jiġi Malta f'Ottubru biex jesplora din il-possibilità. Dr Gasbarri, li huwa responsabbli miż-żjarat tal-Papa, se jikkunsidra li din iż-żjara ssir f'April tal-2010, fl-okkażjoni tal-1950 anniversarju tan-nawfragju ta' San Pawl.

L-isqfijiet Maltin jixtiequ jheggu lill-Insara Maltin u Gjawdxin biex jitolbu halli l-gżejjer Maltin ikollhom il-grazzja tal-vista pastorali tal-Qdusija Tiegħu l-Papa Benedittu XVI.

SFOND DWAR IŻ-ŻJARAT TAL-PAPA F'MALTA

Jekk il-Papa Benedittu Sittax jiġi Malta s-sena d-diehla, din tkun it-tielet żjara f'pajjiżna tas-suċċessur ta' Pietru. F'dawn l-erbgħa snin tal-Pontifikat tiegħu, il-Papa Benedittu Sittax għamel tnax-il Żjara Appostolika barra l-Italja. F'Settembru ta' din is-sena, il-Qdusija Tiegħu mistenni jżur ukoll ir-Repubblika Ċeka.

L-ewwel żjara ta' Papa f'Malta saret mill-Qdusija Tiegħu Ġwanni Pawlu II bejn il-25 u s-27 ta' Mejju, 1990. Dan kien it-48 vjaġġ appostoliku tal-Papa barra mill-Italja fl-ewwel tnax-il sena tal-Pontifikat tiegħu. Ġwanni Pawlu II kien ġie elett Papa fis-16 ta' Ottubru, 1978.

Fit-8 ta' Mejju tal-2001, il-Papa reġa' ġie Malta fid-93 vjaġġ tiegħu barra mill-Italja. Din id-darba bħala parti minn pelegrinagg Pawlin li ħadu l-Grecja, s-Sirja u li ntemm f'Malta. Fit-tieni u l-aħħar jum taż-żjara tiegħu, il-Papa bbeatifika lil Dun Ġorg Preca, Nazju Falzjon u Adeodata Pisani.

Il-Papa Benedittu Sittax ġie mistieden mill-Isqfijiet Maltin u mill-President tar-Repubblika biex izur Malta fl-okkażjoni tal-1950 anniversarju tan-Nawfragju ta' San Pawl, li tradizzjonalment inzommu li ġara fis-sena sittin wara Kristu. Fl-1960 saru ċelebrazzjonijiet kbar f'Malta biex jitfakkar dan iċ-ċentinarju.

Is-sena l-oħra, il-Papa Benedittu XVI kien ddikjara Sena Pawlina - sena ddedikata lil San Pawl. F'Malta wkoll, id-djoċesijiet ta' Malta u Għawdex organizzaw diversi inizjattivi li matulhom l-Insara kienu msejha jirriflettu aktar fuq il-figura ta' San Pawl. F'għeluq is-Sena Pawlina, il-Papa Benedittu XVI bġhat il-legat personali tiegħu, il-Kardinal Ennio Antonelli, biex imexxi iċ-ċelebrazzjoni Ewkaristika li saret quddiem il-Konkatedral ta' San Ġwann.

In-nawfragju ta' San Pawl f'Malta huwa ta' mportanza kbira għall-Insara, partikolarment għal Maltin peress li din il-ġrajja tissemma fl-Atti tal-Appostli, kapitlu 28, 1-2: "Meta ħlisna mill-għarqa sirna nafu li l-gzira kien jisimha Malta. In-nies tal-gzira gibu ruħhom magħna bi hlewwa li ma bħalha."

12 ta' Settembru, 2009

ANNUAL DISCERN LECTURE 2009 Is Secularisation on the Reverse Gear?

The Institute for Research on the Signs of the Times (DISCERN) is organising its annual lecture on Tuesday 13th October, 2009 at 7:00p.m. This event will be held at the Phoenicia Hotel, Floriana. This year's lecture will be addressing the question: 'Is Secularisation on the Reverse Gear?' The main speaker will be Professor David Martin, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London.

Professor David Martin is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics (1962-1989); and a prolific contributor to public as well as sociological debate about religion. The author of more than 20 books, he has established creative lines of thinking both within the sociology of religion and at the interface between sociology and theology. Early books include *Pacifism* (Routledge 1965), *The Sociology of English Religion* (SCM 1967), and *The Religious and the Secular* (Routledge 1969), but Martin became best known for his magisterial *A General Theory of Secularization* (Blackwell 1978), in which he questioned the inevitability of secularization in modern societies. Later work, notably *Tongues of Fire* (Blackwell 1990), elaborates the Latin American case within the “secularization” framework. *Forbidden Revolutions* (SPCK 1996) continues the commitment to comparative sociology, and *Reflections on Sociology and Theology* (Oxford University Press 1996) collects a series of essays on the title theme. Most recently (July 2005) Professor Martin has up-dated the secularisation debate in his book *On Secularization - towards a revised general theory*.

Organizationally Prof. Martin has promoted the sociology of religion both in Britain, through the British Sociological Association’s Sociology of Religion Study Group, and internationally as President of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion.

24th September, 2009

SEBA’ SEMINARISTI ĠODDA U WEBSITE ĠDIDA ĠHAS-SEMINARJU TAL-ARĊISQOF

Aktar kmieni din il-[img]a, seba’ zġhażagħ taw bidu għal programm ta’ formazzjoni li għandu l-għan li jwassalhom biex isiru saċerdoti djoċesani. Dawn qed jingħaqdu ma’ 30 żagħżuġh ieħor li diġa’ bdew il-formazzjoni tagħhom u qegħdin f’fazijiet differenti tal-

proċess tal-formazzjoni tagħhom għas-saċerdozju.

Is-seminaristi l-ġodda, li l-età medja tagħhom hija ta' 21 sena, ġejjin tnejn mill-Parroċċa ta' San Sebastjan, Qormi, tnejn mill-Mosta, wieħed minn Ħad Dingli, ieħor min-Naxxar u ieħor mill-Kalkara.

Fl-okkażjoni tal-bidu tas-Sena l-ġdida tas-Seminarju, li din is-sena taħbat mas-sena ddedikata mill-Papa Benedittu XVI għas-saċerdoti, is-Seminarju ta' Malta qed jagħti dehra ġdida u dinamika lill-website tiegħu www.seminary.org.mt

Permezz tal-website is-Seminarju jixtieq joffri:

1. tieqa fuq il-ħajja tas-Seminarju u tagħrif fuq kif tingħata l-formazzjoni;
2. għajnuna għal min jixtieq ikun jaf aktar x'inh i s-sejħa tiegħu quddiem Alla
3. post għal djalogu u ospitalita' biex is-Seminarju jibqa' fil-qalba tal-Knisja u jkun jista' jtejjeb il-proposta formattiva.

Is-Seminarju qiegħed ukoll iniedi l-grupp *Friends of the Seminary*. Dan jiġbor fih lil dawk kollha li jiffurmaw parti mill-familja wiesgħa tas-Seminarju permezz ta' l-għajnuna varja li joffru: talb, għajnuna fil-kċina, ordni u sbuħija tal-kappelel, u għajnuna finanzjarja.

Ir-Rettur tas-Seminarju, Fr Jimmy Bonnici, stqarr li: “Bħalma n-nar ma jagħmilx haġa oħra ħlief jaqbad, il-Knisja ma tkunx hi jekk ma tikkomunikax. Ma tikkomunikax biss informazzjoni iżda fuq kollox tikkomunika ħajja.”

Hu komplja jgħid li “dan kollu jgħin biex jintlaħaq l-għan tas-seminarju kif imfisser fuq il-website: *Ninbnew bhala komunita' nisranija li tiffirma nies ta' integrita' u fidi li jingħataw lill-Knisja ta' llum bhala Presbiteri'*”.

Għal aktar informazzjoni tista' tikkuntattja lil Fr Jimmy Bonnici – 21455497 – rector@seminary.org.mt

25 ta' Settembru, 2009

**STQARRIJA GHALL-ISTAMPA MILL-KULLEĠĠ TAL-
KAPPILLANI
FIL-BIDU TAS-SENA KATEKETIKA**

Issa li reggħet bdiel is-sena kateketika fil-parroċċa, ahna l-Kappillani nixtiequ:

(1) Ngħidu prosit lill-ġenituri li qed jagħtu importanza lill-formazzjoni Nisranija ta' uliedhom billi jibagħtuhom għall-formazzjoni kateketika tagħhom.

(2) Nawguraw lit-tfal li mhux biss jitgħallmu hafna iżda wkoll isiru jixbhu iktar lil Ġesù.

(3) Nirringrazzjaw lill-Katekisti kollha tal-impenn u s-servizz tagħhom.

(4) Nitolbu għal dawn kollha biex il-Mulej jgħin视角 fir-responsabbiltajiet differenti li għandhom.

Fl-istess ħin, il-Kappillani jixtiequ jheggu lill-ġenituri sabiex:

(a) Jaraw li l-attendenza tat-tfal għall-Katekiżmu tkun waħda regolari tul is-sena kollha.

(b) Jieħdu interess f'dak li qed jitgħallmu t-tfal billi jsaqsuhom x'qed jitgħallmu u jgħin视角om fejn ikun meħtieġ.

(c) Jagħtu eżempju lit-tfal ta' xi jfisser tkun Nisrani llum, billi jieħdu sehem b'mod regolari għall-quddies, jersqu għall-qrar, jitolbu flimkien bhala familja, u jgħixu hajja eżemplari kemm fl-għemil kif ukoll fil-kliem.

(d) Iheggu t-tfal iħobbu lil kulhadd, billi jkomplu joħolqu fil-familja ambjent mimli mħabba.

(e) Jinkoraġġixxu lit-tfal jiskopru dak li Alla jrid minnhom meta jikbru, u f'din is-sena ddedikata lis-sacerdoti jipponu l-ħajja sacerdotali u reliġjuża bħala possibbiltà għalihom fil-futur.

Aħna l-Kappillani nixtiequ wkoll nuru l-apprezzament tagħna lis-Segretarjat għall-Katekezi tas-servizz kbir li jagħti fil-formazzjoni tal-katekisti u billi jipprovdi r-riżorsi meħtieġa.

Filwaqt li aħna l-Kappillani nwiegħdu li nitolbu għat-tfal, ġenituri u katekisti, nergħu noffru s-servizz tagħna f'dak kollu li dawn ikollhom bżonn.

30 ta' Settembru, 2009

KONFERENZA EWROPEA TAL-KUMMISSJONIJIET TAL- ĠUSTIZZJA U PAČI

“Liema huma l-fruntieri tas-solidarjetà fl-Ewropa?”

Il-Konferenza Ewropea tal-Kummissjonijiet tal-Ġustizzja u Paċi tal-Knisja Kattolika (*Justice and Peace Europe*) organiżżat l-laqgħa generali annwali u l-*workshop* internazzjonali bit-tema: “Liema huma l-fruntieri tas-solidarjetà fl-Ewropa?” fil-belt Spanjola ta’ Sevilja.

It-tema tas-solidarjetà tiegħu sinifikat partikulari f’kuntest ta’ dinja aktar globaliżżata. F’Sevilja d-delegati kellhom l-opportunità jagħrblu l-isfidi tas-solidarjetà – dawk politiċi, soċjali, kulturali u ekonomiċi kemm fuq livell nazzjonali kif ukoll dak internazzjonali. L-esperjenzi li qasmu flimkien id-delegati reġgħu fakkru fir-responsabilitajiet tagħna – kemm bħala individwi, kemm bħala Ewropej u kif ukoll bħala Knisja – sabiex niehdu azzjoni u nindirizaw dawn l-isfidi u nneħħu x-xkiel li jfixklu s-solidarjetà.

Wiehed minn dawn l-isfidi huwa li nirċievu l-migranti fostna, insibu xogħol dinjituż għal min hu qiegħed – speċjalment iż-żgħażaġh, u bħala komunitajiet ninfethu għal min hu barrani.

Dan jimplika li hemm bżonn niġġieldu l-eskluzjoni soċjali u l-bini ta’ hitan li jhallu ‘l bogħod kemm jista’ jkun minna lil dawk li għandhom bżonn l-għajnuna tagħna.

Iż-żjarat fil-belt Spanjola ta’ Cueta fuq il-kosta tal-Marokk u f’diversi għaqdiet mhux governattivi f’Sevilja urew li l-problemi għal dawk il-persuni li fis-soċjetà tagħna jesperjenzaw il-faqar, il-qagħad u l-eskluzjoni huma ħafna u kumplessi u jehtiegu soluzjonijiet kemm temporanji, kif ukoll aktar fit-tul.

Din tinkludi rikonoxximent li aħna ma nistgħux inżommu ‘l bogħod mill-problemi politiċi, soċjali u ekonomiċi tal-pajjiż tal-Afrika u l-Asja. Permezz ta’ din l-esperjenza stajna nifhmu aktar li s-solidarjetà vera u effettiva, bid-dimensjonijiet etiċi u spiritwali, għandha bżonn

l-impenn personali ta' kull min hu involut. Għalhekk is-solidarjetà tghinna ndawwru dawk l-oġġetti tal-firda f'pontijiet ta' hbiberija fejn nistgħu niltaqgħu bħal ahwa.

Għal aktar tagħrif, ikkuntatja lil:

Roderick Agius, Segretarju Ġenerali ,
Kummissjoni Ġustizzja u Paċi Malta :
www.maltadiocese.org/justiceandpeace;
justiceandpeace@maltadiocese.org

31 ta' Settembru, 2009

**HIGH PROFILE SCHOLARS FROM EUROPE,
THE US AND THE MIDDLE EAST
TO ADDRESS CONFERENCE ON MARRIAGE AND THE
FAMILY**

On the 6th and the 7th of October, 2009, a dozen of global family scholars and practitioners from Europe, the United States and the Middle East are meeting in the Presidential Palace in Valletta for a colloquium highlighting the importance of strengthening marriage and the family. They will be presenting on topical issues related to marriage and the family putting a strong emphasis on family policy and how family well being is beneficial for society in general.

The Cana Movement, Malta in collaboration with the Centre for Family Studies at the University of Malta have been working over the past year to organize this world class colloquium The funding body for

this event is the Doha Institute for Family Studies based in the Middle East (Doha, Qatar). The vision of this Institute is to establish a global study centre that will provide the region and the world with academic research, interdisciplinary studies and policy initiatives to support the efforts of governments, international organisations, UN agencies and civil societies to develop and implement family development plans, policies and programs. This colloquium is very much in line with the vision of the Doha Institute.

Venue

The event will take place in the House of Representatives which is located in the sumptuous Presidential Palace, built by the Knights of Malta in the capital city of Valletta. It will be held under the auspices of the Social Affairs Committee of the Maltese House of Representatives and will take place in the Hall where the Committee conducts its day to day work. His Excellency the President of the Republic, Dr George Abela who has worked as a family lawyer for many years will be opening the Colloquium himself.

The Purpose of the Colloquium

The purpose of the colloquium is to attract broad support that strengthening marriage and the family is good for society. Malta is very well placed to promote this idea because both the Nationalist party in government and the Labour party in opposition believe in the importance of a healthy marriage and the family as a cornerstone of society.

This thesis is being put forward in the context of current world-wide trends that affect marriage, parenting and family life in general. The shift from a more institutional, traditional model of marriage to a more companionate model of marriage in response to the increase in maternal employment and dual earner families, smaller families and, greater individualism need to be taken into account.

The Presentations

Professor Karen Bogenschneider, a Rothermel-Bascom Professor of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Family Policy Specialist at University of Wisconsin-Extension will deliver her keynote presentation on the first day. In her presentation family policy will be discussed as an efficient investment of public resources, an effective means of promoting positive child and youth development, and a normative ideal held by policymakers and the public that has the potential to foster political consensus and build common ground. Based on interviews of research-minded policymakers and policy-minded researchers, several pragmatic strategies will be discussed for how policymakers and professionals can build evidence-based policies that strengthen and support families.

Professor Jan Walker , Emeritus Professor of Family Policy and Strategic Research Advisor in the Institute of Health and Society at Newcastle University is the keynote speaker for the second day of the colloquium. She will focus on marriage, parenting , the protection of children's best interests and the role of the State. She will argue that a greater understanding of the stresses and strains facing parents should enable policies to be developed which focus less on indicating how people should live their lives and sanctioning parents when they fail to meet their obligations and more on improving communication between family members and enhancing the quality of relationships. Given that children thrive best in families characterised by consistent care which is closely associated with stable and harmonious relationships between parents, this presentation will review the research evidence and suggest ways in which more operationalised support might protect the best interests of children and adults.

Another nine leading experts will present more specifically on topics which are indispensable to a healthy family environment .

Given that we wanted to give this colloquium a policy slant, all of these scholars hailing from Europe, America and one from the Middle East will finish the presentation by proposing a number of policy proposals related to their particular area of study.

Clinical psychologist and family therapist Janine van Lawick, from the Lorenthuis, in Haarlem the Netherlands will discuss couple and family dynamics in the context of domestic violence. Her presentation will end with policy proposals on how domestic violence can be addressed.

Professor Paul Amato, who is the Arnold and Bette Hoffman Professor of Family Sociology and demography at Pennsylvania State University and recipient of many distinguished awards will be addressing the effects of divorce on children and their parents from an American as well as a European perspective. Towards the end of his presentation, he will elicit a number of proposals for policy emanating from his research.

Families living in poverty must also claim their rightful place on the family policy agenda. Marie Cécile Renoux, permanent delegate in the European Union on behalf of ATD Quart Monde, an international nongovernmental organization working with poor families, will help us think about families living on the margin of society. Extreme poverty has serious repercussions on family life, including the separation of children from their parents. This is extremely traumatic for children and very often marks them for life. ATD Quart Monde has long been fighting for children who are often deprived of such vital relationships with their parents in spite of the fact that this goes against the rights recognized in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This volunteer will provide us with engaging narratives of how best to support parents including fathers and their children to remain united and take charge of their lives.

Dottoressa Letizia Tanturri from the University of Pavia will analyse the decline in population growth in Europe. Why is it that we are having less babies on the European continent? This demographic trend is undoubtedly the result of many complex phenomena that young couples have to grapple with today.

Another world wide trend affecting marriage, parenting and family life is the influence of modern technology, especially the media and the internet. The effect this is having on the relationship between children and their parents will be explored. How can we address this issue from a policy perspective ? Dr Monica Whitty will be answering this topical question.

We would also like to take note of two opposing trends related to men and fathers. On the one hand we are placing a greater emphasis on the importance of fatherhood, and how beneficial it is that fathers become more involved in child rearing. On the other hand the increase in non- marital births (including the high rate of teenage pregnancy) as well as divorce has led to more marginalization of men and fathers from family life and a huge increase in the numbers of single parent families. Professor Michael Lamb, who is an eminent scholar, head of the Department on Social and Developmental Psychology at the University of Cambridge will explore the role of fathers in child development.

Professor Frank Fincham whose current position is that of Eminent Scholar at Florida State University where he serves as Director of its Family Institute, has been listed among the top 25 psychologists in the world in terms of impact. He will be presenting on the role of prayer in strengthening marriage and families. The implications for social policy are considered.

Dr Layaci Anser, a sociologist teaching at Qatar University

will be speaking about changing trends in the Middle East.

Ruth Farrugia from the University of Malta will conclude the colloquium by addressing the issue of state responsibility in strengthening families from a legal perspective. She argues that while states are clearly recognised as having an interest in maintaining a family unit that does not impinge on the public purse, other more profound ethical, philosophical and policy considerations may lead to the attribution of justifiable responsibility.

Our Audience

The colloquium will host academics, researchers, family professionals (mainly family therapists, social workers and psychologists) and policymakers as well as top management in child and family services. The audience will consist of around 60 key persons. Over 20% of those present are foreign experts including 11 family scholars of international reputation in the area of family life. Most of these are psychologists, sociologists and policy specialists. We are also inviting the wife of the Prime Minister and the wife of the leader of the Opposition. Both take an active interest in family policy. Both the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo will attend the Colloquium. The Catholic Church in Malta has long taken a keen interest in Maltese family life. Aside from distinguished guests, the 65 members of the House of Representatives of Malta have also been invited to attend.

We plan to publish an edited book on this colloquium. It will be another way of contributing to academic research, interdisciplinary studies and policy initiatives on an international level.

Why have we opted for a colloquium?

We opted for a colloquium rather than a conference because we are also interested in creating dialogue among the various

individuals present. We are particularly interested in the views of the eminent scholars who will be presenting at the colloquium. The size of the audience has intentionally been kept small to create opportunities for reactions from the audience. All those attending are committing themselves to attend the colloquium from beginning to end.

2nd October, 2009

JUM IT-TAGĦLIM NISRANI IL-HADD 11 TA' OTTUBRU

Din is-sena 'Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani' se jiġi ċelebrat nhar il-Ħadd 11 ta' Ottubru. F'dan il-jum il-Knisja tiċċelebra x-xieħda kontinwa u d-dedikazzjoni tal-katekisti flimkien ma' l-ġħajnuna u s-sehem tal-komunità nisranija. It-tema għal din is-sena hi 'Mill-Frott Tagħhom Tagħrfuħom' – Mt 7.20.

Għal din l-okkażjoni se ssir laqġħa tal-katekisti u l-ġħalliema ma' l-Arcisqof Pawlu Cremona, fil-bidu tas-sena kateketika 2009 – 2010. Din se ssir ġħada, l-Erbġħa, 7 ta' Ottubru fl-*auditorium* tas-Soċjeta tad-Duttrina Nisranija, il-MUSEUM, Blata l-Bajda. L-attività tibda fis-7p.m.

6 ta' Ottubru, 2009

**JUM IT-TAGHLIM NISRANI
2009-2010**

**MILL-FROTT TAGHHOM TAGHRFUHOM
(Mt. 7, 20)**

IT-TIFSIRA TA' JUM IT-TAGHLIM NISRANI

Katekezi hija l-kelma li tintuża biex tiddiskrivi l-ministeru essenzjali tal-Knisja li bih it-tagħlim ta' Kristu gie mgħoddi lil dawk li jemmnu tul iż-żminijiet. Kull sena f'**Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani** jingħata għarfien speċjali lil dan il-ministeru essenzjali u lil dawk kollha li għandhom il-privileġġ li jieħdu sehem fih. Din is-sena, fl-Arcidjoċesi ta' Malta, Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani se niċċelebrawh nhar il-Ħadd 11 ta' Ottubru.

It-tema magħżula mill-Arcidjoċesi ta' Malta għal din is-sena hija marbuta mal-Ispirtu s-Santu billi din is-sena se jerga' jiġi ċċelebrat is-Sagrament tal-Griżma tal-Isqof: **Mil-Frott Tagħhom Tagħrfuhom (Mt. 7, 20)**.

Il-Knisja f'pajjiżna tagħmel mill-aħjar biex iċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani tkun waħda li toħroġ dejjem aktar it-tifsira tiegħu u sservi ta' ispirazzjoni għall-membri kolha tal-komunitajiet parrokkjali tagħna. Bit-tama li fil-parroċċi ta' Malta u Għawdex tikber l-familjarità u l-parteciġazzjoni fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' dan il-jum, noffru dawn it-twegibiet għal tliet mistoqsijiet komuni dwar Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani.

• **Għaliex niċċelebrawh Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani?**

Iċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' dan il-jum għandha għeruqha fl-istorja moderna tal-Knisja. Fl-1935, il-Vatikan ippubblika d-digriet *Provido Sane Consilio*, dokument li jitlob li f'kull pajjiż ssir

iċ-ċelebrazzjoni Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani biex jingħata għarfien lill-importanza tal-ministeru tat-tagħlim Nisrani u gieħ lil dawk li jaqdu lill-komunità Nisranija bħala katekisti. Fl-ewwel ftit snin wara t-twaqqif ta' Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani, kienu anke jigu organizzati kungressi kateketiċi nazzjonali u internazzjonali f'rabta ma' din iċ-ċelebrazzjoni. Il-Knisja f'pajjiżna ilha għal dawn l-aħħar snin thejji materjal hafif biex tgħin lill-komunitajiet parrokkjali jiċċelebraw kif jixraq din il-ġrajja fil-livell lokali. Fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' din is-sena nkunu qegħdin nimmarkaw it-tnejn u sebghin sena mit-twaqqif ta' Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani.

- **X'inh i t-tifsira tal-Għoti tal-Mandat lill-Katekisti?**

Il-katekezi hija ministeru distint u speċjali fil-Knisja. Kif jgħid b'mod ċar il-**Katekiżmu tal-Knisja Kattolika**: "Il-katekezi għandha rabta' intima mal-hajja kollha tal-Knisja. Jiddependi essenzjalment mill-katekezi mhux biss l-estensjoni ġeografika tal-Knisja u t-tkattir ta' l-għadd ta' dawk li jemmnu, imma wkoll, u wisq aktar, jiddependi mill-katekezi kemm il-Knisja tikber minn ġewwa u kemm taqbel mal-pjan ta' Alla." (n.7) Dan il-ministeru ta' tagħlim f'isem il-Knisja għandu dinjità tassew kbira u huwa għalhekk li l-katekisti jingħataw il-mandat tagħhom mill-Knisja b'mod formali. Waqt li tgħinna niffokaw fuq l-importanza tal-ministeru tal-Katekisti, iċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani tishaq ukoll fuq ir-responsabbiltà ta' kull wieħed u waħda minna bħala dixxipli ta' kristu u membri ħajjin tal-Knisja li naqsmu l-fidi ma' l-oħrajn.

- **X'għarfien jingħatw il-ġenituri bħala l-ewwel katekisti ta' wliedhom?**

Il-ġenituri tassew li huma l-ewwel u l-ewlenin katekisti ta'

wliedhom. Għax huma l-ġenituri li jhejju l-ħamrija u jixhtu l-ewwel żerriegħa tal-fidi. F'Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani, il-Knisja tfahħar lill-ġenituri u lil dawk li jieħdu ħsieb it-tfal, u ttegggħom biex jieħdu bis-serjetà r-responsabbiltà tagħhom li jagħmlu mid-dar u l-familja tagħhom imkien fejn il-fidi tiġi mgħoddija lill-ġenerazzjoni ta' wara. Huwa għalhekk li fiċ-ċelebrazzjoni ta' Jum it-Tagħlim Nisrani normalment ikun hemm ukoll talb u rit apposta għat-tberik tal-ġenituri u dawk li jieħdu ħsieb it-tfal.

Segretarjat għall-Katekezi

Arċidjoċesi ta' Malta

6 ta' Ottubru, 2009

L-ASSEMBLEA DJOĊESANA TILTAQA' FI TMIEM DIN IL-ĠINGHA

L-Assemblea Djoċesana tal-Knisja f'Malta se tiltaqa' nhar il-Ġingha 9 ta' Ottubru u s-Sibt 10 ta' Ottubru ġewwa ċ-Ċentru Parrokkjali Ġwanni Pawlu II, H'Attard.

L-Assemblea Djoċesana hi l-ġrajja ta' darba fis-sena li tlaqqa' flimkien, taht il-presidenza tal-Arċisqof Pawlu Cremona OP, lill-mexxejja u rappreżentanti oħra tal-oqsma kollha tal-Knisja f'Malta. Fost dawn insibu l-membri tal-kunsill presbiterali u tal-kunsill pastorali djoċesan, il-provincjali tal-kongregazzjonijiet reliġjużi, id-delegati fis-segretarjati u l-kummissjonijiet djoċesani, il-kappillani, il-mexxejja tal-ġhaqdiet u l-movimenti tal-Knisja, il-kapijiet tal-iskejjel tal-Knisja u l-membri tal-kummissjonijiet għall-implimentazzjoni tas-Sinodu, u diversi persuni oħra minn oqsma differenti tal-ġajja.

L-Arċisqof, fi stedina personali lill-membri tal-Assemblea Djoċesana, sejjah lill-Assemblea avveniment 'importanti ħafna fil-ġajja tal-Arċidjoċesi'. Hu tenna x-xewqa li l-Assemblea tkun 'esperjenza ekkleżjali sabiħa fejn nagħrfu li hu l-Mulej li jrid imexxina u minna jitlob li nifflu qalbna għalih u nhejjulu t-triq.'

Din hi s-sitt Assemblea Djoċesana minn meta ntemm is-Sinodu Djoċesan fl-2003. Fi tmiem is-Sinodu, kien ġie deċiż li l-Assemblea titlaqqa' kull sena biex tkompli tmexxi 'l quddiem l-ispiritu tas-Sinodu u l-implimentazzjoni tiegħu, u tkompli tkun okkażjoni ta' diskussjoni libera u kostruttiva fi hdan il-Knisja f'Malta.

Fil-fatt, mal-istedina lil dawk li se jieħdu sehem fl-Assemblea, intbagħat Rapport għall-ewwel sena tat-Twettiq tal-Pjan Pastorali 2009-2011. Dan ir-rapport jieħu biċċa biċċa l-Pjan Pastorali għal dawn it-tliet snin, li kien inniedi fil-bidu ta' din is-sena, u jara dak li

twettaq s'issa mill-proġetti msemmija, dak li qed isir, u dak li għad irid isir. Dan ir-rapport għandu jservi bħala bażi għall-evalwazzjoni li ssir kemm waqt l-Assemblea kif ukoll aktar tard fis-sena.

Dan l-eżerċizzju issa ilu jsir b'mod regolari mis-Sinodu Djoċesan 'l hawn, u r-rapporti li ġew ippubblikati kull sena juru kemm saret hidma sfiqa f'diversi oqsma li d-dokumenti tas-Sinodu kienu indikaw bħala importanti għall-Knisja u l-kontribut tagħha fis-soċjeta' Maltija. Eżempju wiehed hu l-Istitut ta' Formazzjoni Pastoral, wiehed mill-proġetti ewlenin tas-Sinodu Djoċesan, li twaqqaf frott tas-Sinodu u li llum qed joffri korsijiet ta' formazzjoni f'diversi oqsma, flimkien ma' entijiet oħra fil-Knisja. Il-*prospectus* għas-sena akkademika l-ġdida, li l-Istitut għadu kif ippubblika, hu xhieda ta' dan.

Fir-rapport, hemm ukoll spjegat dak li sar s'issa tul il-Viżta Pastoral li l-Arċisqof qed jagħmel fil-parroċċi f'Malta, u li bdiet f'Jannar ta' din is-sena. Il-Viżta Pastoral hi l-proġett prinċipali tal-Pjan Pastoral 2009-2011, u l-mira hi li sa tmiem il-Pjan l-Arċisqof ikun żar il-parti l-kbira tal-parroċċi. Minn Jannar sa issa, l-Arċisqof żar hmistax-il parroċċa, u hu ppjanat li sa tmiem is-sena jżur sitta oħra.

Minbarra l-evalwazzjoni tar-rapport tat-twettiq tal-Pjan Pastoral 2009-2011, l-Assemblea Djoċesana ta' din is-sena se tiffoka fuq żewġ temi relatati. Nhar il-Ġimgħa, is-Segretarjat għall-Katekeżi se jipprezenta l-Viżjoni għall-Katekeżi fil-Knisja f'Malta u nhar is-Sibt id-dokument fuq l-edukazzjoni reliġjuża. Dan id-dokument, bit-titlu '*Religious Education. The Way Forward*', li ġa ntbagħat lil dawk li se jieħdu fl-Assemblea, hu dokument ta' *policy* imhejji mis-Segretarjat għall-Katekeżi wara proċess ta' konsultazzjoni li nbeda b'mod pubbliku fil-Konferenza li saret fit-12 ta' Ġunju 2008. Intgħażlu dawn iż-żewġ temi għax imissu oqsma kruċjali għall-ħajja tal-Knisja f'Malta bħalissa u fis-snin li ġejjin.

Se jkun hemm l-opportunita' għal diskussjoni minn dawk preżenti waqt l-Assemblea Djoċesana. Il-ħsieb hu li l-Assemblea tkun okkażjoni ta' informazzjoni, parteċipazzjoni mifruxa, *accountability* u valutazzjoni, u li din l-esperjenza tkompli tiċċara d-direzzjoni pastorali tal-Knisja f'Malta.

Matul l-Assemblea Djoċesana, l-Arċisqof se jinawgura l-*website* l-ġdida tal-Arċidjoċesi u l-verżjoni *online* tal-gazzetta l-Ġensillum.

Wara li tintemm l-Assemblea Djoċesana, jibdew jiġu organizzati l-Assemblej parrokkjali fil-parroċċi kollha ta' Malta. L-iskop hu li dak li kull parroċċa tagħmel dak li l-Knisja f'Malta qed tagħmel fuq bażi ta' djoċesi – evalwazzjoni tal-ewwel sena tal-Pjan parrokkjali 2009-2011, u ħarsa 'l quddiem għas-sena d-dieħla. Dawk il-parroċċi li ġa kellhom il-Viżta Pastorali mill-Arċisqof se jkunu qed jaħdmu b'mod speċjali fuq l-indikazzjonijiet pastorali li ħarġu mill-Viżta Pastorali.

7 ta' Ottubru, 2009

**L-ARĊISQOF JILTAQA' MAŽ-ŽGHAŽAGH
LI WETTQU HIDMA VOLONTARJA**

Data: Il-Ħamis, 8 ta' Ottubru

Post: Valletta Waterfront

Ħin: 7.00p.m.

Għada l-Ħamis se ssir laqgħa li matulha ż-żgħażagħ li wettqu hidma volontarja f'Malta jew barra minn Malta, jiċcelebraw il-hidma tagħhom flimkien ma' l-Arċisqof Pawlu Cremona O.P. Din il-laqgħa ser issir fil-Magazino, il-Valletta Waterfront, fi tnedija tal-attivitajiet organizzati mis-Segretarjat Parlamentari għaž-Žgħażagħ u Sport, għall-Ġimgħa Nazzjonali taž-Žgħażagħ 2009.

Għal din il-laqgħa se jattendu żgħażagħ li matul is-sajf wettqu hidmiet fi proġetti organizzati mill-parroċċi, għaqdiet, jew movimenti. Numru sabiħ ta' dawn iż-żgħażagħ wettqu ukoll volontarjat f'pajjizi barra minn Malta, fosthom Bari, Napoli, l-Etjopja u l-Indja.

Din l-attività hija ukoll parti mill-mixja li l-Knisja f'Malta qed tagħmel maž-żgħażagħ fuq it-tema magħżula mill-Papa Benedittu XVI għas-sena 2009 "It-tama tagħna hi f'Alla l-Ħaj" (1 Tim 4:10). Il-laqgħa hi kkummissjonta mill-Kummissjoni Djoċesana Żgħażagħ tal-Knisja f'Malta lil grupp Gi.Fra. tal-Floriana u animata mill-band Footprints.

7 ta' Ottubru, 2009

L-ARĊISQOF F'LAQGHA MAL-VOLONTIERA ŻĠHAŻAĠH

Il-bieraħ filgħaxija, il-Ħamis 8 ta' Ottubru, aktar minn mitejn żagħżuġh u żagħżuġha li wettqu hidma volontarja matul din l-aħħar sena ltaqgħu ma' l-Arcisqof Pawlu Cremona OP, f'attività kkordinata mill-grupp Gi.Fra. Florianana (Gioventu Francescana) u kkummissjonata mill-Kummissjoni Djoċesana Żgħażaġh (KDŻ). Din l-attività, li saret fil-Magazino, Valletta Waterfront, bis-sehem tal-Onor. Clyde Puli, giet imtella' bħala parti miċ-Ċelebrazzjonijiet imhejjija mis-Segretarjat Parlamentari għaż-Żgħażaġh u Sport fl-okkażjoni tal-Ġimġha Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh.

L-attività bit-tema ta' Jum Dinji taż-Żgħażaġh 2009 "It-tama tagħna hi f'Alla l-Ħaj" (1 Tim 4:10) kienet imżewqa bi preżentazzjonijiet minn gruppi differenti li rakkuntaw l-esperjenzi tagħhom ta' hidma f'Malta u anke barra minn Malta. L-Arcisqof Pawlu Cremona, filwaqt li sellem liż-żgħażaġh volontiera bħala 'l-aqwa ambaxxaturi għal Knisja u għal pajjiżhom', faħħarhom għal hidma kollha li għamlu, u heġġiġhom sabiex ikomplu b'dan l-ispirtu ta' solidarjeta u servizz matul is-sena.

Wara li l-Arcisqof flimkien mas-Segretarju Parlamentari għaż-Żgħażaġh, l-Onor Clyde Puli u d-Delegat ta' l-Arcisqof għaż-Żgħażaġh, Fr. Savio Vella sdb, ipprezentaw tifikira ta' l-okkażjoni lil gruppi ta' żgħażaġh preżenti, huma għamlu mixja ma' tul il-Valletta Waterfront fejn żaru diversi attivitajiet imtella' minn gruppi ta' żgħażaġh fl-okkażjoni tal-Ġimġha Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażaġh.

9 ta' Ottubru, 2009

IZ-ŻWIEĠ U L-FAMILJA GHANDHOM FUTUR?

KONFERENZA NAZZJONALI

Data: Is-Sibt, 17 ta' Ottubru, 2009

Post: Robert Sammut Hall, Floriana

Ħin: 9.30am – 11.30am

Konferenza Nazzjonali fl-anniversarju ta' Charter tal-Familja, organizzata minn ProġettImpenn bil-kollaborazzjoni tal-Fakulta' tat-Teologija. Il-Konferenza ser issir nhar is-Sibt 17 ta' Ottubru, f'Robert Samut Hall, il-Furjana, bejn id-9.30a.m. u l-11.30a.m. Il-kelliema ser tkun **Aldegonde Brennickmeiher** li hi l-Fundatriċi u d-Direttriċi tal-INTAMS (*The International Academy for Marital Spirituality*). Ikun hemm ukoll hin għall-interventi. **Prof. Manuel Agius**, d-Dekan tal-Fakulta' tat-Teologija fl-Universita' ta' Malta, ser jagħmel id-diskors tal-għeluq.

10 ta' Ottubru, 2009

L-ARĊISQOF INDISPOST

Monsinjur Arċisqof Pawlu Cremona jinsab indispost u fuq parir mediku hassar l-impenji kollha li kellu sa nhar is-Sibt, 17 ta' Ottubru, 2009.

10 ta' Ottubru, 2009

UPDATE

Kien hemm żviluppi fuq il-kundizzjoni tas-saħħa ta' Monsinjur Arċisqof minn nhar is-Sibt sal-lum. Il-konsulenti mediċi ddeterminaw illi Monsinjur Arċisqof qed ibati biss minn infezzjoni hafifa tal-virus A(H1N1). Għalkemm l-Arċisqof jista jkompli bl-impenji tiegħu, inghata l-parir li jibqa' rtirat għal sitt ijiem bi prekawżjoni, kif normalment isir.

12 ta' Ottubru, 2009

Y Standup? STQARRIJA GHALL-ISTAMPA

Qatt ħsibt biex tmur f'pajjizi fejn hemm il-faqar bħala voluntier? Hafna nies, speċjalment iz-zgħażaġġ, iqattgħu il-vaganzi tagħhom f'pajjizi bħall-Afrika, l-Etjopja u l-Brazil. X'għandom komuni dawn il-pajjizi? Dawn huma ftit ezempji ta' pajjizi fejn huwa magħruf li hemm persentagg kbir ta' nies li jgħixu fil-faqar. Imma xi ngħidu dwar Malta? Jezisti il-faqar f'Malta? Il-faqar huwa biss meta tkun bil-guħ, bla ħwejjeg u bla dar?

Il-Kummissjoni Djocesana Żgħażaġġ (KDZ) ħolqot opportunita' għaż-żgħażaġġ biex isemmgħu leħinhom. X'jaħsbu iż-żgħażaġġ? Hemm xi soluzzjoni? Membri tal-parlament ħa jkunu preżenti wkoll biex jiddiskutu, flimkien maż-żgħażaġġ, il-'policies' li qed jigu addottati biex jiffaccjaw dil-problema. U x'inhni tagħmel il-Knisja dwar dan?

Hafna nies, fosthom Nelson Mandela, jgħidu li il-faqar huwa xi ħaga li ħoloq il-bniedem b'hekk huwa il-bniedem li jrid issib soluzzjoni għal dan. Imma kif ħa nwaqqfu il-faqar f'Malta meta m'hawnx djalogu? Il-KDZ qed jagħti spazju liż-żgħażaġġ fl-**24 ta' Ottubru fic-Centru Parrokjali ta' Attard** biex jaffrontaw dan billi iqumu bil-wieqfa flimkien ma' pajjizi oħra li qedgħin jiftakru l-Gurnata Dinjija tal-Faqar. L-Attivita' tibda fid-disa' għar-registrazzjonijiet u tkompli sas-siegħa fejn ikun hemm xi *refreshments*.

Fi tmiem tal-attivita', 'Y Standup?' iż-żgħażaġġ ħa jkunu mogħtija 'wristbands' biex ixxerdu ma' nies oħra bħala simbolu tal-messagg li qed jixxerred. B'hekk iż-żgħażaġġ qegħdin jigu mitluba biex ixxerdu il-messagg li għandna nqumu biex inwaqqfu il-faqar. Ejja nqumu u nkunu l-bidla meta u fejn hemm bżonn!

16 ta' Ottubru, 2009

KJARIFIKA

Fr. Ray Toledo, Delegat tal-Arcisqof għall-Ħajja u Ғidma fil-Parroċċi jixtieq jagħmel din il-kjarifika dwar dak li jgħid id-Dokument “Nirrestawraw il-Festi Flimkien” fuq il-marċ imsejjaħ tan-Nar.

Id-dokument, taht it-Taqsima 4, ‘lċ-Celebrazzjoni Liturgika tal-Festa’, paragrafu 4.9k jgħid li: “l-radd ta’ Ғajr ‘l Alla għandu jsir għal kull min ta sehmu fil-Festa immedjatament wara li l-vara titqiegħed f’postha bil-barka sacramentali li timmarka t-tmiem tal-Festa.”

Dan il-paragrafu jitkellem biss fuq dak li jsir għewwa l-knisja u ma fih l-ebda referenza dwar il-marċ tal-banda li jsir fit-toroq. Dwar dan, id-Dokument ma jieħu l-ebda pożizzjoni u l-Awtoritajiet tal-Knisja jieħdu decizzjoni fuqu wara l-konsultazzjoni li qed issir.

21 ta’ Ottubru, 2009

IL-MEDIA CENTRE SE JKOLLHA TAGĦLAQ

Il-MediaCentre se jkollha tagħlaq l-istamperija tagħha wara ċirkustanzi diffiċli li kienet qed tiffaċċja. Il-bord tad-diretturi tal-MediaCentre wasal għal din il-konkluzjoni wara li analizza bir-reqqa s-sitwazzjoni fl-industrija lokali tal-istampar. Il-bord kkonkluda li biex din tibqa' kompettitiva, jkollu jagħmel investiment ġdid fl-impjant, fl-apparat u fir-rizorsi umani. L-eżerċizzju li sar wera li biex dan l-investiment jkun vijabli, il-kumpanija riedet izzid il-bejgħ b'ammont sinjifikanti, u dan f'suq li diġa qiegħed jagħmilha diffiċli għal kumpanija li ssostni l-livell prezenti tal-bejgħ.

Id-diskussjonijiet bejn il-Bord tad-Diretturi tal-MediaCentre u s-shareholder tal-kumpanija dwar il-futur tal-istamperija, ilhom għaddejjin diversi xhur. Matul dawn il-laqgħat huma esploraw diversi possibilitajiet u alternattivi. Il-konkluzjoni kienet li b'dispjacir kbir, it-taqsimha tad-dizinn u stampar tal-kumpanija se jkollha tiegħaf topera mill-31 ta' Jannar ta' l-2010.

Il-Bord tad-diretturi jrid jagħmila ċara mill-bidu, li se jiġu mħarsa l-interessi tal-impjegati kollha effettwati minn din id-deċizjoni. Huwa għalhekk li diġa saru l-arranġamenti meħtieġa mas-shareholder u benefiċarju tal-kumpanija, jiġifieri l-Arċidjocesi ta' Malta, biex il-ħaddiema tal-post fit-taqsimha tad-dizinn u l-istampar jingħataw impjeg alternattiv fl-istituzzjonijiet varji fi ħdan l-Arċidjocesi.

26 ta' Ottubru, 2009

