



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
DE IUSTITIA ET PACE

XXVII Plenary Assembly

Closing Remarks

San Calisto, 5 December 2012

Eminences, Excellencies, distinguished Professors, Members and Consultors, colleagues and staff, dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Celebrating our 27th plenary assembly early in the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, soon after the Synod on New Evangelization and early in the Year of Faith, has helped us to renew the very foundations of all we do as the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. We began by invoking the Holy Spirit to guide our labours and, more profoundly, to inspire in us all the patience to listen and the *metanoia* of genuine conversion.

Remembering Vatican II motivates us to return to the very basics which have given origin to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and which continue to provide orientation for this our service to the Holy Father, to the Church and to all God's people.

The Ecumenical Council elaborated the fundamental scriptural and ecclesiological foundations in its constitutions *Verbum Dei* and *Lumen Gentium*. Then, rooted and grounded in communion with God and with the entire human family, *Gaudium et Spes* went on to express the Church's sensitivity to the challenging conditions of "la terre des hommes -- of man and his world" (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry). All the Church's ministries, including the mission of this dicastery, unfold in communion with God and for the salvation of each and every man, woman and child. Out of deep compassion for the world's sufferings, we engage in the evangelization of the social order. We do so to incarnate and continue the Lord's own mission of preaching the good news of the Kingdom, healing the sick and casting out whatever kinds of daemons obtain in the changing conditions of our times.

This is the spiritual light in which best to understand the two topics of our focused discussions -- the more general evangelization of the social order, and the more specific proposal of global public authority or governance.

On Monday, the Holy Father urged all Christians to engage in a "new evangelization of the social" which would help "to dethrone today's idols, and replace individualism, materialistic consumerism and the rule of technology with a culture of fraternity and the logic of gift, of love and solidarity." Here we welcome the relevant proposals of the Asian discussion group *to evangelize democracy which is more or less betraying its noble vocation nearly everywhere*, and of the African discussion group *emphasizing the formation of Catholic politicians in order to carry out their responsibilities on behalf of all residents, with a preferential option for the poor, and not exclusively in service of national elites or international forces*.

Underpinning our Council's Note *Towards reforming the international financial and monetary systems...*, the Holy Father called for "an authority" which is capable of building up a world community "motivated by love for the common good of the human family." Not "a superpower concentrated in the hands of a few which would dominate all the peoples, exploiting the weaker ones," but an authority conceived above all "as a moral force capable of influencing according to reason, that is, as a participative authority limited to its areas of competence and by the rule of law."

The *Note* is obviously a timely elaboration of papal teaching on striving for the common good in our ever more globalized world. The *Note* addresses an important need, and it has received both support and criticism. The constructive criticism has highlighted some ambiguities around key terms such as "governance, government, authority". For example, the European working group affirmed our *talking about a global public authority only insofar as we can discover, elaborate and explain what the universal common good is*.

Both our major topics can and do reflect the essentially salvific and spiritual character of Catholic social doctrine and of the Pontifical Council's work, and to this foundation we must constantly return and refer.

There is much more to appreciate in all that we have shared over the past two-and-a-half days. On behalf of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, its superiors and its staff, thank you for coming. Not without sacrifice, you have brought a rich blend of experiences, competences and viewpoints. Thank you for sharing who you are, what you

bring, and how you live your faith and fulfil your vocation. As a Council, we look forward to seriously studying all the inputs shared. If anyone has prepared a contribution, or can soon put their words on paper, please do forward such remarks, by mail or e-mail, to Justice and Peace.

Both as returning Members and Consultors and as new ones, we hope that you have enjoyed this time together and been renewed in your vision. We trust that each one, with the intercession of the Servant of God Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận, takes some good graces away. As we look forward to working together during the two years to come, a suggestion of the Americas discussion group is very welcome: *to encourage networking amongst the Members, the Consultors and the Dicastery, as a strategic way of carrying on our work and enhancing our service between plenary assemblies.*

On our behalf, I thanked the Holy Father for welcoming and addressing us on Monday. It is his words of prayer to our Lady with which I too would wish to conclude: "The Virgin Mary, with faith and love, accepted the Saviour within herself in order to give Him to the world. May She guide us in announcing the Church's Social Doctrine in word and witness, in order to render ever more effective the new evangelization." And with Our Lady's protection, may our Heavenly Father grant each of us safe return home, all the graces of Advent, and His Blessings on all we do.

Thank you!

Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson
President