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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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The Pope's Decalogue for Nuncios

This morning the Holy Father received in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace the participants in the meeting of papal representatives taking place in the Vatican from 12 to 14 June.

The following are extensive extracts from the address prepared by the Pope for this situation, which he handed to those present. It is “a kind of ‘decalogue’”, states the text, “that, in reality, is addressed through you also to your collaborators and, rather, to all the bishops, priests and consecrated persons you encounter in every part of the world”.

Extracts from the Pope's address

1. The nuncio is a man of God

Being a “man of God” means following God in everything and for everything; obeying His commandments with joy; living for the things of God and not for those of the world; dedicating freely all his own resources, accepting with a generous heart the sufferings that come as a consequence of faith in Him. The man of God does not fool or deceive his neighbour; he does not give in to gossip and slander; he conserves a pure mind and heart, preserving eyes and ears from the filth of the world.

2. The nuncio is a man of the Church

Since the nuncio is a papal representative, he represents not himself but the Church and, in particular, Peter's Successor. It is bad to see a nuncio who seeks out luxury, branded clothing and goods in the midst of people who are deprived of necessities. It is a counter-witness. The greatest honour for a man of the Church is that of being a “servant to all”.

Being a man of the Church requires also the humility of representing the countenance, the teachings and the

positions of the Church, that is, setting aside personal convictions.

Being a man of the Church means courageously defending the Church against the forces of evil that always seek to discredit her, defame her or slander her.

3. The nuncio is a man of apostolic zeal

The nuncio is the announcer of the Good News, and being an apostle of the Gospel, has the task of enlightening the world with the light of the Risen One, of taking Christ to the ends of the earth. He is a man on the move, who sows the good seed of faith in the hearts of those he encounters. And those who encounter the nuncio should feel interrogated in some way.

“Indifference” – almost an epidemic that is spreading in various forms, not only in the faithful in general, but also through members of religious institutes. God is worthy of infinite glory.

4. The nuncio is a man of reconciliation

It is an important part of the work of every nuncio to be a man of mediation, of communion, of dialogue and of reconciliation. The nuncio must always seek to remain impartial and objective, so that all parties find in him the just arbiter who seeks sincerely to defend and safeguard only justice and peace, without ever letting himself be negatively involved.

If a nuncio were to close himself up inside the nunciature and avoid meeting with people, he would betray his mission and instead of being a factor of communion and reconciliation, would be an obstacle and impediment to it. You must never forget that you represent the face of the Catholicism and universality of the Church among the local Churches throughout the world, and before governments.

5. The nuncio is a man of the Pope

As a papal representative, the nuncio does not represent himself, but rather Peter's Successor, and acts on his behalf in the Church and before governments; that is, he concretizes, implements and symbolizes the Pope's presence among the faithful and populations. It is good that in several countries the nunciature is called the “House of the Pope”.

Certainly, every person may have reservations, sympathies and antipathies, but a good nuncio cannot be a hypocrite as the representative is a conduit, or better, a bridge connecting the Vicar of Christ to the people to whom he is sent, in a specific zone, for which he is appointed and sent by the same Roman Pontiff.

Therefore, being the papal representative is irreconcilable with criticizing the Pope behind his back, having blogs or indeed joining groups hostile to him, to the Curia or to the Church of Rome.

6. The nuncio is a man of initiative

It is necessary to have and develop the capacity and agility to promote or adopt a behaviour suited to the needs of the moment without ever falling into mental, spiritual and human rigidity, or in hypocritical and chameleon-like flexibility. It is not about being opportunistic, but about knowing how to move from ideation to implementation, taking into account the common good and loyalty to one's mandate.

7. The nuncio is a man of obedience

The virtue of obedience is inseparable from freedom, because only in freedom can we truly obey, and only by obeying the Gospel does one enter in the fullness of freedom. The call of the Christian and, in this context, of the

nuncio to obedience remains the call to follow the style of life of Jesus of Nazareth.

A nuncio who does not live the virtue of obedience – even when it is difficult and contrary to his own personal vision – is like a traveller who loses their compass, thus risking to lose his objective. Let us always remember the saying “*Medice, cura te ipsum*”. It is a counter-witness to call others to obedience, only to disobey.

8. The nuncio is a man of prayer

Here it seems important to remind you once again of the insuperable words with which Saint Giovanni Battista Montini, as substitute of the Secretariat of State, described the papal representative: “One who truly has the conscience to take Christ with him” (April 1951), as a precious asset to communicate, announce and represent. The commodities and the perspectives of this world end up being disappointing, they drive us never to be satisfied. The Lord is the good that does not disappoint, the only one that does not disappoint. And this requires a detachment from oneself that can only be achieved with a constant relationship with the Lord and the unification of life around Christ.

9. The nuncio is a man of industrious charity

It is necessary to reiterate here that prayer, the path of discipleship and conversion find in charity and sharing the confirmation of their evangelical authenticity. And from this way of living, there derive joy and serenity of the heart, because one touches with one’s hand the flesh of Christ.

Charity is also free, and this is why I would like to speak to you here of a permanent danger, or rather the danger of gifts. The Bible defines as wicked the man who accepts underhand gifts, to deviate the course of justice.

Industrious charity must lead us to be prudent in accepting gifts that are offered to obscure our objectivity and in some cases also to buy our freedom.

No gift of any value must ever make us slaves! Refuse gifts that are too costly and often useless, or give them to charity, and remember that receiving a costly gift never justifies its use.

10. The nuncio is a man of humility

I would like to conclude this Decalogue with the virtue of humility, citing the “Litany of Humility” of the Servant of God Rafael Merry del Val (1865-1930), secretary of State and collaborator with Saint Pius X; an ex-colleague of yours:

Lord Jesus. Meek and humble of heart, *Hear me*.

From the desire of being esteemed, *Deliver me, Jesus*.

From the desire of being loved, *Deliver me, Jesus*.

From the desire of being extolled, *Deliver me, Jesus*.

From the desire of being honored, *Deliver me, Jesus*.

From the desire of being praised, *Deliver me, Jesus*.

From the desire of being preferred to others, *Deliver me, Jesus*.

From the desire of being consulted, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the desire of being approved, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being humiliated, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being despised, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of suffering rebukes, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being calumniated, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being forgotten, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being ridiculed, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being wronged, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

From the fear of being suspected, *Deliver me, Jesus.*

That others may be loved more than I, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be esteemed more than I, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be chosen and I set aside, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be praised and I unnoticed, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may be preferred to me in everything, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should, *Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.*
