



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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INTERVENTO DELL'OSSERVATORE PERMANENTE PRESSO LE ORGANIZZAZIONI DELLE NAZIONI UNITE PER L'ALIMENTAZIONE E L'AGRICOLTURA ALLA XXX SESSIONE DELLA CONFERENZA GENERALE DELLA FAO

INTERVENTO DELL'OSSERVATORE PERMANENTE PRESSO LE ORGANIZZAZIONI DELLE NAZIONI UNITE PER L'ALIMENTAZIONE E L'AGRICOLTURA ALLA XXX SESSIONE DELLA CONFERENZA GENERALE DELLA FAO

Nel corso della XXX sessione della Conferenza Generale della FAO, svoltasi a Roma dal 12 al 23 novembre u.s., l'Osservatore Permanente presso le Organizzazioni delle Nazioni Unite per l'Alimentazione e l'Agricoltura, S.E. Mons. Agostino Marchetto, ha pronunciato l'intervento di cui, in occasione dell'Anno Giubilare, riportiamo qui di seguito il testo:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. AGOSTINO MARCHETTO

My statement, within the item generally reserved for the exposition of the agricultural situation in different countries, could lead me to deal with a model farm, of 20 hectares, created by Pope Pius XI, in the Ville Pontificie of Castel Gandolfo, that also shows the interest that the Holy See has always had for agriculture. I could talk also about the Vatican gardens, that probably many of you have already visited.

I am telling this to you smiling a bit, since this small territory, the Vatican City, gives a support - let's say, a material one - to the Holy See, to the juridical personality (recognized by international law before the establishment of the Vatican City) representing the Catholic Church in the world. This little parcel of land - where you have been kindly invited tomorrow, for the traditional Papal Audience on the occasion of the FAO Conference - makes the freedom of the High Office of the Pope, Bishop of Rome, and, for us, Successor of St. Peter, perceptible and possible, also in front of the powers of this world. And it can be seen not only in the Ministerial service for the Catholic community, but also in favour of peace for all peoples, in truth and justice, and in love and liberty (cf. PACEM IN TERRIS, opening address).

In this perspective, I could talk (and you will be more interested in it) about the engagements "in the field" of this big Catholic family - here represented by me - made up of more than one thousand million people, spread over the whole world (therefore in your countries, too). I mean, our international, national, local, religious or lay institutions, working in favour of the development of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, of youth training, in

service of the farmers, families, or of those who depend on fishery and forestry products. This is a part of a big struggle against hunger and malnutrition in the world, which we consider deeply and essentially connected to the witness of the "good news", the Gospel.

I am sure that - as I have experienced in different countries where I have represented the Holy See - many of you are acquainted with numerous beautiful and noble deeds of our Catholic fellow-citizens, or of other men and women, of the same faith, coming from other countries, in the service of agriculture, plants and animals, as well as of people and families who get their living from land and water products, in order to have a more decent, free and brotherly life, in a generous effort towards the individual and common welfare.

They are citizens of the world, but also citizens of heaven, who, with inspiration and strength deriving from their faith and the implicit spirit of solidarity, offer their service to the weak and the voiceless.

In the same context, I remind you, humbly and briefly, of our commitment - in view of the by now near Jubilee - towards human promotion, the struggle against hunger and poverty. This commitment represents a fundamental part of the victory of peace over war, discrimination and domination. In fact isn't Jesus Christ - whose millennium will be celebrated soon - the symbol of the research for peace? (cf. UNGA Resolution 53/27, 5th January 1999).

In this image of peace, besides the four pillars of "Pacem in terris" we have just spoken about, we wish to mention the praiseworthy engagement of FAO and of the 186 States that in 1996, in Rome, on the occasion of the famous World Food Summit, have adopted a Plan of action aiming at favouring the agricultural and food policies, in order to reduce by half within 2015 - the more than 800 million of hungry and undernourished people. It would mean having 20 million hungry people less every year!

I wish to repeat with you today this engagement: "We pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015."

We can read in your document C 99/12: "A common thread which runs through the declarations and action plans adopted by the global conferences is that of national responsibility and international solidarity. The goals defined are goals which only States can achieve, but the multilateral institutions, each within its own mandate and sphere of competence, are called upon to help and support them in that effort." (para. 17). And then the following purpose: "Thus FAO has a major role to play in assisting countries to implement the provisions of the World Food Summit Plan of Action which fall within its mandate, as well as to monitor, through its Committee on World Food Security (CFS), overall progress in achieving the Summit's goals. In defining FAO's own goals, therefore, the Plan of Action is fundamental." (para. 18).

We certainly believe that this Plan of Action is very fundamental, since "agir plus fermement en faveur des pauvres de la terre, des affamés, des nécessiteux et des laissés-pour-compte, c'est une affaire de justice et de charité, sans lesquelles le monde perdrait son sens de l'homme et ne pourrait construire la paix" (Message of the Holy See on the occasion of the World Food Day 1999).

Therefore, we hope from the bottom of our heart that our Conference will give every possible support to this cause.

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