



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 0616

Sabato 10.11.2001

Sommario:

- ◆ **LE UDIENZE**
- ◆ **VISITA "AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM" DEI PRESULI DELLE CONFERENZE EPISCOPALI DI MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE E BRUNEI**
- ◆ **UDIENZA AI VOLONTARI DELLA DIOCESI DI ROMA IMPEGNATI NEL MONDO DELLA SANITÀ**
- ◆ **PAROLE DI SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE ALLA DELEGAZIONE DI VIGILI DEL FUOCO DI NEW YORK**
- ◆ **PAROLE DI SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE ALLA FAMIGLIA SPIRITUALE "DAS WERK"**
- ◆ **MESSAGGIO DEL SANTO PADRE ALLA FAMIGLIA SPIRITUALE "DAS WERK" IN OCCASIONE DEL RICONOSCIMENTO ECCLESIASTICO DELLA COMUNITÀ**
- ◆ **INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALL'ASSEMBLEA PLENARIA DELLE NAZIONI UNITE**
- ◆ **AVVISO DI CONFERENZA STAMPA**

◆ **LE UDIENZE**

LE UDIENZE

Il Santo Padre ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza:

Em.mo Card. Ignace Moussa I Daoud, Prefetto della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali;
S.E. Mons. Lawrence Khai Saen-Phon-On, Arcivescovo di Thare and Nonseng (Thailandia), in Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum";
S.E. Mons. Lawrence Thienchai Samanchit, Vescovo di Chanthaburi (Thailandia), in Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum";
Volontari della Diocesi di Roma impegnati nel mondo della Sanità.

Giovanni Paolo II riceve questo pomeriggio in Udienza:

Em.mo Card. Giovanni Battista Re, Prefetto della Congregazione per i Vescovi.

Il Santo Padre ha ricevuto ieri:

Em.mo Card. Francis Arinze, Presidente del Pontificio Consiglio per il Dialogo Inter-Religioso.

Il Papa ha ricevuto ieri:

Em.mo Card. Crescenzo Sepe, Prefetto della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli.

[01819-01.02]

VISITA "AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM" DEI PRESULI DELLE CONFERENZE EPISCOPALI DI MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE E BRUNEI

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che il Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ha rivolto agli Ecc.mi Presuli delle Conferenze Episcopali di Malaysia, Singapore e Brunei, ricevuti questa mattina e incontrati nei giorni scorsi, in separate udienze, in occasione della Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum":

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. "I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers" (*Eph 1:15-16*). In the bond of that faith, I greet you, the Bishops of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, as you come on your visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*. As you pray at the Tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, you reaffirm the bond of communion with the Successor of Peter and with the episcopal college throughout the world, and you re-commit yourselves to that "care for all the Churches" (*2 Cor 11:28*) which is at the heart of the apostolic ministry. You re-dedicate yourselves to that witness to which Bishops are called as Successors of the Apostles, a witness to the Risen Christ who dispels all darkness by the power of his glorious light. With the Church throughout the ages you echo the song of Easter which has long been heard in this place: *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat!* These words, by directing your minds and hearts to the Lord Jesus – to whom alone belong "honour and glory and might for ever and ever" (*Rev 5:13*) – remind you that the Bishop is a steward, not an owner, of the mysteries. You are servants of the Gospel of the one Saviour Jesus Christ: the source, heart and goal of all your episcopal ministry.

You come from afar, "but there is no distance between those who are united in the same communion, the communion which is daily nourished at the table of the Eucharistic Bread and the Word of Life" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 58). The particular Churches entrusted to your care are a precious part of the great fellowship of faith which is the universal Church. In this moment of communion, dear Brothers, let us together give thanks for what the universal Church is to your particular Churches and for the wonderful gifts which the faithful of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei bring to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

2. Today I wish to encourage you to direct your ministry and pastoral planning more and more to that lifelong Christian formation which is the essential support of a solid Christian life, a formation which begins in Baptism, develops through grace at every stage of life's journey, and will end only when our eyes are fully opened in the beatific vision of heaven. It is this lifelong Christian training which enables us to hear the voice of Christ, our Teacher (cf. *Mt 23:10*), and adhere with heart and mind to the cause of his kingdom. The Lord's teaching reaches the Christian community in many ways, not the least of which are the three great areas within which it unfolds in the lives of most of the faithful: the family, the school and the parish. These are not just conventional arrangements which might at some point be judged outmoded; they are in fact enduringly valid institutions through which the grace of Christ is mediated to those involved. They require sustained and sensitive pastoral

care on your part if the community over which you preside is to be strengthened as a visible social body.

3. In your lands as elsewhere, the family is under pressure. Divorce has become more common, and its prevalence can lead to a diminished sense of the special grace and commitment involved in Christian marriage. Among couples of different religious allegiance, the problem is especially felt, since the shared bond of faith is lacking. Family life is also made more difficult where the mass media present values contrary to the Gospel and become instruments of a vision of life reduced to the ephemeral and unsubstantial. In such a situation, "the Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family" (*Familiaris Consortio*, 3). Indeed, you will be doing an excellent service to the whole of society when you proclaim that the marriage of man and woman was "willed by God in the very act of creation" (*ibid.*) and that it is a primary locus of the ceaseless creativity of God, with whom couples cooperate through their service of life and love. This means that marriage and the family are not institutions which can change with passing trends or as majority opinion might decide. Every effort should be made to ensure that the family will be recognized as the *primordial* building block of a truly healthy and spiritually vigorous nation (cf. *Letter to Families*, 2 February 1994, 17).

In the bond of Christian marriage, Christ himself dwells sacramentally, drawing spouses and children ever more deeply into his inexhaustible love, showing forth the glory of his own self-giving, and revealing to the world the truth that man is created both through love and for love (cf. *ibid.*, 11). I would recall the words of Tertullian: "How wonderful the bond between two believers, with a single hope, a single desire, a single observance, a single service! They are both brethren and both fellow-servants; there is no separation between them in spirit or flesh; in fact they are truly two in one flesh, and where the flesh is one, one is the spirit" (*To His Wife*, II, VIII, 7-8). Because of this very special vocation, it is essential that there should be not only thorough preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, but also unfailing support and continuing formation of Christian spouses, so that they can understand the dignity and duties of their state.

4. In the lifelong process of formation, Catholic schools are closely associated with parents in teaching children to know and love both God and man. In your particular Churches in general, magnificent work has been done in the field of Catholic education, especially by men and women Religious, and you have been unstinting in offering support and encouragement. The presence of Religious in the schools is less assured now than it was, and dedicated lay teachers are assuming wider responsibility. This means that special attention has to be given to their training, in order to ensure that they see their professional work as a genuine vocation, and likewise to ensure that what is most distinctive about Catholic schools is not compromised.

Cultural, political and financial pressures sometimes make it difficult to maintain the independence required by Catholic schools. In a situation such as yours, Church schools are open to students of all backgrounds. Yet it is essential to preserve and nurture that sense of the providence of the Creator, of the inviolability of human dignity, of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and of the Church as a communion of holiness and mission, which enables Catholic schools to make their special contribution not only to the children whom they teach but also to the society which they serve.

5. Just as schools cannot be separated from the education which takes place within the family, so too they are intimately related to the formation offered in the parish. This is especially true in situations where the faith cannot be taught in schools but must be taught in the parish. As you know from daily experience, catechists play a fundamental role in teaching the faith in your local communities. They need the special formal and informal training which enables them to pass on the riches of Catholic doctrine in all its fullness, as well as the support and encouragement of the community and its pastor.

This is even more important in the case of priests, since it is they who have day-to-day contact with their people as teachers of the faith. Not only must they themselves teach, but they must also help parents, teachers and catechists to fulfil their particular responsibilities. That is why your priests need not only excellent seminary training, but also the continuing formation mentioned in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, which speaks of such further training as "a requirement of the priest's own faithfulness to his ministry, to his very being" (No. 70). Be especially close to your priests, by helping them constantly to cherish in their hearts

the treasure of their priestly calling. Encourage them to grow in the love and zeal which ensures that their communities are equipped in every way for the worship of God and the service of the brethren.

What is true of priests is also true, *a fortiori*, of Bishops. Many beautiful and penetrating things were said at the recent Tenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops about the figure of the Pastor as a man of God, a teacher of the faith that has been handed down, a sanctifier of God's people, and a guide of the community's pilgrimage journey. With the many pressures of your ministry, it is never easy to find the time for further study and reflection. Yet this is very necessary. Otherwise it will surely be more difficult for you as Bishops to persevere with truth and humility in the task of being faithful stewards of the mysteries. Therefore, dear Brothers, I urge you "to rekindle the gift of God that is within you" (2 Tim 1:6). And do all you can to help your priests to do the same, so that in the parishes of your Dioceses the voice of Christ the Good Shepherd will always be heard by the flock he has claimed as his own.

6. The Catholic family, school and parish must, each in its own way, become more and more a school of faith and holiness, a sanctuary where God is worshipped and a service to a broken world. In doing so they will provide that "genuine training in holiness" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 31) which is especially needed now if the new evangelization is to bear the fruit so earnestly needed. On this point we must be clear: holiness of life is the goal of all Christian formation, just as it is the goal of the pastoral planning in which we are involved at the start of the new millennium. Christian holiness springs from contemplation of the face of Christ; it grows through a process of continuing formation, leading to an ever more perfect following of Jesus; and it comes to maturity when we bear faithful witness to Christ and proclaim his truth to the world.

All of this will bring positive results also in dealing with another of the challenging tasks facing the Church in the Third Christian Millennium: the duty to engage in fruitful interreligious dialogue and work effectively with the followers of all religions for a strengthening of mutual understanding and peace in the world. This undertaking is of particular importance for your local churches. As I wrote in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, only Christians with a mature and convinced faith, who are deeply immersed in the mystery of Christ and are happy in their faith community, can be effective in promoting genuine interreligious dialogue (cf. No. 31). Such dialogue includes scholarly exchanges, joint action for integral human development and the defence of human and religious values. The Church's mission in the new millennium calls for her "to strive to preserve and foster at all levels this spirit of encounter and cooperation between religions" (*ibid.*); this in turn will sustain the values upon which a just and peaceful society can be built.

My fervent prayer for you, dear Brothers, is that you will ever be men of God, men of prayer and intense pastoral love, so that you will help your people to live in genuine Christian hope: "For in hope we were saved" (*Rom* 8:24). In this uncertain period in world events, let your hearts be ever more filled with the compassion and mercy of the Heart of Jesus. Be prophets of his love for every needy person!

I entrust you, your priests, the women and men Religious, and the lay people of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei to the unfailing protection of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in her Divine Son.

[01820-02.01] [Original text: English]

UDIENZA AI VOLONTARI DELLA DIOCESI DI ROMA IMPEGNATI NEL MONDO DELLA SANITÀ

Alle 11.45 di questa mattina, nella Patriarcale Basilica Vaticana, al termine della Celebrazione Eucaristica presieduta dall'Em.mo Card. Camillo Ruini, Vicario Generale di Sua Santità per la Diocesi di Roma, in occasione dell'Anno internazionale del volontariato, il Santo Padre si è recato in Basilica per incontrare i presenti ed ha loro rivolto il discorso che riportiamo di seguito:

Carissimi Volontari!

1. Vi saluto con affetto, a conclusione della Celebrazione eucaristica con la quale avete voluto dare inizio a quest'incontro promosso in occasione dell'Anno internazionale del volontariato, fissato nel corrente 2001 dall'Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite.

Rivolgo il mio cordiale pensiero al Cardinale Vicario e lo ringrazio per le parole che ha voluto indirizzarmi, facendosi interprete dei comuni sentimenti. Con lui, saluto Mons. Armando Brambilla, Vescovo Delegato per l'assistenza religiosa negli Ospedali di Roma, le Confraternite ed i Pii Sodalizi. Il mio riconoscente ricordo va, altresì, ai responsabili della *Caritas* e della *Migrantes* di questa Chiesa di Roma, come pure ai partecipanti al Convegno promosso dall'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore e dal Policlinico Agostino Gemelli di Roma. Saluto tutti voi, carissimi Fratelli e Sorelle, desiderosi di servire i fratelli seguendo l'esempio di Gesù che la sera prima della Passione, dopo aver lavato i piedi ai suoi discepoli, disse loro: "*Vi ho dato l'esempio, perché come ho fatto io, facciate anche voi*" (Gv 13,15).

Di quale esempio Egli parla? La risposta appare evidente nel contesto nel quale tali parole vengono pronunciate. Egli, compiendo verso i suoi Apostoli un'azione solitamente riservata agli schiavi, preannuncia la sua morte, mediante la quale il giorno dopo avrebbe donato se stesso sul Calvario. Gesù parla, dunque, di un amore totale e incondizionato, al quale desidera che i suoi discepoli imparino ad ispirare il proprio comportamento.

Le parole del Signore nell'Ultima Cena devono costituire per voi un programma di vita: la vostra missione più profonda, infatti, consiste proprio nel riprodurre i gesti di Colui che, pur essendo di natura divina, assunse per amore la condizione di servo (cfr *Fil* 2,6-7).

2. Nella Lettera apostolica *Novo millennio ineunte* ho invitato tutta la Chiesa a "prendere il largo", sì da irradiare con forza e rinnovato entusiasmo il Vangelo nel nuovo millennio. Quest'appello risuona con particolare vigore quest'oggi per voi, chiamati a collaborare in modo singolare all'opera della nuova evangelizzazione.

Grazie per la testimonianza generosa che offrite in una società spesso dominata dalla bramosia dell'avere e del possedere! Quali fedeli discepoli e imitatori di Cristo, siete spinti ad andare controcorrente, compiendo la scelta evangelica di servire i fratelli non soltanto perché mossi dal desiderio di conseguire legittimi obiettivi di giustizia sociale, ma anche, e soprattutto, perché animati dalla forza inarrestabile della divina carità.

Enorme è il campo d'azione che quotidianamente si apre dinanzi ai vostri occhi. Numerosi e gravi, infatti, sono i problemi che affliggono la nostra società. Guardando alla realtà della nostra Città, come non riconoscere che esistono, purtroppo, ancora carenze nei servizi sociali e inadeguatezza di servizi di base in diverse zone periferiche, gravi forme di disuguaglianza nel reddito e nella fruizione di beni primari come la scuola, la casa, l'assistenza sanitaria. Che dire, poi, dell'emarginazione in cui vivono mendicanti, nomadi, tossicodipendenti, malati di AIDS? senza parlare della disgregazione familiare che penalizza le persone più deboli, e delle forme di violenza fisica o psicologica sulle donne e sui bambini. Come non ricordare, inoltre, i problemi legati all'immigrazione, all'aumento del numero degli anziani soli, degli ammalati e dei disagiati?

Questo preoccupante scenario sociale, a cui si uniscono non di rado una lamentata mancanza di rispetto per la vita e la persona umana e uno sconcertante vuoto di valori morali e religiosi, interpella innanzitutto le istituzioni, ma sollecita in particolare la Comunità cristiana, che da sempre scorge nella carità la via maestra dell'evangelizzazione e della promozione umana.

3. Il volontariato, così diffuso in Italia, costituisce un autentico "segno dei tempi" e rivela una viva presa di coscienza della solidarietà che lega reciprocamente gli esseri umani. Dando modo ai cittadini di partecipare attivamente alla gestione dei servizi di cui sono destinatari e alle diverse strutture ed istituzioni, il volontariato contribuisce ad imprimere quel "supplemento d'anima" che le renda più umane e rispettose della persona.

Per poter svolgere il suo ruolo profetico, l'azione del volontario deve mantenersi fedele ad alcuni tipici tratti essenziali: la ricerca innanzitutto di un'autentica promozione degli individui e del bene comune, che vada oltre la pur necessaria assistenza, lo stile poi di genuina gratuità, che deve sempre caratterizzare, sull'esempio del Signore Gesù, l'azione dei credenti. Questo stile proprio dei volontari, che testimoniano il Vangelo, va custodito gelosamente anche quando si beneficia di quelle forme di sostegno economico previste dalle leggi per l'attuazione dei compiti del volontariato.

Carissimi, ogni abitante della nostra Città, a qualunque razza o religione appartenga, trovi in voi dei fratelli generosi e consapevoli di esercitare la carità non come pura filantropia, ma in nome di Cristo. Per mantenervi fedeli a questa vocazione, perseverate nella preghiera e nell'ascolto della Parola di Dio, come pure nella partecipazione all'Eucaristia. Sarete così capaci di scorgere nei fratelli sofferenti il volto del Signore, contemplato nell'orazione e nella celebrazione dei divini Misteri. In tal modo contribuirete a quell'opera di missione permanente alla quale tante volte ho richiamato in questi anni la Comunità diocesana di Roma.

Con tali auspici, vi affido alla materna protezione della *Salus Populi Romani* e di cuore imparto a ciascuno la Benedizione Apostolica, volentieri estendendola ai vostri familiari e a quanti beneficino del vostro diuturno servizio.

[01821-01.01] [Testo originale: Italiano]

PAROLE DI SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE ALLA DELEGAZIONE DI VIGILI DEL FUOCO DI NEW YORK

Pubblichiamo di seguito le parole di saluto che il Papa ha rivolto alla Delegazione di Vigili del Fuoco di New York incontrati nella Basilica Vaticana:

• PAROLE DI SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

I offer a warm welcome to the delegation from the New York City Fire Department, so many of whose members lost their lives in the terrorist attack of September 11. May Almighty God grant the bereaved families consolation and peace, and may he give you and your fellow firefighters strength and courage to carry on your great service to your City. With the promise of my continued prayers, I invoke upon you and your families God's abundant blessings.

[01822-02.01] [Original text: English]

PAROLE DI SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE ALLA FAMIGLIA SPIRITUALE "DAS WERK"

Riportiamo di seguito le parole di saluto del Papa ai membri della Famiglia Spirituale "Das Werk" presenti questa mattina all'Udienza in Basilica:

• PAROLE DI SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder der geistlichen Familie "Das Werk"!

Mit großer Freude begrüße ich euch zu dieser Audienz und freue mich, daß es zur Begegnung mit der neuen Familie des geweihten Lebens gekommen ist. Am Anfang eines neuen Jahrhunderts steht ihr vor einer großen Herausforderung: Die Menschen von heute suchen nach Männern und Frauen, die ihnen Jesus Christus zeigen. Durch eure hohen Ideale und eure jugendliche Begeisterung wollt ihr euch für Jesus gleichsam zum

"Zeigefinger" machen. Dafür gilt euch meine Anerkennung.

Gerade dem alten Kontinent Europa kann eure junge Gemeinschaft sehr nützlich sein. Denn unsere Zeitgenossen hören auf überzeugende Christen, die sich von Gott binden und senden lassen. Die Gründerin eurer geistlichen Familie, Mutter Julia, gibt euch dazu ein schönes Wort mit auf den Weg: "Seit Jesus Christus die heilige Kirche gegründet hat, ist alles gegründet. Es braucht nur Menschen, die diese Gründung gründlich leben".

Daß ihr eurem Auftrag zum Lob Gottes und zum Heil der Menschen gründlich nachkommt, dazu erteile ich euch gern den Apostolischen Segen.

[01823-05.01] [Originalsprache: Deutsch]

MESSAGGIO DEL SANTO PADRE ALLA FAMIGLIA SPIRITUALE "DAS WERK" IN OCCASIONE DEL RICONOSCIMENTO ECCLESIASTICO DELLA COMUNITÀ

Pubblichiamo di seguito il Messaggio che Giovanni Paolo II ha inviato agli appartenenti alla Famiglia Spirituale "Das Werk" in occasione del riconoscimento ecclesiastico della comunità come "Famiglia di Vita Consacrata":

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder
der geistlichen Familie „Das Werk“!

1. In der frohmachenden Gemeinschaft des Dreifaltigen Gottes, des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes, entbiete ich euch herzliche Grüße und Segenswünsche. Die Freude über die Anerkennung eurer geistlichen Familie bewegt euch, dem Nachfolger des heiligen Petrus erneut eure Verbundenheit und Dienstbereitschaft zu bezeugen. Gerne danke ich mit euch Christus, dem Herrn der Kirche, für das euch verliehene Charisma und bete darum, daß es reiche Früchte hervorbringen möge.
2. Im Geiste eurer Gründerin seid ihr dazu entschlossen, den Herausforderungen unserer Zeit in der Kraft des katholischen Glaubens zu begegnen. Ihr dürft der Kirche und den Menschen freudig dienen als eine kontemplative und zugleich apostolische Gemeinschaft, die in der Welt als Sauerteig wirksam werden will. Hochherzig seid ihr der Einladung des Herrn gefolgt, für sein Reich „ans Werk“ zu gehen. Wenn ihr jederzeit für den Plan Gottes verfügbar bleibt und eure Talente in den Dienst der kirchlichen Heilssendung stellt, kann eure geistliche Familie zu einem kraftvollen Werkzeug der Neuevangelisierung werden, besonders in Europa. Eure gelebte Hingabe an Gott ist die beste Antwort auf die drängenden Fragen der Menschen und auf die Nöte der Zeit.
3. Im Zwiegespräch mit dem Vater faßt Jesus Christus seine Heilssendung zusammen: „Ich habe dich auf der Erde verherrlicht und das Werk zu Ende geführt, das du mir aufgetragen hast“ (*Joh 17, 4*). Das Werk Christi – die Verherrlichung Gottes und die Erlösung der Menschen – wird von der Kirche in der Kraft des Heiligen Geistes durch alle Zeiten fortgeführt. Eure geistliche Familie ist aus der Kirche heraus geboren. Als Mitglieder des „Werkes“ seid ihr bereit, euch die Sendung der Kirche Christi zu eigen zu machen.
4. Die Kirche ist das große Werk Gottes. Wenn heute mitunter ihr göttlicher Ursprung in Frage gestellt wird, trägt „das Werk“ dazu bei, das Geheimnis der Kirche in seiner Tiefe zu erfassen und zu leben. Bleibt dem Ziel eurer Gemeinschaft immer treu: Seid ein Abglanz der Kirche zum Lob des Dreifaltigen Gottes und zum Heil der Menschen. Bezeugt die Schönheit der Kirche als Volk Gottes, Braut Christi und Tempel des Heiligen Geistes. Bleibt stets verwurzelt in der heiligen Eucharistie, der Quelle der Einheit mit Gott und untereinander.
5. In eurer Gemeinschaft ist der Geist der Anbetung lebendig. Gott steht im Zentrum; um Ihn dreht sich euer

Denken und Tun. Auf diese Weise kann „das Werk“ ein wirksames Mittel gegen die Resignation sein, die manchmal auch die Diener der Kirche einholt. Möge euer Beten und Handeln im großen Werk Gottes zum Heil der Menschen fruchtbar werden! Der Herr der Geschichte lenke den Weg eurer geistlichen Familie in die Zukunft. Von Herzen erteile ich euch den Apostolischen Segen.

Aus dem Vatikan, am 10. November 2001

IOANNES PAULUS II

[01824-05.01] [Originalsprache: Deutsch]

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALL'ASSEMBLEA PLENARIA DELLE NAZIONI UNITE

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'O.N.U., S.E. Mons. Renato Raffaele Martino, ha pronunciato ieri all'Assemblea Plenaria delle Nazioni Unite *"on Item 25: United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations"*:

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. RENATO R. MARTINO

Mr. President,

In his Message for the World Day of Peace celebrated on 1 January 2001, Pope John Paul II wrote of the urgency *"to reflect on the theme of dialogue between cultures and traditions"*, with this dialogue being *"the obligatory path to the building of a reconciled world, a world able to look with serenity to its own future. This is a theme which is crucial to the pursuit of peace ... the United Nations Organization has called attention to this urgent need by declaring 2001 the 'International Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations'"* (n.3).

The impact of the brutal and unprecedented attacks of 11 September are forcing all of us to consider the urgency of the dialogue among civilizations and to intensify our hopes as this International Year draws to a close. To do anything less would only allow for the perversion of the very idea of civilization. As the recently-published Report of the Secretary-General on this agenda item indicates, *"A dialogue among civilizations is not only a necessary answer to terrorism - it is in many ways its nemesis"* and the very presence of this organization is a testament to the deep human desire for justice and peace. The terrorist attacks must make the UN not only re-consider but re-commit and resolve itself to this dialogue.

In last year's resolution on the Dialogue among Civilizations, the General Assembly noted that *"civilizations are not confined to individual nation-States, but rather encompass different cultures within the same civilization, and ... that civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of humankind, providing a source of inspiration and progress for humanity at large"* (Resolution 55/23). In recognizing the plurality and relatedness of the world's cultures and civilizations, this body thus admitted the vital role culture, as a subset of each civilization, must play in the drama that is every human life.

*"The main concern of culture in general and of all culture is education."*¹ Addressing man in his moral, intellectual and spiritual capacities, authentic culture is rooted in the search for ultimate truth. In the recesses of his heart, man seeks to discover both his origins and his ultimate destiny. In many respects, culture is the means by which whole communities of people come to meet God and to ask life's fundamental questions. It is this common search for truth that forms the basis of culture: *"At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God."*²

As personal as this search is to the human heart, it naturally expresses itself in and through the customs and traditions of whole communities of people who, through their relative proximity to one another, have sought the

ultimate meaning of life together as a people. The first experience of living together is found in the family, a universal experience whose importance can hardly be overstated. The family provides the basis of an essential relationship between the individual and one's origins. In the family, individuals also come to maturity through receptive openness to others and through generous self-giving to them.

Moreover, there is a close connection between the particular culture of a people and its identity as a nation. "History shows that in extreme circumstances ... it is precisely its culture that enables a nation to survive the loss of political and economic independence."³ Not even the powerful ideological systems of colonialism and totalitarianism were able, and neither will terrorism be able, to suppress the universal need for a particular and unique cultural life.

It may seem that any particular culture, if it is taken seriously, raises strong and definitive claims to truth - in a sense, each culture may say that *its way* is *the way*, to the exclusion of all others. This determination may even seem to give cultures a certain force. Yet such overly-simplistic claims have led, and sadly continue to lead, to strife and conflict between peoples, not to mention the number of inhuman and barbarous acts against human dignity, dubiously justified in the name of "culture." All cultures must bear some relationship to freedom and truth. Fanaticism and fundamentalism cannot be equated with the search for truth itself.

A true dialogue between cultures requires a respect for differences. Much too often, both in history and present times, ethnic and religious differences have been used as a justification for brutal conflict, genocide, and persecution. There have also been problems where one religious group has sought to expel members of another religion from a country, often with threats and actual violence. Authentic culture cannot be built upon the practice of religious persecution. Such a so-called culture stands diametrically opposed to the human person and will eventually lead to the disintegration of society.

Meaningful dialogue among civilizations cannot take place in the absence of religious freedom. The cultures of the world, with all of their rich diversity of gifts, have much to contribute to the building up of a civilization of love. What is required is a mutual respect for differences among cultures - a respect inspired by the desire to uphold the right of all individuals to seek the truth in accord with the dictates of their conscience and in continuity with their cultural heritage.

Human beings are not enslaved by the past. They cannot disregard the past or recreate themselves in any way they wish, but they do have the capacity to *discern* and *choose* how they should live, both as individuals and together. They are free enough to accept the limitations imposed by various historical, cultural, economic or other conditions. These conditions may constrain but cannot abolish their freedom. As a part of human nature, freedom, especially the freedom to choose dialogue and peace, is always possible.

After the recognition of a variety of cultures and civilizations, one is bound to ask, What unifies mankind? The answer proposed and affirmed by the United Nations has been "those *universal rights* which human beings enjoy by the very fact of their humanity. It was precisely outrages against human dignity which led the United Nations Organization to formulate, barely three years after its establishment, that *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which remains one of the highest expression of the human conscience of our time."⁴

As Pope John Paul II stated in his address to the General Assembly in 1995, "These are not abstract points; rather, these rights tell us something important about the actual life of every individual and of every social group. They also remind us that *we do not live in an irrational or meaningless world*. On the contrary, there is a *moral logic which is built into human life* and which makes possible dialogue between individuals and peoples. If we want a *century of violent coercion* to be succeeded by a *century of persuasion*, we must find a way to discuss the human future intelligibly. The universal moral law written on the human heart is precisely that kind of 'grammar' which is needed if the world is to engage this discussion of its future."⁵

Mr. President,

My Delegation would like to conclude with a final reflection on the relationship between civilization and

recognition of the value and dignity of human life. No authentic dialogue can take place if it fails to respect life. There can be no peace or dialogue among civilizations when this fundamental right is not protected. There have been many examples of generosity, dedication, even heroism in the service of life in our time. Yet the world is still plagued by a number of attacks on life. When the human dignity of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society is not duly recognized, respected and protected, all civilizations suffer.

Yet again, despite these terrible practices and the recent crises, mankind must not be discouraged. The very idea of dialogue presupposes our ability to reason and understand, and especially to change and make anew. The Holy See has full confidence that a true dialogue among civilizations will serve to benefit all.

Thank you.

1 Address of Pope John Paul II to UNESCO, 2 June 1980, n. 11

2 *Centesimus Annus*, n. 24

3 Address to the United Nations, 5 October 1995, n. 8

4 *Ibid.*, n. 2

5 *Ibid.*, n. 3[01825-02.01] [Original text: English]

AVVISO DI CONFERENZA STAMPA Si informano i giornalisti accreditati che **martedì 13 novembre 2001**, alle **ore 11.30**, nell'*Aula Giovanni Paolo II* della Sala Stampa della Santa Sede, avrà luogo la **presentazione della XVI Conferenza Internazionale "Salute e Potere"**, promossa dal Pontificio Consiglio per la Pastorale della Salute, che si terrà il 15, 16 e 17 novembre 2001 in Vaticano, presso l'Aula Nuova del Sinodo. Interverranno: **S.E. Mons. Javier Lozano Barragán**, Presidente del Pontificio Consiglio per la Pastorale della Salute; **S.E. Mons. José Luis Redrado Marchite**, OH., Segretario del Pontificio Consiglio; **Rev.do P. Felice Ruffini**, M.I., Sottosegretario del Pontificio Consiglio; **Mons. Ignacio Carrasco de Paula**, Consultore del medesimo Pontificio Consiglio; **Dott. Luciano Onder**, Giornalista.[01811-01.01]
