



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'O.N.U., l'Arcivescovo S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato ieri a New York, davanti alla 63ma sessione dell'Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite, in occasione della Commemorazione del 60° Anniversario della Dichiarazione Universale dei Diritti Umani:

● **INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE**

Mr. President,

Allow me first of all to express congratulations on the part of the Holy See Delegation for this session celebrating the Sixtieth Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, a fundamental document for international life and that of every single State. By this *Declaration*, people, States, international institutions can even today rediscover the true significance of the person, his concrete humanity, the individual and communitarian dimensions of his rights, and in particular the universal value of human dignity.

The *Declaration*, in fact, clearly shows that human rights, which require application and protection, are not only

an expression of mere legality but find their source and ends in ethics and natural reason common to all men. It can well be said that by means of this proclamation the whole human family has affirmed that the respect of rights is the result of justice and the guarantee of peace. Through the international protection of rights, persons, people, States and governments have manifested the will to avoid conflicts and major contrasts to proceed instead on a united path consisting of cooperation and integration.

Many present here today at this commemoration still vividly recall the words uttered in this same hall on April 18 last by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, who linked human rights and their protection to two fundamental objectives: the promotion of the common good and the safeguarding of human freedom.

From international activity, and from the action of the United Nations Organization in particular, we see how much the idea of the *common good* is the essential condition to adopt effective decisions in the realm of security, of cooperation for development, as well as special humanitarian action that the Organization is all the more called to carry out in the face of events and situations that gravely affect the person, his dignity and therefore his rights. The common good is well expressed in the call "to act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (Art. 1) that the *Universal Declaration* addresses to all the members of the human family. In fact, we cannot fail to recognize that the first violation of rights comes from the lack of essential living conditions, when there prevails an inequitable distribution of wealth, conditions of poverty, of hunger, lack of medical care. It is not by accident that the first of the Millennium Goals proclaimed by the United Nations is appropriately aimed at the overcoming of this situation that involves a substantial part of the world population.

Regarding *human freedom*, protecting its various dimensions and manifestations, not only guarantees the building of the common good and overcoming the threats to the dignity of every person, but also recognizes that "all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (Art. 1). This allows for the building of that necessary correlation among rights and duties that brings every person, every State, every community to assume the responsibility for the choices made, and to recognize its reciprocal relationship with others.

Today, in the face of significant milestones humanity has reached, are unfortunately evident negations of rights that violate the order of creation, contradict the sacred character of life, deprive the human person, the family, communities of their natural identity. Protecting rights means, therefore, to respect ethical imperatives that are the necessary precondition for freedom.

Human rights express the unity of the human creature, of his aspiration at satisfying his essential needs while attaining at the same time freedom, human relations and spiritual values.

In this sense, rights are also an instrument through which the person manifests his relationship with the truth, protects his conscience, his dimension of faith and his most profound convictions. Everyone should be able to express these aspirations as part of a community of citizens, of believers and free to propose his vision of the social order, of freedom, of institutions and of rules without this being cause for discrimination or limiting participation in the social body.

In the specific area of religious liberty, the *Universal Declaration* concretely provides a manifestation that is at the same time individual and communitarian, and does not set the dimension of the citizen against that of the believer, recognizing instead the full freedom of the relationship between the person and his Creator. No principle, no national or international law can cancel or limit this relationship if it wants to recognize with coherence the rights proclaimed sixty years ago. The free relationship between the person and his Creator, today as then, should not be limited to the exercise of religious belief, but open to the public expression of religious worship through the channels of formation, instruction and full participation in all decision making within a given country.

Mr. President,

The *Universal Declaration* has made human rights and action aimed at their protection one of the primary objectives of the international Community and of States. Human rights consist no longer in mere proclamations

or legislative and institutional modifications.

Human rights, in fact, are not a rhetorical remembrance, but the result of the responsible deeds of everyone. Deeds necessary in a world that has adequate means and specialized structures to end the scandal of hunger and poverty, to guarantee security that is not violated or derided, to safeguard the life of everyone in every moment. To celebrate this day means to place the person in the heart of the international Community and of its law and to overcome present obstacles on the path of humanity.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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