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Intervento del Segretario per i Rapporti con gli Stati alla Conferenza sulla riduzione della fame svoltasi alla Fordham University di New York sul tema “Ridurre la fame: l'appello di Papa Francesco per un nuovo approccio”

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che S.E. Mons. Paul Richard Gallagher, Segretario per i Rapporti con gli Stati, ha pronunciato venerdì 28 settembre 2018 in occasione della Conferenza sulla riduzione della fame, organizzata dal *Programma International Political Economy and Development* (IPED) e dalla Fondazione *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice*, sul tema “Ridurre la fame: l'appello di Papa Francesco per un nuovo approccio”, che si è svolta presso il *Gerald Corrigan Conference Center* della Fordham University di New York:

Intervento di S.E. Mons. Paul Richard Gallagher

I am pleased to have the opportunity, once again this year, to take part in the conference organized by the International Political Economy and Development (IPED) Program of Fordham University and the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* (CAPP) - USA Foundation and to offer some brief remarks on the theme of discussion, namely, “*Reduce Hunger: Pope Francis’ Call for New Approaches.*”

The consideration of the “right to food” and its implication on reducing hunger and poverty have gained considerable attention in the international scene over the past couple of decades. As we know, the United Nations 2030 Agenda dedicated one of the seventeen SDGs, namely SDG 2, to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” Undoubtedly, all of these aspects are strictly interconnected, which indicates also the awareness that, notwithstanding all the technological advances, the enjoyment of the right to food remains far from the needs of millions of people.

In addition to being affirmed in numerous international declarations and documents, the “right to food” and its corollary, reducing hunger, have long been part of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church as is witnessed in the teaching of the past several pontificates. The basis, of course, is scriptural, “For I was hungry and you gave me food” (Mt. 25:35). Our Lord confirms this imperative by adding: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt. 25:40). With these words, we are immediately reminded that we have a duty, in solidarity with all human beings, to be concerned with the needs of others, because we are all part of the same human family, each created in the image and likeness of God.

he reality that every person enjoys an inviolable dignity is manifest in the specific teaching of the Church, which has always defended the right to food. Pope Benedict remarked that: “The right to food, with all that this implies, has an immediate repercussion on both the individual and communal dimensions, which bring together entire peoples and human groups”.^[1]

The reduction of hunger and a healthy and adequate nutrition are essential elements of the “right to food”. Therefore, they should be part of those core “fundamental” human rights, since they are considered an integral part of the right to life proper to every human being. Furthermore, there is a growing awareness that the elimination of hunger is a common good for society. As recalled in various legal instruments on human rights, the right to food means providing those means that allow every person and community to access, at all times, adequate and safe nutrition or the use of those resources necessary for their livelihood. This security must be provided in ways that are respectful of human dignity and of all different cultures and traditions.

For those engaged in addressing the questions related to reducing hunger on the international level, the analysis proposed by the *Magisterium* of Pope Francis may be an effective tool for identifying challenges related to food security and the elimination of hunger applying them to the daily reality of peoples and communities: climate change, sources of clean energy, migration, trade and the culture of waste. This last challenge is deeply connected with two other grave issues, which affect profoundly hunger and malnutrition, namely, food waste and overconsumption. “Consumerism has induced us to be accustomed to excess and to the daily waste of food, whose value, which goes far beyond mere financial parameters, we are no longer able to judge correctly.”^[2] The Holy Father expresses his approach clearly when he says: “Faced with the increased demand for food, it is indispensable that the fruits of the land be available to all. For some it would be enough to reduce the number of mouths to feed and in this way solve the problem; but it is a false solution if we consider the levels of food waste and models of consumption that squander many resources. Reducing is easy; sharing instead demands conversion, and this is demanding.”^[3]

In this approach of Pope Francis, we see a rejection of those approaches that might look for a “quick fix” solution to the problem of reducing hunger by sacrificing the very values that are essential to the promotion and protection of the human person and its rights. Hence, the Holy Father speaks of another avenue, one that respects the inviolable dignity of the human person, by calling on all people and institutions on every level to exercise the “*principle of humanity*”. This term, common in international and diplomatic language, is an expression of the Christian duty to love one’s neighbor. “It is to be hoped that diplomacy and multilateral Institutions nurture and organize this capacity to love, because it is the royal road that guarantees not only food security, but human security in a global sense.”

Translating the “*principle of humanity*” into a concrete course of action that calls on the engagement of national and international players is eloquently posed by Pope Francis in these terms, which, in the end, provide a beautiful summary of his approach to reducing hunger. “To love means to contribute so that every country increases its production and reaches food self-sufficiency. To love translates into thinking of new development and consumption models, and adopting policies that do not aggravate the situation of less advanced populations, or their external dependency. To love means not continuing to divide the human family into those who have more than they need, and those who lack the essentials.”^[4]

As with many of the social and humanitarian challenges confronting the international community, Pope Francis’ approach to reducing hunger is not based on mere sentiment or a vague empathy. Rather, “it is a call for justice, not a plea or an emergency appeal. There is a need for broad and sincere dialogue at all levels, so that the best solutions can emerge and a new relationship among the various actors on the international scene can mature, characterized by mutual responsibility, solidarity and communion.”^[5]

Thank you for your attention.

[1] Pope Benedict XVI, Message on the Occasion of World Food Day 2007, 4 October 2007.

[2] Pope Francis, General Audience, 5 June 2013.

[3] Pope Francis, Address to the FAO on World Food Day, 16 October 2017, n. 3.

[4] Ibid, n. 3.

[5] Ibid, n. 4

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