



Democracy – Reality and Responsibility



Plenary Session 23-26 February 2000 – Article 1 of the statutes of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences says: 'The Academy, through an appropriate dialogue, thus offers the Church the elements which she can use in the development of her social doctrine, and reflects on the application of that doctrine in contemporary society'. Thus the Academy is aware that it has to concentrate on the relationship between the reality and the theory of democracy on the one hand, and the social teaching of the Church on the other. For this reason, the Academy has repeatedly referred to what the social teaching of the Church has said, and should say, about democracy. The Sixth Plenary Meeting was brought to a close with a report on 'Democratic Development and the Social Teaching of the Church' which was delivered by Roland Minnerath (Strasbourg, see pp. 405 ff), and this, too, was followed by a discussion. This was an attempt to look at the principal areas of focus of the subject. However, despite all these endeavours to relate the Academy's discussions of democracy to the social teaching of the Church, the results clearly need further research and debate. The Academy hopes that the three volumes on democracy which it has produced will also be read and discussed by experts on the social teaching of the Church who do not belong to the Academy and who were not involved in its work on democracy.

Hans F. Zacher

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