



Address to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences on: 'The Governance of Globalisation'



The Supreme Pontiff observes that globalisation should be so governed as to benefit the whole of mankind. He stresses that contemporary global processes often elude the controls of national governments and international organisations to the detriment of the vulnerable members of society. In addition, 'entire peoples and cultures' may be subjected to a 'struggle for survival'. The Pope adds that globalisation often fails to help those most in need, generating, thereby, dangerous and extreme reactions. Globalisation, instead, must be directed towards promoting the common good of all people and 'authentic human development'. This goal requires a 'new constitutional organisation of the human family' to meet the 'new demands of a globalised world'. All efforts in this direction must be based on the 'unchanging social virtues', and above all on the supreme virtue of charity.

Mr President,

Distinguished Members of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences,

I am pleased to greet you on the occasion of your Ninth Plenary Session and extend my best wishes for your work during these days of discussion focusing on the theme of 'the Governance of Globalisation'. I am confident that the expertise and experience which each of you brings to this meeting will help to shed light on how globalisation may best be guided and regulated for the benefit of the entire human family.

Indeed, the processes by which capital, goods, information, technology and knowledge are exchanged and circulate throughout the world today often elude the traditional mechanisms of regulatory control put in place by national governments and international agencies. Special

interests and the demands of the market frequently predominate over concern for the common good. This tends to leave the weaker members of society without adequate protection and can subject entire peoples and cultures to a formidable struggle for survival.

Moreover, it is disturbing to witness a globalisation that exacerbates the conditions of the needy, that does not sufficiently contribute to resolving situations of hunger, poverty and social inequality, that fails to safeguard the natural environment. These aspects of globalisation can give rise to extreme reactions, leading to excessive nationalism, religious fanaticism and even acts of terrorism.

All of this is far-removed from the concept of an ethically responsible globalisation capable of treating all peoples as equal partners and not as passive instruments. Accordingly, there can be little doubt of the need for guidelines that will place globalisation firmly at the service of authentic human development – the development of every person and of the whole person – in full respect of the rights and dignity of all.

It becomes clear, therefore, that globalisation in itself is not the problem. Rather, difficulties arise from the lack of effective mechanisms for giving it proper direction. Globalisation needs to be inserted into the larger context of a political and economic programme that seeks the authentic progress of all mankind. In this way, it will serve the whole human family, no longer bringing benefit merely to a privileged few but advancing the common good of all. Thus, the true success of globalisation will be measured by the extent that it enables every person to enjoy the basic goods of food and housing, of education and employment, of peace and social progress, of economic development and justice. This goal cannot be achieved without guidance from the international community and adequate regulation on the part of the worldwide political establishment.

In fact, in my Message for the 2003 World Day of Peace, I remarked that now is the time ‘to work together for a new constitutional organisation of the human family’ (No. 6), an organisation that would be in a position to meet the new demands of a globalised world. This does not mean creating a ‘global super-State’, but continuing the processes already underway to increase democratic participation and promote political transparency and accountability.

The Holy See is fully aware of the difficulties of devising concrete mechanisms for the proper regulation of globalisation, not least because of the resistance that such regulation would meet in certain quarters. Nonetheless it is essential that progress be made in this direction, with every effort firmly based on the unchanging social virtues of truth, freedom, justice, solidarity, subsidiarity and – above all – charity, which is the mother and perfection of all Christian and human virtues.

Dear Members of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, I thank you in advance for the insights that your meeting will bring to the question under consideration, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and enlighten your deliberations. To all of you I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and strength in the Risen Saviour.