



HOLY SEE

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE

Address at the III Forum on "Migration and Development "
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+*Archbishop Agostino Marchetto*
Secretary (Junior Minister)

Mister President,

It is an honour for me to lead the Delegation of the Holy See once again at this Forum which, in its present edition, proposes to reflect on how to integrate migration policies into development strategies.

Unfortunately, today we are witnessing a widespread feeling of defeat before many of the commitments that were taken only a few years ago. New and protracted conflicts, the economic crisis, the multiplication of environmental emergencies, threats to internal and external security of States, some health hazards, the temptation to subordinate political choices to interests in terms of power or short-term benefits, together with other factors, strongly jeopardize development and significantly condition decisions and the management of migration at the worldwide level.

The Holy See considers the latter an important element in the interdependence among States. A correct approach to the management of this phenomenon should first of all consider the migrant as a human person who, as such, is endowed with inalienable rights, which everyone must respect under all circumstances.¹

This implies numerous consequences and requires specific actions, like the need to protect the migrants' dignity, and for policies that face the causes of migration so that people would not be obliged to leave their own country. Moreover, those among them who are giving a valuable and regular contribution to our society must be provided with an

¹ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 62, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2009, pp. 91-92.

environment that is capable of combating attitudes of discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia, which can reach the point of using religious or ethnic background as a pretext.

In the recent Social Encyclical "*Caritas in veritate*" (Charity in truth), Pope Benedict XVI made important considerations regarding the topics that we are analyzing and dedicated to them a specific paragraph that can offer interesting leads in the search for new solutions at an international level, in addition to local ones, in the light of an integral vision of the human person.²

His Holiness indicates charity as the leading way of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, charity which sustains a "civilization of love" that includes "civilizing economy", guided by two fundamental criteria: justice and common good.³ These criteria are also applicable to that manifestation of globalization which is the macro-phenomenon of migration.

Knowing how impressive today's migration phenomenon is, "*a striking phenomenon because of the sheer numbers of people involved, the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community*"⁴, the Pope constantly refers to solidarity⁵ in his new Encyclical.

This is particularly urgent in the sphere of the mobility of labor, which involves "*grave danger for the rights of workers, for fundamental human rights and for the solidarity associated with the traditional forms of the social State.*"⁶ Human decline and the waste of social resources have a serious influence not only on the life of the workers, but also on their family relations, on the social structure that receives them, as well as on those from where they come, and on the economic growth of both, since human costs are reflected also in economic costs.

A new approach in facing these problems can be suggested by the criterion of subsidiarity which, in our sphere, requires the involvement of all actors in the management of migration, at all levels, and at the same time the recognition, where possible, of the rightful autonomy of intermediate bodies (communities *in diaspora*, association of migrants, of their families, etc.). On its part, the principle of subsidiarity must be kept closely related with the principle of solidarity, so that the former may not fall into social "particularism" nor the latter deteriorate into "assistentialism" which humiliates the needy.⁷

In dealing with the relationship between migration and integral human development, I feel it important to add that integration is fully achieved there where it is not limited only to the socio-economic sphere, but also includes the cultural area, in the context of mutual availability and welcome between the immigrants and the local population. We know that the relationship between cultures always have an effect also on the economic field. In the Encyclical itself, Pope Benedict XVI calls to mind that "*the reduction of cultures to the technological dimension, even if it favours short-term profits, in the long term impedes*

² Cf. *Ibid.*, nos. 25, 32 and 62.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, nos. 2, 7, 33, 36, 38 and 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 62.

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, nos. 19, 25, 27ff., 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 47, 49, 53, 60, 73, 76, which refer to "universal solidarity", "solidarity of presence, supervision, training and respect", "social solidarity", "development of all peoples in solidarity", "new forms of solidarity".

⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 25.

⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, no. 58.

reciprocal enrichment and the dynamics of cooperation” inasmuch as “*workers tend to adapt passively to automatic mechanisms, rather than to release creativity*”⁸ and points out that technological development is precisely produced “*through human creativity as a tool of personal freedom*”⁹.

Since “*no country can be expected to address today's problems of migration by itself*”¹⁰, then let us face the dramatic challenge, at the universal level, a positive response to which “*depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side*”¹¹.

This is a confirmation – I think – of the importance of these meetings of the “*Forum*”.

Thank you, Mr. President.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 70.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 62.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 53.