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Intervento del Cardinale Segretario di Stato alla Conferenza Internazionale “Rethinking Key Features of Economic and Social Life” promossa dalla Fondazione “Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontifice” (25-27 maggio 2015)

Il Cardinale Segretario di Stato Pietro Parolin è intervenuto ieri pomeriggio alla Conferenza Internazionale *Rethinking Key Features of Economic and Social Life* promossa dalla Fondazione *Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontifice*. La Conferenza Internazionale chiude oggi, con la partecipazione all’Udienza Generale, i lavori che si sono svolti nei giorni 25 e 26 maggio presso l’Aula del Sinodo in Vaticano e presso il Palazzo della Cancelleria in Roma.

Pubblichiamo di seguito il testo dell’intervento del Segretario di Stato, nel corso della Sessione di ieri pomeriggio presso il Palazzo della Cancelleria:

Intervento del Cardinale Pietro Parolin

Your Eminence,
Dear Friends,

We have now come to the end of this most stimulating International Conference of the *Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice* Foundation.

This two-day meeting has confirmed once again how your Foundation – by remaining faithful to the responsibility entrusted to it by Saint John Paul II in 1993 – can render valuable service for a wider and better knowledge of the social doctrine of the Church. It does so by promoting the application of this doctrine through robust dialogue among specialists, economists, university instructors and others who bring their life experience to the world of economics.

The theme chosen by the Conference, *Rethinking Key Features of Economic and Social Life*, is thus particularly significant. It recalls the challenge of Pope Benedict XVI to “further and deeper reflection on the meaning of the economy and its goals, as well as a profound and far-sighted revision of the current model of development, so as to correct its dysfunctions and deviations” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 32).

It is important that the Foundation is taking up this challenge with dedication and competence, in the light of the Church's social teaching. Its main point of reference must be the dignity of the human person and the promotion of the common good. We live in a time in which, unfortunately, the prevalent economic model reveals numerous shortcomings, dysfunctions and deviations which weigh heavily on the state of the planet's health. These affect the ethical and moral principles which guide many forms of behaviour within the human family.

Nonetheless, it is important to realize that there are increasing demands from various sectors of society for a careful examination of how best to respond to these distortions. The ethical principles underlying the Church's social teaching can serve as a scheme of reference and a key to interpretation in this effort.

In this context, the Foundation is awarding its second biennial Economy and Society Prize. In doing so, it helps to draw attention to the quality of original projects which can aid in developing new areas of application of the principles of Catholic teaching, and increase its influence on concrete decisions.

I give warm thanks to Cardinal Marx and to the entire jury, made up of specialists from ten countries, for their careful study and selection of the proposed texts.

It is most significant that the prize is being awarded for a book which offers a Christian view on the world of finance. This calls for an attentive, in-depth historical analysis, for already in the Middle Ages within the Catholic Church original thought and research was being developed on monetary and financial issues. History is the teacher of life, as Cicero reminds us (*De Oratore*, II, 9, 36). In this field too, our rich history can undoubtedly orient an in-depth investigation into this matter of great contemporary import.

We are all aware that such a reflection is today even more necessary in a globalized world where financial activity is carried out with considerably complex means and instruments, and at times risks losing sight of its original aims, which must always be anchored in the dignity of the human person, and the common good.

The jury wished also to draw attention to two doctoral theses which show the increasing depth and number of studies on the social doctrine of the Church being pursued in different universities of the Catholic world.

Dear friends,

His Holiness Pope Francis has addressed you on several occasions, emphasizing that "the current crisis is not only economic and financial but is rooted in an ethical and anthropological crisis" (*Address to the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation*, 25 May 2013). In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he has stated that at the heart of this ethical and anthropological crisis is, and I quote, "the denial of the primacy of the human person. We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. *Ex* 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings; man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption" (No. 55). Symptomatic of this is the culture of waste which the Holy Father has frequently denounced, a culture which conceals a rejection of ethics, and frequently a rejection of God as well.

In these two days you have engaged in a disciplined reflection in response to these observations of Pope Francis. You have considered issues linked to the world of labour, and also economic and financial problems which can lead such activity away from its calling to the service of integral human development.

Retrieving this calling in economic life is one of the principal tasks for a Foundation such as yours, whose goals include "promoting informed knowledge of the social teachings of the Church and of the activity of the Holy See among qualified and socially motivated business and professional leaders" (*By-Laws of the Foundation*, Art. 3(a), Section 1, 25 June 2004).

Pope Benedict XVI frequently stated that "every economic decision has a moral consequence" (*Caritas in*

Veritate, 37). Retrieving this calling necessitates returning to the fundamental meaning of such concepts as economy and development, finding adequate ways of applying them for the integral development of every person and the whole person, as Pope Paul VI encouraged in *Populorum Progressio* (No. 14), not only for the short term, but for the long term too.

Once again, the key to this is the moral formation of individual persons needed at every level, which can lead them to rediscover the meaning of personal and collective work in the service of integral human development.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you these reflections. I offer you my best wishes for fruitfulness of the Foundation's work, which I trust will be oriented ever more fully towards the planning and structuring of the economic and financial sphere within a healthy and robust ethical framework.

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