

IL-KURJA TAL-ARĊISQOF
Archbishop's Curia

Floriana
Malta
(+356) 79703011
www.maltadiocese.org/
justiceandpeace

KUMMISSJONI DJOĊESANA ĠUSTIZZJA U PAĊI

DIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

E-Newsletter tal-Kummissjoni Ġustizzja u Paċi

THE POPE'S MESSAGE FOR WORLD PEACE DAY 1ST JANUARY 2010

Pope Benedict XVI will focus on the connection between protecting the environment and working for peace in the message he will publish for World Peace Day in 2010, the Vatican said.

The theme the Pope has chosen for the January 1st celebration is "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Safeguard Creation," the Vatican announced on July 29.

The Vatican said the Pope intends

to discuss the fact that in a globalized world there is a strict connection between protecting the environment and promoting peace.

"The use of resources, climate change, the application and use of biotechnologies (and) demographic growth" are all issues that can have repercussions across national borders for generations to come, the statement

(Continued on page 2)



Il-Kummissjoni
Djoċesana
Ġustizzja u Paċi
tixtieq lill-qarrejja
kollha ta' din
in-newsletter
l-isbaħ xewqat
għall-
Milied qaddis
u
Sena Ġdida
mimlija
kull risq u barka.

IN THIS ISSUE

The Pope's Message for World Peace Day - 1st January 2010	Page 1 & 2
Swiss Bishops Protest Minaret Ban	Page 3
3 Challenges for Muslims and Christians	Page 4
Climate Debate Should Center on Poor	Page 5
Papal Message for Migrant and Refugee Day	Page 6 & 7
Caritas Jerusalem: West Bank Needs Clean Water	Page 7
On World Hunger: Pope Decries Indifference	Page 8 & 9

THE POPE'S MESSAGE FOR WORLD PEACE DAY

1ST JANUARY 2010

(continued from page 1)



(Continued from page 1)

said. The papal message will underline the fact that protecting the natural environment is a challenge all people must face together, recognizing they have an obligation to respect a gift

God created for all, it said.

Pope Benedict also wants to emphasize how the "current ecological crisis" is impacting the entire world and, therefore, requires international action to resolve, it said.

"If one wants to cultivate the good of peace, in fact, one must promote a renewed awareness of the interdependence that links the earth's inhabitants to one another," the Vatican statement said.

Together people must preserve and restore the natural environment, eliminating at least some of the causes of environmental disasters, it said.

The Vatican statement said Pope Benedict intends his World Peace Day message to be a further development of the four paragraphs on the environment included in his encyclical "Caritas in Veritate" ("Charity in Truth").

In his encyclical, published in early July, Pope Benedict said, "The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a respon-

sibility toward the poor, toward future generations and toward humanity as a whole."

While the encyclical focused on development, and therefore discussed the need to share natural resources equitably and not exploit those found in poor countries, it also insisted there is a connection between environmental protection and peace.

"The stockpiling of natural resources, which in many cases are found in the poor countries themselves, gives rise to exploitation and frequent conflicts between and within nations. These conflicts are often fought on the soil of those same countries, with a heavy toll of death, destruction and further decay," the encyclical said.

Pope Benedict's message for the World Day of Peace in 2008, which focused on the family and on the world's population as forming one human family, also included a section on the obligation to protect the environment.



Swiss Bishops Protest Minaret Ban Say Prohibition Threatens Peaceful Coexistence



The Swiss bishops are expressing concern over a referendum vote that resulted in the banning of minarets -- the tall spires that constitute a distinctive architectural feature of mosques.

In a communiqué published recently, the Swiss Bishops' conference stated that the people's

decision to prohibit the construction of minarets in the country, approved that same day, "represents an obstacle and a great challenge on the path of integration in dialogue and mutual respect."

The communiqué, signed by the conference's director of communications, Walter Müller, affirmed that this ban implies "a manifest omission to show the people that the prohibition of minarets does not contribute to a healthy coexistence between religions and cultures but, on the contrary, it deteriorates it."

"The campaign, with its exaggerations and caricatures, demonstrated that religious peace does not happen on its own, but must be defended every day," the conference noted.

The Bishops warned that the initiative, driven by the conservative Swiss People's Party and the Federal Democratic Union, "increases the problems of coexistence between religions and cultures."

In the referendum, more than 57% of the voters decided to include in the Swiss Constitution the prohibition against constructing minarets.

Given the result, "the first challenge is to give back to the population the necessary confidence in our juridical ordering and appropriate attention to the interests of all," stated the Bishops.

And "this calls for the collaboration of all in Switzerland, especially the authorities of the State and of the Church," they continued.

Repercussions

At present Switzerland has four minarets, which are not currently used in the traditional Muslim "call to prayer." The referendum sought to halt new construction projects of these mosques towers, though the current minarets will be left intact.

The country, in which Islam is the second religion after Christianity in the number of followers, has some 310,000 Muslims, in a population of 7.5 million inhabitants.

The Bishops point out that "the difficulties of coexistence between religions and cultures are not limited to Switzerland," and they warned about the negative repercussions that this popular decision might have in other parts of the world.

Before the vote, they reminded citizens that the prohibition of minarets "would not help oppressed and persecuted Christians in Muslim countries, but rather would deteriorate the credibility of their commitment in those countries."

The text ends with an exhortation "to all persons of good will to increase still more their present commitment to those Christians and to be by their side."

In a communiqué last September, in which the bishops opposed the popular consultation approved yesterday, the conference requested consistency with the principles of religious liberty.

"The minarets, like the bell towers of churches, are a sign of the public presence of a religion," the Swiss Bishops affirmed at that time.

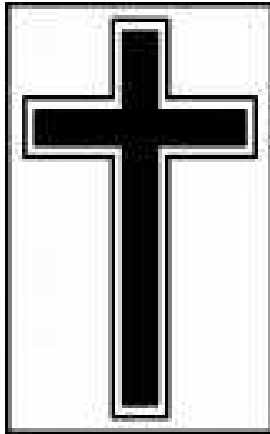
They added, "The general prohibition to construct minarets would make more fragile the necessary efforts to establish an attitude of reciprocal acceptance, in dialogue and mutual respect. In this matter, fear is a poor adviser."

3 Challenges for Muslims and Christians

Dialogue Council President: Future Must be Shared

The president of the Vatican's council for interreligious dialogue says there are three challenges shared by Muslims and Christians alike.

Believers of both faiths approach the table of dialogue with three necessities, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran said at a November 17 conference in France.



Cardinal Tauran's list is made up of:

- the "challenge of identity" (to know and accept what we ourselves are);
- the "challenge of otherness" (taking our differences as a source of enrichment);
- and the "challenge of sincerity" (being firm in proposing one's own faith, but within the limits of respect for the dignity of every human being).

The president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue proposed that interreligious dialogue "is based on a relationship of trust between faithful of different religions in order to know each another, to be mutually enriched and to reflect on how to cooperate together for the common good."

"This does not imply giving up one's faith," he said. "It implies allowing oneself to be questioned by another's convictions, to be willing to take into consideration arguments that are different to one's own or those of one's community."

The cardinal acknowledged that there are many conditions for "fruitful interreligious dialogue." Among them, he noted, are clarity regarding one's own religious beliefs, humility in admitting the errors of past and present, the recognition of values in the other, and sharing values held in common.

In interreligious dialogue, the prelate clarified, "there is no break with one's faith, which implies



knowledge of one's tradition." "Dialogue is not a strategy or a means to convert, though dialogue might foster conversion," he continued. "To be sincere, dialogue must be carried out without ulte-

rior motives."

Common contribution

The French cardinal stated that the "reflections, meetings and initiatives" of Christians and Muslims "are an especially positive contribution for our societies, which are often organized without God and at times against him."

"Believers can offer their fellow human beings, in particular leaders of society, values that can contribute to the harmony of spirits, to the meeting of cultures and to the preservation of the common good," he contended.

He recognized that there are obstacles in Christian-Muslim cooperation, pointing out in particular Muslim leaders who oppose the possibility of changing religions in fidelity to one's conscience.

Additionally, the cardinal noted, the climate of dialogue progressing among scholars and religious leaders "has not yet penetrated" to the base of society.

"But I am convinced that we must continue to meet, to listen, to understand and to propose concrete and modest ways that can open the way at the same time to more concrete and profound debates," he said. "The history of religions teaches that there is only one future possible: a shared future."

Climate Debate Should Center on Poor Hearts Must Change Before the Environment

The archbishop of Westminster is affirming that helping the poorest persons should be at the center of the climate change debate.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols said this Saturday at a "Time to Pray" ecumenical service regarding the environment and climate change.

The service, which featured addresses by various Christian leaders, was planned in conjunction with "The Wave," a demonstration in central London aimed at drawing attention to climate change issues prior to the U.N. Copenhagen summit.

Representatives of some 190 countries have just gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark, for a two-week conference to seek a global pact on climate change.

Archbishop Nichols addressed the topic by expressing concern for "all those whose lives are directly affected by climate change, the world's poorest and the most disadvantaged."

"This is an important perspective which we must not lose in the midst of all the other concerns expressed in recent weeks," he stated.

"We know that issues of world poverty and development cannot be separated from concerns for the environment," the prelate said. "They are intimately connected."

There is "much to do before we achieve sound and sustainable relationships between the peoples of this earth and with the environment of the created world," he acknowledged.

Lifestyles

"We sense within us never-ending demands," the



archbishop affirmed, "often provoked by the culture of our consumer society." He continued: "But we must look hard at the way we live our lives and consider again those whose future is threatened by the effects of our own lifestyles."

"Only when we are clearly prepared to change the way we live will politicians be able to achieve the change we say we want to see."

"To love God is, among other things, to give thanks and praise for the gifts of creation and to recognize that they are destined for all people," Archbishop Nichols stated.

Among these gifts, he said, is that of technology, and thus "technological advance is a crucial part of the way we will find solutions to the problems caused by climate change."

Technology is "not morally neutral," the prelate pointed out.

"Rather," he explained, "its proper use is guided always by its effect on the common good."

Thus, the archbishop continued, "let the genius of our finest minds serve the needs of all, and the needs of our environment."

"At the center of our world stands the human person," he affirmed, "every single one made in the image and likeness of God and deserving, for that reason alone, respect, freedom and cooperation."

Archbishop Nichols concluded: "It is hope that inspires us; faith that sustains us. Our union with Christ in prayer is our source of energy, of a new life for our effort as his disciples."

Papal Message for Migrant and Refugee Day

"Jesus Himself Experienced Migration"

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 27, 2009

Here is the message Benedict XVI wrote for the 96th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be celebrated Jan. 17, 2010.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The celebration of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees once again gives me the opportunity to express the Church's constant concern for those who, in different ways, experience a life of emigration. This is a phenomenon which, as I wrote in the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, upsets us due to the number of people involved and the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises on account of the dramatic challenges it poses to both national and international communities. The migrant is a human person who possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance (cf. n. 62).

This year's theme -- "Minor migrants and refugees" -- touches an aspect that Christians view with great attention, remembering the warning of Christ who at the Last Judgment will consider as directed to himself everything that has been done or denied "to one of the least of these" (cf. Mt 25:40, 45). And how can one fail to consider migrant and refugee minors as also being among the "least"? As a child, Jesus himself experienced migration for, as the Gospel recounts, in order to flee the threats of Herod, he had to seek refuge in Egypt together with Joseph and Mary (cf. Mt 2:14).

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that the best interests of the minor shall always be safeguarded (cf. Art. 3, 1), recognizing his or her fundamental human rights as equal to the rights of adults, unfortunately this does not always happen in practice.

Although there is increasing public awareness of the need for immediate and incisive action to protect minors, nevertheless, many are left to themselves and, in various ways, face the risk of exploitation. My venerable Predecessor, John Paul II, voiced the dramatic situation in which they live in the Message



he addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 22 September 1990, on the occasion of the World Summit for Children.

"I am a witness of the heart-breaking plight of millions of children on every continent. They are most vulnerable, because they are least able to make their voice heard" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 1 October 1990, p. 13). I warmly hope that proper attention will be given to minor migrants who need a social environment that permits and fosters their physical, cultural, spiritual and moral development. Living in a foreign land without effective points of reference generates countless and sometimes serious hardships and difficulties for them, especially those deprived of the support of their family.

A typical aspect of the migration of minors is the situation of children born in the host country or of those who do not live with their parents, who emigrated after their birth, but join them later. These adolescents belong to two cultures with all the advantages and problems attached to their dual background, a condition that can nevertheless offer them the opportunity to experience the wealth of an encounter between different cultural traditions. It is important that these young people be given the possibility of attending school and subsequently of being integrated into the world of work, and that their social integration be facilitated by appropriate educational and social structures. It should never be forgotten that adolescence constitutes a fundamental

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

phase for the formation of human beings.

A particular category of minors is that of refugees seeking asylum, who, for various reasons, are fleeing their own country, where they are not given adequate protection. Statistics show that their numbers are increasing. This is therefore a phenomenon that calls for careful evaluation and coordinated action by implementing appropriate measures of prevention, protection and welcome, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (cf. Art. 22).

I now turn in particular to parishes and to the many Catholic associations which, imbued with a spirit of faith and charity, take pains to meet the needs of these brothers and sisters of ours. While I express gratitude for all that is being done with great generosity, I would like to invite all Christians to become aware of the social and pastoral challenges posed by migrant and refugee minors.

Jesus' words resound in our hearts: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35), as, likewise, the central commandment he left us: to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind,

but together with love of neighbour (cf. Mt 22:37-39).

This leads us to consider that any of our concrete interventions must first be nurtured by faith in the action of grace and divine Providence. In this way also hospitality and solidarity to strangers, especially if they are children, become a proclamation of the Gospel of solidarity. The Church proclaims this when she opens her arms and strives to have the rights of migrants and refugees respected, moving the leaders of Nations, and those in charge of international organizations and institutions to promote opportune initiatives for their support.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary watch over us all and help us to understand the difficulties faced by those who are far from their homeland. I assure all those who are involved in the vast world of migrants and refugees of my prayers and cordially impart to them the Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 16 October 2009

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

Caritas Jerusalem: West Bank Needs Clean Water Sewage Damaging Farmland

JALBUN, West Bank, A village and surrounding settlements in the West Bank have been inundated with sewage and have little opportunity for clean water.

A statement sent by Caritas Jerusalem detailed the problems suffered by the some 2,500 residents of Jalbun. Because it is low-lying and adjacent to a cow farm, and because of the rerouting of sewage caused by the separation wall, Jalbun has seen sewage flooding.

Samir Abu Al-Roub, chairman of the Jablun local council, noted the grim prospects for agriculture since the farmland has absorbed the sewage chemicals. Moreover, Jalbun is not connected to the water network, meaning that residents need to buy water when it is delivered on trucks. One resident, Jamal Abu Al-Rob, lamented, "I can not afford to buy water for 45 sheep and my family. This is too much."

According to the statement sent by Caritas Jerusalem, Palestinians go without water for days or months at a time. "Residents of most West Bank villages only receive running water once a week and some have not received running water in months. This problem of water shortage is not only a health hazard but a social and agricultural challenge," said Nader Al- Khateeb, general director of the Water and Environment Development Organization.

According to Palestinian officials, Israel controls about 50 West Bank wells, which are directed to about 250,000 people. Palestinians control about 200 wells, but with them, need water for some 2.5 million people.

On World Hunger: Pope Decries Indifference Affirms Problem Is Not an Issue of Population Growth

Pope Benedict XVI addressed the U.N. food summit, saying that world hunger must never become a matter of indifference.

The Pope visited the Rome headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, where some 60 heads of state and delegates from 192 countries were gathered to consider the problem that one in six people on the planet will go to bed hungry tonight.

"Statistics bear witness to the dramatic growth in the number of people suffering from hunger [...] notwithstanding the known fact that the world has enough food for all its inhabitants," the Holy Father said. "Indeed, while low levels of agricultural production persist in some regions, partly owing to climate change, sufficient food is produced on a global scale to satisfy both current demands and those in the foreseeable future.

"From these data we may deduce that there is no cause-and-effect relationship between population growth and hunger," he said. And he contended this is further demonstrated by the "lamentable destruction of foodstuffs for economic gain."

The Holy Father's observation seconded an analysis from the director-general of FAO, Jacques Diouf, who noted, "In some developed countries, 2% to 4% of the population are able to produce enough food to feed the entire nation and even to export, while in the majority of developing countries, 60% to 80% of the population are not able to meet country food needs."

Subsidiarity

Benedict XVI spoke to the world leaders about the Catholic social doctrine principle of subsidiarity -- according to which a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order.

He noted that the poorest countries are more integrated into world economy than they used to be, and yet, sometimes they are still forced to seek the

**Every 3.6 seconds a person
dies of hunger
75%
of them are children**

aid of intergovernmental institutions.

This type of cooperation, the Holy Father suggested, "must be consistent with the principle of subsidiarity: It is necessary to involve 'local communities in choices and decisions that affect the use of agricultural land.'"

In fact, the declaration approved today at the FAO three-day summit reflects a change in strategy to focus on agriculture in poor countries. It is expected that re-focusing will better equip the world's hungry to help themselves, rather than depending on outside food assistance.

"Our job is not just to feed the hungry, but to empower the hungry to feed themselves," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the beginning of the summit.

Never

Benedict XVI was adamant that a solution to world hunger must be found, saying that it is not something to get used to.

He forcefully contested what he called a "tendency to view hunger as structural, an integral part of the socio-political situation of the weakest countries, a matter of resigned regret, if not downright indifference."

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

"It is not so, and it must never be so," he said.

Instead, the Pope called for fighting and conquering hunger, saying that to make this happen "it is essential to start redefining the concepts and principles that have hitherto governed international relations, in such a way as to answer the question: What can direct the attention and the consequent conduct of states toward the needs of the poorest?"



"The response," the Bishop of Rome affirmed, "must be sought not in the technical aspects of cooperation, but in the principles that lie behind it: Only in the name of common membership of the worldwide human family can every people and therefore every country be asked to practice solidarity, that is, to shoulder the burden of concrete responsibilities in meeting the needs of others, so as to favour the genuine sharing of goods, founded on love."

Not just love

Nevertheless, Benedict XVI clarified, solving the problem of world hunger is not just a question of charity.

He explained: "While it is true that human solidarity inspired by love goes beyond justice -- because to love is to give, to offer what is 'mine' to the other -- it is never without justice, which leads us to give the other what is 'his,' what belongs to him by virtue of his being and acting. Indeed, I cannot 'give' the other what is 'mine,' without first giving him what belongs to him in justice."

"Sufficient, healthy and nutritious food, and likewise water" are a "fundamental right of the individual," he recalled.

In eliminating hunger, the Pope added, international action is needed to find new parameters -- and not just ethical ones, but also juridical and economic parameters, which are "capable of inspiring the degree of cooperation required to build a relationship of parity between countries at different stages of development."

He cited St. Paul in this regard: "I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want, that there may be equality. As it is written, 'He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.'"

Cruel and concrete

Benedict XVI concluded calling hunger the "most cruel and concrete sign of poverty."

"Opulence and waste," he said, "are no longer acceptable when the tragedy of hunger is assuming ever greater proportions."
