



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO PARTICIPANTS AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
FOR CATHOLIC RADIO PERSONNEL
SPONSORED BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS***

Friday, 20 June 2008

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am pleased to welcome you to this house which is the house of Peter, and I joyfully offer my welcome to you all - Directors, editors and administrators - and the representatives of the many Catholic Radios throughout the world who are meeting in Rome, convoked by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications to consider the identity and mission of Catholic Radio Stations today. Through you, I would like to greet with affection your many listeners in the various countries and continents who tune in daily and, thanks to your news broadcasts, learn to know Christ better, to listen to the Pope and to love the Church. I extend a warm "thank you" to the President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, for his kind tribute to me. With him I greet the Secretaries, the Undersecretary and all the Officials of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

The many different forms of communication with which we all have to deal show with obvious clarity that man, in his essential anthropological structure, was made to enter into relations with others. He does so above all through speech. In its simplicity and apparent poverty, the word, inscribed in the common grammar of language, is an instrument that assists the human capacity for relationships. This is based on the shared riches of a reason created in the image and likeness of the eternal *Logos* of God in which all things are created freely and for love. We know that that *Logos* did not remain extraneous to human events but, through love, communicated himself to men and women - *ho Logos sarx egheneto* (Jn 1: 14) - and, in the love revealed by him and given in Christ, he continues to invite people to relate to him and to one another in a new way.

By becoming incarnate in Mary's womb, the Word of God offers the world a relationship of intimacy and friendship: "No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends" (Jn 15: 15). The Word is transformed into a source of newness for the world and is integrated into humanity as the beginning of a new civilization of truth and of love. In fact, "the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known - it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing" (*Spe Salvi*, n. 2). God's self-communication offers a new horizon of hope and truth to human hopes and from this springs forth, already in this world, the beginning of a new world, a world of this eternal life that brightens the darkness of the human future.

Dear friends, as you work in Catholic radio stations you are at the service of the Word. The words that you broadcast each day are an echo of that eternal Word which became flesh. Your own words will bear fruit only to the extent that they serve the eternal Word, Jesus Christ. In God's saving plan and providence, that Word lived among us, or - as St John says - "pitched his tent among us" (Jn 1: 14), in humility. The Incarnation took place in a distant village, far away from the noisy imperial cities of antiquity. Today, even though you make use of modern communication technologies, the words which you broadcast are also humble, and sometimes it may seem to you that they are completely lost amidst the competition of other noisy and more powerful mass media. But do not be disheartened! You are sowing the Word "in season and out of season" (2 Tm 4: 2), and thus fulfilling Jesus' command that the Gospel be preached to all nations (cf. Mt 28: 19). The words which you transmit reach countless people, some of whom are alone and for whom your word comes as a consoling gift, some of whom are curious and are intrigued by what they hear, some of whom never attend church because they belong to different religions or to no religion at all, and others still who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ, yet through your service first come to hear the words of salvation. This work of patient sowing, carried on day after day, hour after hour, is your way of cooperating in the apostolic mission.

If the many forms and types of communication can be a gift of God to the service of development of the human person and of all humanity, radio, through which you exercise your apostolate, proposes closeness and listening to the word and to music in order to inform people and to make them relax, to announce and to denounce, but always with respect for reality and in a clear perspective of education in the truth and in hope. Indeed, Jesus Christ gives us the Truth about man and the truth for man and, based on this truth, a hope for the present and for the future of people and of the world. In this perspective, the Pope encourages you in your mission and congratulates you on the work you have done. However, as *Redemptoris Missio* emphasizes: "It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the 'new culture' created by modern communications" (n. 37, c). By virtue of its association with words radio shares in the Church's mission and in its visibility but also creates a new way of living, being and making Church; this mission entails ecclesiological and pastoral challenges. It is important to make the Word of God attractive by giving it substance in your programmes and broadcasts to move the hearts of the men and women of our time and to take part in the transformation of our contemporaries' lives.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, what exciting prospects you have before you in your commitment and your work! Your network can represent a small but concrete echo in the world of that network of friendship which the presence of the Risen Christ, the God-with-us, has inaugurated between Heaven and earth and among the peoples of all continents and epochs. By doing so your work itself will be fully part of the mission of the Church which I invite you to love deeply. By helping the heart of every person to open up to Christ you will help the world to be open to hope and to be wide open to that civilization of truth and love which is the most eloquent fruit of his presence among us. My Blessing to you all!

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