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Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontifice

PRESS RELEASE 3

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

"Rethinking Key Features of Economic and Social Life"

New Synod Hall - Vatican City and the Palazzo della Cancelleria - Rome; 25-27 May 2015

Prof. Quadrio Curzio: "proposing an alternative to the current development model that is not to be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human (Centesimus Annus, p.29)".

"The theme of this conference, 'Rethinking Key Features of Economic and Social Life' "is in line with those of recent years, in which the dominant paradigm of development was critically examined from economic, social and cultural perspectives with reference to the principles of the social doctrine of the Church". These comments were made by Professor Alberto Quadrio Curzio, chairman of the Scientific Committee of the Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice Foundation (FCAPP), in his introduction to the work of the international conference which opened this afternoon in the New Synod Hall in Vatican City.

Themes. This year the Scientific Committee chose three specific issues for reflection. The first concerns the relationship between economic growth and compulsive consumption. Although consumption represents one of the forces that support economic growth, excess consumption, considered by Pope Francis and his predecessors as the expression of a culture of selfishness and hedonism, can have a negative impact on the sustainability of economic and social development. The second deals with the contribution to job creation as part of the activities of the informal economy. Although these are lawful, they desert the market mechanism as they are regulated by reciprocity and redistribution. These activities often prove adequate to meet basic human needs with a strong relational content (health, education, proximity services). The third theme asks whether the principles of the social doctrine of the Church can be a guide in its policy and whether this guide is also valid for those who do not profess themselves to be either Catholic or Christian.

Professor Quadrio Curzio explained that the objective which the CAPPF Scientific Committee has consistently pursued through the Foundation's international conferences, was to draw out the potential for current questions of the combined values of the Church's Social Doctrine. As part of the specific topics to be addressed in this year's conference, he mentioned some points that may guide the initial discussion, but they will undoubtedly be further expanded.

The Church's Social Doctrine and current issues. With regard to the first theme, we intend to evaluate how in the current deflationary situation, we could recommend revisions in models of consumption inspired by Christian moral principles, without affecting the need to strengthen economic growth and maintain the mechanisms of the market economy, since these are useful to reduce inequalities within and between countries. What is needed where the second theme is concerned, is a critical examination of the informal economy in the economic and social development of a country in terms of resources used and final results. This can be done by evaluating whether these lawful activities can provide an opening for job creation and what policies and safeguards should be taken to legitimize and strengthen them. Finally, regarding the third theme, the goal is to reflect on the likelihood of a shared common platform for social commitment beyond religious or ideological beliefs.

Dignity and primacy of the person. "To rethink the characteristics of economic and social life in this historic moment, means offering an alternative to the current development model that, while not the only one, is the dominant one; a paradigm that is based on the categories of subsidiarity and solidarity, capable of ensuring economic growth and development that 'must not be understood solely in purely economic terms, but in a way that is fully human' (Centesimus Annus, §29)". As Professor. Quadrio Curzio made clear, "The CSD's combined values provide a good basis to inform and shape the proposed development model referred to above. The point of reference for these values is the dignity and absolute primacy of the human person, considered both in his autonomy and responsibility and as part of a complex relational reality in which to work for the common good.

Message. In conclusion, the chairman of the Scientific Committee emphasized that "the social doctrine of the Church has a very coherent vision of subsidiarity, solidarity and development for the promotion of the person and his freedom within a context of responsibility and the pursuit of the common good. This leads to a strong

identity with which Catholics should be familiar. It would promote economic and social choices based on true knowledge of the facts and full adherence to principles that are likewise an ideal guide for all men of good will.

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- *Journalists, photographers and video operators who wish to attend the two events of the international conference to be held in the New Synod Hall and the Palazzo della Cancelleria, **must be authorized by the Holy See Press Office** (the request must indicate the place or places where they wish to attend) by filling out an application form for accreditation, available on the website: www.vatican.va. The request, accompanied by documents of identity, must be sent by the management of the news organization they represent to: accreditamenti@pressva.va 48 hours before the event. For information contact the Holy See Press Office tel. (39) 06698921, fax (39) 066868810.*
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