

## INAUGURAL SESSION

### OPENING SPEECH by Domingo Sugranyes Bickel, Chairman CAPP Foundation

Eminence, Your Excellencies, Reverend Fathers, Dear friends,

In the first place, I should like to express my gratitude to His Eminence, Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, and to Monsignor Mauro Rivella for their solicitous interest in the work of the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation. It is a great privilege to work under their guidance. The freedom with which we have been able to develop our activities is a unique sign of confidence and trust, and I hope we are up to the challenge!

My second thought is for all of you who have taken time and effort to be here today in Rome and at the Vatican for our international conference, especially those coming from far away. We have more than 500 hundred registered participants and accompanying persons coming from 19 countries. These record high numbers are a good indication of the vitality of our Foundation on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. My heartfelt welcome to all and every one of you. May I also welcome our many guests and friends who are not yet members of the Foundation but have shown special interest and honour us with their company. And a special welcome to the members of the newly created international network of young CAPP members.

My third thought: in these three days you will listen to many speeches and I prefer to spare you any deep concepts at this early stage! I suppose you've read the letter I sent to all members a few days ago and you know that this annual conference is the last one at which I'll serve as Chairman. And still, at the opening of this annual conference I feel as excited and motivated as the first time, nine years ago, and deeply impressed with our own ambitious project. As the President of Fordham University Fr McShane told us two months ago in New York, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Dublin Process consultation, "we have the goods, let's find the language". Yes, we have extraordinary goods – Catholic Social Teaching – and our vocation is to participate in a Church-wide effort to try and elaborate how it can be applied and spread today, in the context of another avalanche of "new things", *Rerum Novarum*. This is a demanding task. We should pray our founder, the great Pope St John Paul II, to help us on the way.

We are celebrating 25 years of the Foundation. This is a reason for great joy. But our Board decided that it was no time to look backwards. On the contrary, from this afternoon until Saturday morning when we shall have the privilege of listening to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, before being received once more by our Holy Father Pope Francis, the program of our conference is totally oriented to the present and the future. I should like to thank all those who have shared work in preparing this program, especially the Scientific Committee for their advice, the Secretary General for his tireless dedication to the organization, and my colleagues on the Board. And let me mention especially our colleague Professor Anna Maria Tarantola: as you know, with the approval of the Holy See, she has already accepted to be appointed by the Board later this year, and she prepares to take up the Chair as from March 2019.

Welcome to all, and I wish you an enriching experience during this conference: to feed and strengthen our common faith and commitment through sharing questions, answers, smiles and empathy, and by praying together.