

30th Anniversary International Convention- initial greetings by the Chairperson A.M. Tarantola 6.6.23

Opening the proceedings of the second day of our International Convention celebrating our 30th Anniversary, in the presence of many authorities and friends, I would like to particularly welcome the attending founding members and those who could join us. A special thought goes to all those who have been the protagonists in the history of Centesimus and who have left us.

Thirty years of activity is almost a third of a century. We have come a long way. This Convention must be an opportunity not only to celebrate this anniversary but to enjoy the pleasure of being together and to gain strength and inspiration for our future.

Our Foundation was born immediately after the publication of the Encyclical Centesimus annus by Saint John Paul II. It was the brainchild of Cardinal Rosalio José Castillo Lara, who wanted to stimulate Italian entrepreneurs to 'do something' to testify to the Holy Father that they appreciated and welcomed the Encyclical.

Thanks to the valuable and important contribution of Mr. Andrea Gibellini, Msgr. Daniele Rota, Card. Giovanni Lajolo and others, it was possible to involve a significant number of Italian entrepreneurs and bankers who set up our Fondazione with the aim of spreading the Social Doctrine of the Church and supporting the Holy Father's charitable works. Each of the 40 founding members contributed 50 million lire, a significant amount at the time. Particularly important was the action of the national and diocesan ecclesiastical counsellors, always on the frontline to actively promote the cause. I recall, in particular, the late Msgr. Nicola Pavoni and Msgr. Massimo Magagnin, who were very active in the founding phase. I wish to thank the many Ecclesiastical Counsellors who continue to play a fundamental role in guaranteeing the consistency of our work with the Teaching of the Church.

Many years have passed since then, and we have grown in numbers, in the range of professions, and in geographical areas. We have operated during very difficult periods marked by major crises.

Now we live in a world that the Global Economic Forum has called Vuca: volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. A world that is difficult to understand and manage. In this world, the SDC can be the compass to guide us and anchor the ship to a saving shore through stormy seas. Centesimus' commitment, though modest, can support and help with this anchoring.

During these years, we have earned neither honours nor economic benefits. Rather we have achieved the satisfaction of humbly contributing to the affirmation of the centrality of the person and of ethics, inclusion, solidarity and the achievement of integral sustainability. We have accomplished all this and can continue to do so by studying and deepening our knowledge of the contents of SDC today. By bearing witness, through our work, to its concreteness, by engaging in open dialogue, internally and externally. Also, by bringing together people of different religions and cultures on what can be concretely done to transform an unsustainable world into one that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and also genuinely inclusive.

The SDC should become the guide for the lives of everyone in every field: in business as well as in politics, science, academia, professional world, and in technology. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The SDC is little known and applied. So, we still have a long way to go, but it is vitally important to make the world know the beauty and usefulness of the SDC. How can we apply the SDC if we do not know it?

Yesterday we listened to the work of the Chapters, some really interesting insights emerged. Today we will talk about our past in order to map out our future. We will listen to the voices of members and their different roles within our Fondazione: Chairpersons, ecclesiastical counsellors (Msgr. Celli, International Ecclesiastical Counsellor representing them all), coordinators, and some individual members who have responsible roles in society.

I would like to focus briefly on two sessions:

- The first session with the presentation of the book '30 years of papal messages to Centesimus' with Msgr. Nunzio Galantino, President of APSA, who wrote the introduction to the book, and two academics: Prof. Alberto Quadrio Curzio, who was for many years President of the Scientific Committee and played a driving role in its scientific activity, and Prof. Stefano Zamagni, former President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, who has always been close to our Foundation. He won the International Prize for Economy and Society in 2013 in its first edition. This first session will certainly provide important reflections on the contents of the papal messages and indications on how we should operate in the years to come in the light of the path traced out in these messages. H.E. Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi, President of the Italian Episcopal Conference and also member of the Dicastery for the Evangelisation, who accepted to participate, is currently engaged, on His Holy Father's request, in a delicate peace mission in Kiev for the peace in Ukraine. We wish him great success for this strategic and delicate mission. We will pray for him.

- The final session, which we have entitled "The Future of the FCAPP" is particularly relevant. We will focus on Aid to the Church in Need thanks to the presence of Mr. Thomas Heine-Geldern, President of Aid to the Church in Need. Unfortunately, in many countries the Catholic Church is subject to persecution; it is important to be aware of this reality.

As you can see, we have a lot of food for thought, and I am certain that we will take home some useful indications on how to set up our future work. Confident in the fact that we can be a point of reference for all men and women of good will who believe in the Gospel message.

I would like to close by recalling that in the audience granted to the IC participants in May 2016, Pope Francis invited the Fondazione to *"contribute to generating new models of economic progress more clearly directed towards the universal common good, inclusion and integral development, job creation and investment in human resources."* Seven years have passed since then, some progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go. That is why our goal for the future is still the one indicated at the time by Pope Francis. Let us commit ourselves personally and as a Foundation, with a great sense of responsibility. We should also be capable of reaching out to more people, not just members, drawing them closer to our purposes. We should help them understand the context in which we live and know how to represent their real needs. As the Holy Father said on that occasion: *"How I wish everyone would accept responsibility for preparing a different future!"*

I sincerely thank all the speakers and moderators who honour us with their presence. Thank you all for being here today. Thank you for your past and future commitment.