



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE ITALIAN FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC WEEKLIES***

Clementine Hall

Friday, 26 November 2010

Private Audience with the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies

On Friday, 26 November, the Holy Father spoke to the journalists taking part in the Assembly of the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies, whom he received in Audience in the Vatican's Clementine Hall. The following is a translation of the Pope's Address, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to meet you on the occasion of the Assembly of the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies. I extend my cordial greeting to Bishop Marian Crociata, Secretary of the Italian Episcopal Conference, to the Prelates and Priests present, and to Fr Giorgio Zucchelli, President of the Federation, whom I thank for his courteous words. I greet you all, editors and collaborators of the 188 Catholic newspapers represented in the Federation. I greet in particular the Director of the press agency *SIR* and the Editor of the daily, *Avvenire*.

I am grateful for this meeting, with which you express your fidelity to the Church and to her Magisterium: I also thank you for your continued support of the Peter's Pence Collection, and of the charitable initiatives promoted and supported by the Holy See.

The Italian Federation of Catholic Journalists is made up of the diocesan weeklies and the various Catholic organs of the press of the whole Italian peninsula.

It was established in 1966 in response to the need to develop synergies and collaboration aimed at encouraging the precious task of popularizing the Church's life, activity and teaching.

Channels of communication between the different local organs of the press scattered across Italy were created in order to respond to the need to encourage collaboration and to give a certain

organic dimension to the various intellectual and creative potentials with the aim of increasing the efficacy and effectiveness of the proclamation of the Gospel message.

This is the specific role of newspapers of Catholic inspiration: to proclaim the Good News by covering current events in Christian communities and the real situations of which they are part.

Just as a small quantity of leaven, mixed with flour, causes the mass of dough to rise, so the Church, present in society, causes what is true, good and beautiful grow and mature.

It is your task to broadcast this presence which promotes and strengthens what is authentically human and brings to contemporary men and women the message of truth and hope of the Lord Jesus.

You know well that in the context of post-modernity in which we live, one of the most important cultural challenges is posed by the way of understanding truth. The prevalent culture, the most widespread in the agora of the media, adopts a sceptical and relativistic approach to the truth, measuring it with the same yardstick as that by which simple opinions are judged, and consequently deems many “truths” to be possible and legitimate at the same time.

Yet the desire that dwells in human hearts testifies to the impossibility of being satisfied with partial truths. This is why the “search looks towards an ulterior truth which would explain the meaning of life. And it is therefore a search which can reach its end only in reaching the absolute” (John Paul ii, Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, n. 33).

The truth for which the human person thirsts is a person: the Lord Jesus. It is in encountering this Truth, in knowing and loving it, that we find true peace and true happiness. The Church’s mission consists in creating the necessary conditions for this encounter of the human being with Christ.

By collaborating in this task, organs of information are called to serve truth courageously, to help public opinion to look at and interpret reality from an evangelical viewpoint. It is a matter of presenting the reasons for faith which, as such, go beyond any ideological vision and are fully entitled to citizenship in public debate.

From this need is born your constant commitment to give a voice to a viewpoint that respects Catholic thought in all ethical and social matters.

Dear friends, the importance of your presence is testified by the far-reaching distribution of the weeklies you represent.

This distribution passes through the means of printed paper which, precisely because of its simplicity, continues to be an effective sound box of all that happens in the different diocesan

realities. I therefore urge you to continue in your service providing information about the events that mark the progress of the communities, their daily lives, and the many charitable and beneficial initiatives that they promote.

Continue to be papers for the people that seek to encourage authentic dialogue between the various members of society, training-grounds for comparison and loyal discussion between different opinions.

By so doing, while they carry out their important duty of informing, Catholic newspapers carry out at the same time an indispensable formative role, promoting an gospel understanding of the complex reality as well as educating critical and Christian consciences.

In this way you also are responding to the appeal of the Italian Episcopal Conference which has made the educational challenge, the need to give to the Christian people a solid and robust formation, the focus of its pastoral commitment in the coming decade.

Dear brothers and sisters, through the sacrament of Baptism every Christian becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit and, immersed in the death and Resurrection of the Lord, is consecrated to him and belongs to him.

In order to bring your important task to completion, you too must first of all cultivate a constant and profound bond with Christ; only profound communion with him will enable you to bring to our contemporaries the news of Salvation!

In hard work and dedication to your daily tasks, may you be able to witness to your faith, the great and freely given gift of the Christian vocation. Continue to remain in ecclesial communion with your Pastors, so as to cooperate with them as editors, writers and administrators of Catholic weeklies, in the Church's evangelizing mission.

As I take my leave of you, I would like to assure you of my remembrance in suffrage for the late Mons. Franco Peradotto, who died recently. He was the first President of the Federation of Italian Catholic Weeklies and was editor of the Turin paper *Voice of the People* for many years.

As I entrust the Federation and your work to the heavenly intercession of the Virgin Mary and of St Francis de Sales, I warmly impart to you and to all your collaborators the Apostolic Blessing.

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