



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE
DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, MARKING THE
50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENCYCLICAL "POPULORUM PROGRESSIO"**

Synod Hall

Tuesday, 4 April 2017 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for the invitation and the welcome. Thank you for your presence and your work in human promotion and for the common good. I thank Cardinal Turkson for his words of greeting and for having begun, with no small effort, the new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. It has been an exemplary model to follow, in peace, creativity, consultations, truly a model of ecclesial construction: thank you, Your Eminence.

You have come together in this International Congress because, significantly, the birth of the new Dicastery corresponds with the 50th anniversary of Blessed Paul vi's Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. He explained in detail in that Encyclical the meaning of 'integral development' (cf. n. 21), and proposed the concise and felicitous formula: "development of each man and of the whole man" (n. 14).

What is meant, today and in the near future, by 'integral development', that is, the development of each man and of the whole man? In the footsteps of Paul vi, perhaps in the very word *integrate* — so dear to me — we can identify a fundamental direction for the new Dicastery. Let us look at a few aspects together.

It is a matter of *integrating the diverse peoples of the earth*. The duty of solidarity obliges us to seek just ways of sharing, so there may not exist that tragic inequality between those who have too much and those who have nothing, between those who reject and those who are rejected. Only the path of integration among peoples allows humanity a future of peace and hope.

It is a matter of offering *feasible models of social integration*. Everyone has a contribution to offer to the whole of society; everyone has a trait that can be useful in living together; no one is excluded from contributing something for the good of all. This is, at the same time, a right and a duty. It is the principle of subsidiarity that guarantees the need for everyone's contribution, whether as individuals or as groups, if we want to create a human coexistence open to all.

It is also a matter of *integrating in development all those elements that render it truly such*. The various systems: the economy, finance, work, culture, family life, religion are, each in its own way, a fundamental circumstance for this growth. None of them can be an absolute, and none can be excluded from the concept of integral human development which, in other words, takes into account that human life is like an orchestra that performs well if the various instruments are in harmony and follow a score shared by all.

It is also a matter of *integrating the individual and the community dimensions*. It is undeniable that we are children of a culture, at least in the Western world, that has exalted the individual to the point of making him as an island, almost as if he could be happy alone. On the other hand, there is no lack of ideological views and political powers that have crushed the person; they have depersonalized the individual and deprived him of that boundless freedom without which man no longer feels he is man. There are also economic powers interested in this conformity; they seek to exploit globalization instead of fostering greater sharing among people, simply in order to impose a global market of which they themselves make the rules and reap the profits. The 'I' and the community are not in competition with each other, but the 'I' can mature only in the presence of authentic interpersonal relationships, and the community is productive when each and every one of its components is such. This is even more the case for the family, which is the first cell of society and where one learns how to live together.

It is lastly a matter of *integrating among them body and soul*. Paul vi previously wrote that development cannot be restricted simply to economic growth (cf. n. 14); development does not consist in having goods increasingly available, for physical wellbeing alone. Integrating body and soul also means that no work of development can truly reach its goal if it does not respect that place in which God is present with us and speaks to our heart.

God made himself known fully in Jesus Christ: in Him there is no division or separation between God and man. God became man in order to make of human life, both personal and social, a concrete path to salvation. Thus, the manifestation of God in Christ — including his gestures of healing, of liberation, of reconciliation that today we are called to propose anew to the many wounded on the roadside — points out the path and the way of service that the Church intends to offer the world: in his light one can understand what is meant by 'integral' development, which harms neither God nor man, because it takes on the complete essence of both.

In this sense the very concept of *person*, born and matured in Christianity, fosters the pursuit of a

fully human development. Because person always signifies *relationship*, not individualism; it affirms *inclusion*, not exclusion; unique and inviolable *dignity*, not exploitation; *freedom* and not constraint.

The Church does not tire of offering this wisdom and her work to the world, mindful that integral development is the path of good that the human family is called to follow. I invite you to carry on this work with patience and perseverance, trusting that the Lord accompanies us. May He bless you and Our Lady protect you. Thank you.