



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI
ON OCCASION OF THE CONTINENTAL MEETING
FOR AMERICA ON THE
«COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH»**

*To Cardinal
Norberto Rivera Carrera
Archbishop and Primate of Mexico*

On the occasion of the Continental Meeting for America on the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* which is taking place in this City, I am pleased to address a cordial greeting to the organizers and participants who come from the different American Countries to take part in this important Meeting, motivated by their commitment to the evangelization of social life.

Thus, the desire of my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God John Paul II, is fulfilled. Aware of the priority importance of spreading knowledge of the Church's social teaching, he pointed out that it would be very useful to have "a compendium or approved synthesis of Catholic social doctrine" (*Ecclesia in America*, n. 54).

In fact, this *Compendium* is a valuable instrument which facilitates in the different environments a deeper and more systematic study of the Church's approaches in the political, social and economic contexts, and at the same time encourages their practical application in the actual situation of each country or continent, taking its particular features into account.

I am pleased to note that this Meeting seeks to give a greater impetus to the evangelizing mission of the Church in America, which must also be extended to the social field, ever mindful of the primacy of the truth about the human being with his inviolable dignity and all his rights.

Thus, the world, whose organizational and interrelational forms are increasing every day so that they are known today as "globalization", will be able to have a soul that also enables it to grow in humanity, justice and the spirit of solidarity.

The lay faithful take part in this evangelizing and humanizing mission of the Church in a special way in accordance with their secular character, since they live and work where social life is organized, decisions are taken and changes are made to the structures that condition civil life.

Lay people must follow their specific vocation "to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 31).

Consequently, they should put their professional skills and witness of an exemplary life at the service of the evangelization of social life, making it at the same time more just and better suited to the human person.

They therefore need a solid formation that will enable them to discern in every practical situation, over and above private interests or opportunist proposals, what truly improves human beings in their entirety and the specific characteristics the various social institutions should have if they are truly to promote the common good.

In this regard, the *Compendium*, the subject of examination at this Meeting, because of its completeness and its concise summaries of each one of the points treated, can be a valuable help in the formation of the Christian faithful in social matters, especially if it is accompanied by pastoral and catechetical activities that are wise, constant and far-reaching.

I ask the Lord, through the motherly intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, to illumine the work of this Continental Meeting, so that it will bear abundant fruit and be a favourable opportunity to live the thirst for justice with a Christian spirit, in order to encourage the commitment to solidarity with the needy and the indispensable impulse of charity.

With these sentiments, I impart a heartfelt Apostolic Blessing to all those who are taking part in the Congress.

From the Vatican, 19 November 2005

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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