

Documents

World Meeting of Popular Movements



2014 in Rome, Italy

2015 in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia



Index

- 1 - Introduction
- 2 - Francis' Speech 28/10/2014 – WMPM 2014
- 3 - Final Statement – WMPM 2014
- 4 - Letter from Santa Cruz – WMPM 2015
- 5 - Francis Speech 9/7/2015 – WMPM 2015
- 6 - Notes



INTRODUCTION

In his meeting with the popular movements, Francis has set on the international scene a reality that has been silenced by the powerful of the world. "Not only do the poor suffer injustice but also they struggle against it." The excluded are not satisfied with empty promises, alibis or excuses. Nor do they wait with arms crossed for help from NGOs, welfare schemes or paternalistic solutions that never arrive." The ones from below are "the sowers of change", "social poets", "they want to be protagonists, they get organised, study, work, issue demands and, above all, practice that very special solidarity that exists among those who suffer, among the poor, and that our civilization seems to have forgotten or would strongly prefer to forget." The ones disposed by the system, in opposition to the socioenvironmental crisis that challenges the whole world, have "in their own hands" not only the solution to their own problems but also, nothing more and nothing less, "the future of humanity".

Francis, in an outpouring of affection and with genuine proximity, has made visible the struggles of the excluded from the countryside and the city for the 3 L's (labor, lodging, land), by asserting their organizational solidary experiences and reassuring the need to promote the social, economic and political protagonism of the poor.

He has done it with clarity, determination and courage, he has criticized the excluding capitalism harshly and reasserted the processes of change, rejected the sweetness of power, shook all forms of imperialism and celebrated the unity of the peoples, avoided the hypocrisy of euphemisms and talked with clarity about the sufferings and hopes of our colleagues.



Francis has reassured the utterly revolutionary nature of Jesus project, a project which challenges the ruling of the “maximum profit” and the “throw-away” culture; which implies the fair distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor, not as a mere philanthropy but as a commandment that calls us to raise the flags for Peace and Justice in defence of humanity and Mother Earth.

With a huge contribution to militancy, Francis has updated the sense of the preferential option for the poor, by clarifying that it does not only imply showing solidarity to them but also recognising them as a social and political subject, fostering their protagonism in all the fields, being by their side always from their own reality and not from abstract ideological schemes.

In other words, this is not a question of working for the poor but struggling against the structural causes of inequality and injustice. To this regard, Francis’ contributions to the popular thinking –among them, the two addresses to the popular movements that appear in this edition- not only have renewed the Social Doctrine of the Church but also they are an invaluable input for the theoretical and doctrinaire updating of those who long for the structural transformation of society and the overcoming of capitalism.

As members of the popular movements, we also did a good job during the two world meetings held in Rome (2014) and Santa Cruz de la Sierra (2015). There, we laid out some common lines of work that are reflected in the two final documents and went into detail about a fruitful dialogue between the different tendencies and traditions of popular struggle. However, our capacity of transforming action, our efficacy in the struggle for the 3 L’s, our construction of alternatives to face the excluding globalization, our levels of unity, organization and mass mobilization are far away from achieving the historical mission

we have as protagonists of the process of change.

Let us not become intimidated, let us double the efforts and go further into the struggle so that the sacred right to land, lodging and labor may be an effective reality for all of us.

Juan Grabois

Organising Committee

World meeting of Popular Movements

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD MEETING OF POPULAR MOVEMENTS

Old Synod Hall

Tuesday, 28 October 2014



Good morning again, I am happy to be with you. Besides, let me tell you a secret: this is the first time I have come down here to the Old Synod Hall, I have never been here before. As I was saying, I am very happy to see you here, and I welcome you warmly.

I thank you - you who in person suffer exclusion and inequality in the first person - for accepting the invitation to discuss the many very serious social problems that afflict the world today. I also thank Cardinal Turkson for his welcome - thank you, Eminence, for your work and your words of greeting.

This meeting of grassroots movements is a sign, it is a great sign, for you have brought a reality that is often silenced into the presence of God, the Church and all peoples. The poor not only suffer injustice, they also struggle against it!

You are not satisfied with empty promises, with alibis or excuses. Nor do you wait with arms crossed for NGOs to help, for welfare schemes or paternalistic solutions that never arrive or, if they do, then it is with a tendency to anaesthetize or to domesticate ... and this is rather perilous. One senses that the poor are no longer waiting. You want to be protagonists. You get organized, study, work, issue demands and, above all, practice that very special solidarity that exists among those who suffer, among the poor, and that our civilization seems to have forgotten or would strongly prefer to forget.

Solidarity is a word that is not always well received. In certain circumstances it has become a dirty word, something one dares not say. However, it is a word that means much more than an occasional gesture of generosity. It means thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all take priority over the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means fighting against the structural causes of poverty and inequality; of the lack of work, land and housing; and of the denial of social and labour rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced dislocation, painful emigration, human trafficking, drugs, war, violence and all those realities that many of you suffer and that we are all called upon to transform. Solidarity, understood in its deepest sense, is a way of making history, and this is what the grassroots movements are doing.

This meeting of ours is not shaped by an ideology. You do not work

with abstract ideas; you work with realities such as those I just mentioned and many others that you have told me about. You have your feet in the mud, you are up to your elbows in flesh-and-blood reality. You carry the smell of your neighbourhood, your people, your struggle! We want your voices to be heard - voices that are rarely heard. No doubt this is because your voices cause embarrassment, no doubt it is because your cries are bothersome, no doubt because people are afraid of the change that you seek. However, without your presence, without truly going to the peripheries, the good proposals and projects we often hear about at international conferences remain stuck in the realm of ideas and wishful thinking.

The scandal of poverty cannot be addressed by promoting strategies of containment that only tranquilize the poor and render them tame and inoffensive. How sad it is when we find, behind allegedly altruistic works, the other being reduced to passivity or being negated; or worse still, we find hidden personal agendas or business interests. "Hypocrites" is what Jesus would say to those responsible. How marvellous it is, by contrast, when we see peoples moving forward, especially their young and their poorest members. Then one feels a promising breeze that revives hope for a better world. May this breeze become a cyclone of hope. This is my wish.

This meeting of ours responds to a very concrete desire, something that any father and mother would want for their children - a desire for what should be within everyone's reach, namely land, housing and work. However, it is sad to see that nowadays land, housing and work are ever more distant for the majority. It is strange but, if I talk about this, some say the Pope is communist. They do not understand that love for the poor is at the centre of the Gospel. Land, housing and work, what you struggle for, are sacred rights. To make this claim is nothing unusual; it is the social teaching of the

Church. I am going to dwell briefly on each of these since you have chosen them as the core issues for this meeting.

Land. At the beginning of creation, God created man and woman, stewards of his work, mandating them to till and to keep it (cf. Gn 2:15). I notice dozens of peasant farmers here, and I want to congratulate you for caring for the land, for cultivating it and for doing so in community. The elimination of so many brothers and sisters who are peasant farmers worries me, and it is not because of wars or natural disasters that you are uprooted. Land and water grabbing, deforestation, toxic agrochemicals are some of the evils which uproot people from their native land. This wretched separation is not only physical but existential and spiritual as well because there is a relationship with the land, such that rural communities and their special way of life are being put at flagrant risk of decline and even of extinction.

The other dimension of this already global process is hunger. When financial speculation manipulates the price of food, treating it as just another commodity, millions of people suffer and die from hunger. At the same time, tons of food are thrown away. This constitutes a genuine scandal. Hunger is criminal, food is an inalienable right.

I know that some of you are calling for agrarian reform in order to solve some of these problems, and let me tell you that in some countries - and here I cite the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church - "agrarian reform is, besides a political necessity, a moral obligation."¹ It is not just me saying this, it is in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Please carry on your struggle for the dignity of the rural family, for water, for life, and so that everyone can benefit from the fruits of the earth.

Second, Housing. I said it and I repeat it: a home for every family. We must never forget that, because there was no room in the inn, Jesus was born in a stable; and that his family, persecuted by Herod, had to leave their home and flee into Egypt. Today there are so many homeless families, either because they have never had one or because, for different reasons, they have lost it. Family and housing go hand in hand. Furthermore, for a house to be a home, it requires a community dimension, and this is the neighbourhood ... and it is precisely in the neighbourhood where the great family of humanity begins to be built, starting from the most immediate instance, from living together with one's neighbours. We live nowadays in immense cities that show off proudly, even arrogantly, how modern they are. But while they offer wellbeing and innumerable pleasures for a happy minority, housing is denied to thousands of our neighbours, our brothers and sisters including children, who are called elegant names such as 'urban campers'. Isn't it curious how euphemisms abound in the world of injustices! A person, a segregated person, a person set apart, a person who suffers misery or hunger: such a one is a street person or an 'urban camper'. It is an elegant expression, isn't it? You should be on the lookout - there may be exceptions but, in general, what lurks behind each euphemism is a crime.

We live in cities that throw up skyscrapers and shopping centres and strike big real estate deals ... but they abandon a part of themselves to marginal settlements on the periphery. How painful it is to hear that poor settlements are marginalized or, still worse, earmarked for demolition! How cruel are the images of violent evictions, bulldozers knocking down the tiny dwellings, images just like from a war. And this is what we see today.

You know that in the crowded slums where many of you live, values endure that have been forgotten in the rich centres. These settlements are blessed with a rich popular culture where public areas are not just transit corridors but an extension of the home, a place where bonds can be forged with neighbours. How lovely are cities that overcome unhealthy mistrust and integrate those who are different, even making such integration a new factor of development. How lovely are cities that, in their architectural design, are full of spaces that unite, connect and foster recognition of the other. So the line to follow is neither eradication nor marginalization but urban integration. Moreover, not only must the word "integration" replace all talk of eradication; it must also supplant those projects that aim to varnish poor neighbourhoods, prettify the outskirts and daub make-up on social ailments instead of curing them by promoting genuine and respectful integration. It is a sort of cosmetic architecture, isn't it? And it is the trend. So let us keep on working so that all families have housing and so that all neighbourhoods have adequate infrastructure (sewage, light, gas, asphalted roads) and I go on: schools, hospitals or first aid clinics, sports clubs and all those things that create bonds and unite; and as I have already said, access to health care and to education and to secure tenancy.

Third, Work. There is no worse material poverty - I really must stress this - there is no worse material poverty than the poverty which does not allow people to earn their bread, which deprives them of the dignity of work. But youth unemployment, informality or underground work, and the lack of labour rights are not inevitable. These are the result of an underlying social choice in favour of an economic system that puts profit above people. If economic profit takes precedence over the individual and over humanity, we

find a throw-away culture at work that considers humanity in itself, human beings, as a consumer good, which can be used and then thrown away.

Today, a new dimension is being added to the phenomena of exploitation and oppression, a very harsh and graphic manifestation of social injustice: those who cannot be integrated, the excluded, are discarded, are "leftovers". This is the throw-away culture, and I would like to add something on this that I just remember now, I do not have it written down. This happens when the deity of money is at the centre of an economic system rather than man, the human person. Yes, at the centre of every social or economic system must be the person, image of God, created to "have dominion over" the universe (cf. Gn 1:26). The inversion of values happens when the person is displaced and money becomes the deity.

I remember a teaching from around the year 1200 that illustrates this point. A Jewish Rabbi was explaining the story of the Tower of Babel to his faithful. He recounted the extraordinary effort required to build it: the bricks had to be made, and to make the bricks one had to mix mud and fetch straw, knead the mud with the straw, then cut it into squares, then dry them, then fire them, and after the bricks were fired and then cooled, hoist them up to keep building the tower.

If a brick fell – a brick was very costly, given all the work – if a brick fell, it was almost a national tragedy. Whoever dropped it was punished or suspended or whatever. But if a worker fell, nothing happened. That is the situation when the person is at the service of the deity money – so said a Jewish Rabbi in the year 1200 explaining such terrible incidents.

And so, thinking about disposal, we must also turn our attention to what is going on in our society. I am repeating what I have already said in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Today children are disposed of because the birth-rate in many of the world's countries has fallen, or because there is no food, or because they are killed before being born – children are thrown away.

The elderly are discarded, well, because they are useless, they are not productive. Neither children nor the elderly produce and so, with more or less sophisticated systems, they are slowly being set aside. And in the current period of economic crisis, now that it is necessary to regain a certain equilibrium, we are witnessing a third very painful disposal – the disposal of young people. Millions of young people – I do not want to give a precise figure because I do not know exactly and what I read seems somewhat inflated – anyhow, millions of young people are discarded from work, are unemployed.

In European countries where statistics are very clear, and specifically here in Italy, slightly more than 40% of young people are unemployed. Do you know what 40% of young people means? A whole generation is being cancelled, in order to restore the balance sheet. In another European country, it is over 50% and up to 60% in its southern region. These figures clearly indicate how many are excluded. So in addition to discarding children and the elderly who do not produce, a generation of young people is to be sacrificed, people thrown away, in order to prop up and rebalance a system with the deity money at its centre and not the human person.

Despite this throw-away culture, this culture of leftovers, so many of you who are excluded workers, the discards of this system, have been inventing your own work with materials that seemed devoid

of further productive value... But with the craftsmanship God gave you, with your inventiveness, your solidarity, your community work, your popular economy, you have managed to succeed, you are succeeding... And let me tell you, besides work, this is poetry. I thank you.

From now on every worker, within the formal system of salaried employment or outside it, should have the right to decent remuneration, to social security and to a pension. Among you here are waste-collectors, recyclers, peddlers, seamstresses or tailors, artisans, fishermen, farmworkers, builders, miners, workers in previously abandoned enterprises, members of all kinds of cooperatives and workers in grassroots jobs who are excluded from labour rights, who are denied the possibility of unionizing, whose income is neither adequate nor stable. Today I want to join my voice to yours and support you in your struggle.

During this meeting, you have also talked about Peace and Ecology. It is logical. There cannot be land, there cannot be housing, there cannot be work if we do not have peace and if we destroy the planet. These are such important topics that the peoples of the world and their popular organizations cannot fail to debate them. This cannot just remain in the hands of political leaders. All peoples of the earth, all men and women of good will – all of us must raise our voices in defence of these two precious gifts: peace and nature or “Sister Mother Earth” as Saint Francis of Assisi called her.

Recently I said and now I repeat, we are going through World War Three but in instalments. There are economic systems that must make war in order to survive. Accordingly, arms are manufactured and sold and, with that, economies sacrifice man at the feet of the idol of money and their balance sheets are clearly rendered healthy. And no thought is given to hungry children in refugee camps; no

thought is given to the forcibly displaced; no thought is given to destroyed homes; no thought is given, finally, to so many destroyed lives. How much suffering, how much destruction, how much grief. Today, dear brothers and sisters, in every part of the world, in all nations, in every heart and in grassroots movements, the cry wells up for peace: War no more!

An economic system centred on the deity money also needs to plunder nature to sustain consumption at the frenetic level it needs. Climate change, the loss of biodiversity, deforestation are already showing their devastating effects in terrible cataclysms which we see and from which you the humble suffer most – you who live near the coast in precarious dwellings, or so economically vulnerable that you lose everything due to a natural disaster. Brothers and sisters, creation is not a possession that we can dispose of as we wish; much less is it the property of some, of only a few. Creation is a gift, it is a present, it is a marvellous gift given to us by God so that we might care for it and use it, always gratefully and always respectfully, for the benefit of everyone. You may be aware that I am preparing an encyclical on ecology. Rest assured that your concerns will have their place in it. I thank you, I take this opportunity to thank you for the letter on this topic that I received from members of Via Campesina (the international farmworkers’ organization), the Federation of Cartoneros and so many other brothers and sisters.

We talk about land, work, housing ... we talk about working for peace and taking care of nature. Why are we accustomed to seeing decent work destroyed, countless families evicted, peasant farmers driven off the land, war waged and nature abused? Because in this system man, the human person, has been removed from the centre and replaced by something else. Because idolatrous worship is devoted to money. Because indifference has been globalized: “Why

should I care what happens to others as long as I can defend what's mine?" Because the world has forgotten God, who is Father; and by setting God aside, it has made itself an orphan.

Some of you said that this system cannot endure. We must change it. We must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need. This must be done with courage but also with intelligence, with tenacity but without fanaticism, with passion yet without violence. And all of us together, addressing the conflicts without getting trapped in them, always seeking to resolve the tensions in order to reach a higher plane of unity, of peace and of justice. We Christians have something very lovely, a guide to action, a programme we could call revolutionary. I earnestly recommend that you read it: the Beatitudes in Saint Matthew chapter 5 (cf. Mt 5:3) and in Saint Luke chapter 6 (cf. Lk 6:20); and the Last Judgment passage in Saint Matthew chapter 25. This is what I told the young people at Rio de Janeiro: With these passages, you have the plan of action.

I know that you are persons of different religions, trades, ideas, cultures, countries, continents. Here and now you are practicing the culture of encounter, so different from the xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance which we witness so often. Among the excluded, one finds an encounter of cultures where the aggregate does not wipe out the particularities. That is why I like the image of the polyhedron, a geometric figure with many different facets. The polyhedron reflects the confluence of all the partialities that in it keep their originality. Nothing is dissolved, nothing is destroyed, nothing is dominated, everything is integrated. Nowadays you too are looking for that synthesis between the local and the global. I know that you work daily in what is close at hand and concrete, in your area, your neighbourhood, your work place. I also invite you

to keep seeking that broader perspective so that our dreams might fly high and embrace the whole.

With all this I attach great importance to the proposal which some of you have shared with me, that these movements - these experiences of solidarity which grow up from below, from the subsoil of the planet - should come together, be more coordinated, keep on meeting one another as you have done these days. But be careful, it is never good to confine a movement in rigid structures. So I say you should keep on meeting. Even worse is the attempt to absorb movements, to direct or dominate them. Unfettered movements have their own dynamic. Nevertheless, yes, we must try to walk together. Here we are in this Old Synod Hall (now there is a new one), and synod means precisely "to walk together". May this be a symbol of the process that you have begun and are carrying forward.

Grassroots movements express the urgent need to revitalize our democracies, so often hijacked by innumerable factors. It is impossible to imagine a future for society without the active participation of great majorities as protagonists, and such proactive participation overflows the logical procedures of formal democracy. Moving towards a world of lasting peace and justice calls us to go beyond paternalistic forms of assistance; it calls us to create new forms of participation that include popular movements and invigorate local, national and international governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny. And all this with a constructive spirit, without resentment, with love.

I accompany you wholeheartedly on this journey. From our hearts let us say together: No family without housing, no farmworker without land, no worker without rights, no one without the dignity that work provides.

Dear brothers and sisters, carry on with your struggle. You do us all good, like a blessing for humanity. Here are some rosaries made by Latin American artisans, waste collectors and grassroots workers, which I leave you as a memento, as a present and with my blessing.

And in this accompaniment I pray for you, I pray with you, and I want to ask God Our Father to go with you and bless you, to fill you with his love and accompany you on the way, abundantly giving you that strength that keeps us standing tall. That strength is hope, the hope that never lets us down. Thank you.

Final Statement – WMPM 2014

Salesianum, Roma

Wednesday 29 October, 2014



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are men and women from many places, of many origins, cultures and beliefs, representatives of social and grassroots movements from the different continents. We have come here joyfully in response to the invitation of Pope Francis to this World Meeting of Popular Movements in the Vatican from 27 to 29 October 2014.

We heeded the call to this gathering because its concerns are aligned with ours and with our approach to transforming the world. It is an event of enormous historical importance. For the first time, the

voices of poor men and women are amplified as never before. They are the voices of the socially excluded and of those who strive to end the poverty and exclusion caused by an economic system whose purpose is profit, the accumulation of wealth and not the common good. At this historic moment, these voices, our voices, denounce the disorder of this world and affirm the leading role of the poor who are not submissive but who struggle, protest and are committed to continue seeking profound change for the benefit of all.

What we have found here is a great arena for exchange and extensive dialogue about the problems related to land, work, housing, the environment and climate change, and the situations of violence and armed conflict that have put all of humanity at risk. It has been very encouraging to participate with our Brother Francis, to greet him personally and to understand his thinking on these issues. The presence of compañero Evo Morales with our movements and the Pope has also encouraged us enormously.

Therefore in our Final Statement, while our reflections denounce situations of injustice, we affirm our reasons for hope and our commitment to struggle in many ways to transform the economic, political and cultural dimensions of our world.

Just as Francis has made our concerns his own, so we adopt his words as our own because they accurately express our aspirations and our efforts to be agents of that transformation.

During our dialogue, Pope Francis made the following statements:

“We want your voices to be heard - voices that are rarely heard. No doubt this is because your voices cause embarrassment, no doubt it is because your cries are bothersome, no doubt because people are afraid of the change that you seek...”

“The scandal of poverty cannot be addressed by promoting strategies of containment that only tranquilise the poor and render them tame and inoffensive.”

LAND

“The elimination of so many brothers and sisters who are peasant farmers worries me, and it is not because of wars or natural disasters that they are uprooted. Land and water grabbing, deforestation, toxic agrochemicals are some of the evils which uproot people from their native land.”

“The other dimension of this already global process is hunger.”

“Hunger is criminal, food is an inalienable right...”

“Agrarian reform is, besides a political necessity, a moral obligation.”

HOUSING

“A home for every family... Today there are so many homeless families, either because they have never had one or because, for different reasons, they have lost it...”

“Cities offer well-being and innumerable pleasures for a happy minority [but] housing is denied to thousands of our neighbours, our brothers and sisters including children, who are called elegant names such as ‘street people’... You should be on the lookout - I might be wrong in some cases; but in general, what lurks behind each euphemism is a crime.”

WORK

“There is no worse material poverty than the poverty which does not allow people to earn their bread, which deprives them of the dignity of work. But youth unemployment, informality or underground work, and the lack of labour rights are not inevitable. These are the result of an underlying social choice in favour of an economic system that puts

profit above men and women.”

“Today, a new dimension is being added to the phenomena of exploitation and oppression, a very harsh and graphic manifestation of social injustice: those who cannot be integrated, the excluded, are discarded, the ‘leftovers’. This is the throw-away culture...”

ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE

“Climate change, the loss of biodiversity, deforestation are already showing their devastating effects in terrible cataclysms which we see and from which you the humble suffer most – you who live near the coast in precarious dwellings, or who are so economically vulnerable that you lose everything due to a natural disaster.”

“Creation is not a possession that we can dispose of as we wish; much less is it the property of some, of only a few. Creation is a gift, it is a present, it is a marvellous gift given to us by God so that we might care for it and use it, always gratefully and always respectfully, for the benefit of everyone.”

SOLIDARITY

“Solidarity is much more than an occasional gesture of generosity. It means thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all take priority over the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means fighting against the structural causes of poverty and inequality; of the lack of work, land and housing; and of the denial of social and labour rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced dislocation, painful emigration, human trafficking, drugs, war, violence and all those realities that many of you suffer and that we are all called upon to transform. Solidarity is a way of making history, and that is what the

popular movements are doing.”

“This system cannot endure. We must change it. We must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need.”

The Pope indicated that this World Meeting of Popular Movements “is a sign, it is a great sign, for you have brought forth a reality that is often silenced: The poor not only suffer injustice, they also struggle against it!

“Then one feels a promising breeze that revives hope for a better world. May this breeze become a cyclone of hope.”

LETTER FROM SANTA CRUZ

*Poligimnasio Santa Rosita, Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Wednesday 9 July, 2015*



Social organizations gathered at the Second World Meeting of People's Movements, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, on days 7, 8 and July 9, 2015, we agreed with the Pope Francisco in which social and environmental issues emerge as two sides of the same coin. A system that can not provide land, housing and work for all, that undermines peace between people and threatens the very survival of Mother Earth, can not continue to control the destiny of the planet.

We must overcome social, political, economic and cultural model where the money market and have become the regulator axis of human relations at all levels.

Our shout, the one of the most neglected and marginalized, forces powerful people to understand that things can not continue in this way. The world's poor have risen up against social exclusion daily

suffered. We do not want to exploit or be exploited. We do not want to exclude or be excluded. We want to build a way of life in which the dignity to rise above all things. Therefore, we will:

1. Promote and deepen the process of change

We reaffirm our commitment to the processes of change and liberation as a result of the action of organized peoples, from their collective memory take history into their hands and decided to transform it, to give life to the hopes and utopias that call us revolutionize the deeper structures of oppression, domination, colonization and exploitation.

2. Live well in harmony with Mother Earth

We will continue fighting to defend and protect Mother Earth, promoting "integral ecology" of which the Pope speaks Francisco. We are faithful to the ancient philosophy of "Living Well" new order of life that proposes harmony and balance in the relationship between humans and between humans and nature. The earth does not belong to us, we belong to the land. We must take care and dress it for the benefit of all. We want environmental laws in all countries in terms of caring for the common good. We demand the historical reparation and a legal framework that protects the rights of indigenous peoples at the national and international level, promoting sincere dialogue to overcome the diverse and multiple conflicts that cross the indigenous, native, peasant and Afrodescendants.

3. Defende decent work

We commit ourselves to fight for the defense of labor as a human right. By creating decent jobs for the design and implementation of policies to reinstate all workers' rights eliminated by the neoliberal capitalism such as social security systems, retirement and the right to unionize.

We reject the precarity and outsourcing work and seek to overcome informality work through inclusion, without persecution or repression. We also support the cause of migrants, displaced persons and refugees. We urge the governments of rich countries to repeal all of the rules that promote discrimination against them and establish forms of regulation to eliminate slave labor, trafficking, human trafficking and child exploitation countries.

We will promote alternative forms of economy, both urban and rural areas. We want a popular community and social economy that protects the lives of communities and solidarity prevail over profit. This requires that governments strengthen efforts to emerge from the grassroots.

4. Improve our neighborhoods and build decent housing

We denounce speculation and commercialization of land and urban property. We reject forced evictions, the rural exodus and the growth of slums. We reject any kind of prosecution against those who fight for a house for his family, because we understand housing as a basic human right, which must be universal. We demand participatory public policies that guarantee the right to housing, the integration of urban slums and comprehensive access to housing to build homes in safety and dignity.

5. Defend the Earth and food sovereignty

We promote comprehensive agrarian reform to distribute land fairly and equitably. We call the attention of the people on the emergence of new forms of accumulation and land speculation and land as a commodity, linked to agribusiness, which promotes monoculture destroying biodiversity, consuming and polluting

the water, displacing rural populations and using agro-toxics that contaminate food. We reaffirm our struggle for the definitive elimination of hunger, the defense of food sovereignty and production of healthy food. Also emphatically we reject private ownership of seeds by large agribusiness groups and the introduction of GM products in place of the natives, because they destroy the reproduction of life and biodiversity, create food dependency and cause irreversible effects on human health and the environment. Likewise, we reaffirm the defense of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples on sustainable agriculture.

6. Build peace and the culture of the meeting

We promise from the peaceful vocation of our peoples to strengthen collective action to ensure peace among all people, nations, religions, ethnicities and cultures. We reaffirm the plurality of our cultural identities and traditions that must live harmoniously without undergoing some others. We stand up against the criminalization of our struggle, because they are criminalizing our customs.

We condemn any military aggression and we mobilize for an immediate end to all wars and destabilizing actions or coups, which undermine democracy and the choice of free peoples. We reject imperialism and the new forms of colonialism, whether military, financial or media. We stand up against impunity for the powerful and for the freedom of social activists.

7. Fighting discrimination

We commit to fight all forms of discrimination between human beings, whether by ethnicity, skin color, gender, national origin, age, religion or sexual orientation. All of us, women and men should have the same rights. We condemn any form of violence against women, including femicide, and we shout: no one less!

8. Promoting freedom of expression

We promote the development of alternative media, means popular and community communication, facing of the media monopolies that hide the truth. Access to information and freedom of expression are rights of peoples and fundamental pillar of any society that we can call democratic, free and sovereign. The protest is a legitimate form of popular expression. It is a right and those who exercise should not be persecuted for it.

9. Putting science and technology in the service of the people

We are committed to fight for science and knowledge are used to serve the welfare of the people. Science and knowledge are conquests of mankind and can not be at the service of profit, exploitation, manipulation and accumulation of wealth by some groups. Persuade universities are filled with people and their knowledge are aimed at solving the structural problems rather than generating wealth for large corporations. A reporting and control multinational pharmaceutical companies on the one hand, profit from expropriation of ancestral knowledge of indigenous peoples and on the other, speculate and generate income to the health of millions of people, putting business ahead of life.

10. We reject consumerism and defend solidarity as a life project

We defend solidarity as project of personal and collective life. We pledge to fight against individualism, greed, envy and greed that nest in our societies and often in ourselves. We will work tirelessly to eradicate the culture of consumerism and culture of discard.

We will continue working to build bridges between peoples, that allow us to break down the walls of exclusion and exploitation!

PARTICIPATION AT THE SECOND WORLD MEETING OF POPULAR MOVEMENTS ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Fexpocruz, Santa Cruz de la Sierra

Thursday, 9 July 2015



Dear brothers and sisters, good afternoon!

Several months ago, we met in Rome, and I remember that first meeting. In the meantime I have kept you in my thoughts and prayers. I am happy to see you again, here, as you discuss the best ways to overcome the grave situations of injustice experienced by the excluded throughout our world. Thank you, President Evo Morales, for your efforts to make this meeting possible.

During our first meeting in Rome, I sensed something very beautiful: fraternity, determination, commitment, a thirst for justice. Today, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, I sense it once again. I thank you for that. I also know, from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace headed

by Cardinal Turkson, that many people in the Church feel very close to the popular movements. That makes me very happy! I am pleased to see the Church opening her doors to all of you, embracing you, accompanying you and establishing in each diocese, in every justice and peace commission, a genuine, ongoing and serious cooperation with popular movements. I ask everyone, bishops, priests and laity, as well as the social organizations of the urban and rural peripheries, to deepen this encounter.

Today God has granted that we meet again. The Bible tells us that God hears the cry of his people, and I wish to join my voice to yours in calling for the three “L’s” for all our brothers and sisters: land, lodging and labor. I said it and I repeat it: these are sacred rights. It is important, it is well worth fighting for them. May the cry of the excluded be heard in Latin America and throughout the world.

1. Before all else, let us begin by acknowledging that change is needed. Here I would clarify, lest there be any misunderstanding, that I am speaking about problems common to all Latin Americans and, more generally, to humanity as a whole. They are global problems which today no one state can resolve on its own. With this clarification, I now propose that we ask the following questions:

Do we truly realize that something is wrong in a world where there are so many farmworkers without land, so many families without a home, so many laborers without rights, so many persons whose dignity is not respected?

Do we realize that something is wrong where so many senseless wars are being fought and acts of fratricidal violence are taking place on our very doorstep? Do we realize something is wrong

when the soil, water, air and living creatures of our world are under constant threat?

So, if we do realize all this, let’s not be afraid to say it: we need change; we want change.

In your letters and in our meetings, you have mentioned the many forms of exclusion and injustice which you experience in the workplace, in neighborhoods and throughout the land. They are many and diverse, just as many and diverse are the ways in which you confront them. Yet there is an invisible thread joining every one of the forms of exclusion. These are not isolated issues. Can we recognize that invisible thread which links them? I wonder whether we can see that those destructive realities are part of a system which has become global. Do we realize that that system has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature?

If such is the case, I would insist, let us not be afraid to say it: we want change, real change, structural change. This system is by now intolerable: farmworkers find it intolerable, laborers find it intolerable, communities find it intolerable, peoples find it intolerable ... The earth itself – our sister, Mother Earth, as Saint Francis would say – also finds it intolerable.

We want change in our lives, in our neighborhoods, in our everyday reality. We want a change which can affect the entire world, since global interdependence calls for global answers to local problems. The globalization of hope, a hope which springs up from peoples and takes root among the poor, must replace the globalization of exclusion and indifference!

Today I wish to reflect with you on the change we want and need. You know that recently I wrote about the problems of climate change. But now I would like to speak of change in another sense. Positive change, a change which is good for us, a change - we can say - which is redemptive. Because we need it. I know that you are looking for change, and not just you alone: in my different meetings, in my different travels, I have sensed an expectation, a longing, a yearning for change, in people throughout the world. Even within that ever smaller minority which believes that the present system is beneficial, there is a widespread sense of dissatisfaction and even despondency. Many people are hoping for a change capable of releasing them from the bondage of individualism and the despondency it spawns.

Time, my brothers and sisters, seems to be running out; we are not yet tearing one another apart, but we are tearing apart our common home. Today, the scientific community realizes what the poor have long told us: harm, perhaps irreversible harm, is being done to the ecosystem. The earth, entire peoples and individual persons are being brutally punished. And behind all this pain, death and destruction there is the stench of what Basil of Caesarea - one of the first theologians of the Church - called "the dung of the devil". An unfettered pursuit of money rules. This is the "dung of the devil". The service of the common good is left behind. Once capital becomes an idol and guides people's decisions, once greed for money presides over the entire socioeconomic system, it ruins society, it condemns and enslaves men and women, it destroys human fraternity, it sets people against one another and, as we clearly see, it even puts at risk our common home, sister and mother earth.

I do not need to go on describing the evil effects of this subtle dictatorship: you are well aware of them. Nor is it enough to point to the

structural causes of today's social and environmental crisis. We are suffering from an excess of diagnosis, which at times leads us to multiply words and to revel in pessimism and negativity. Looking at the daily news we think that there is nothing to be done, except to take care of ourselves and the little circle of our family and friends.

What can I do, as collector of paper, old clothes or used metal, a recycler, about all these problems if I barely make enough money to put food on the table? What can I do as a craftsman, a street vendor, a trucker, a downtrodden worker, if I don't even enjoy workers' rights? What can I do, a farmwife, a native woman, a fisher who can hardly fight the domination of the big corporations? What can I do from my little home, my shanty, my hamlet, my settlement, when I daily meet with discrimination and marginalization? What can be done by those students, those young people, those activists, those missionaries who come to a neighborhood with their hearts full of hopes and dreams, but without any real solution for their problems? They can do a lot. They really can. You, the lowly, the exploited, the poor and underprivileged, can do, and are doing, a lot. I would even say that the future of humanity is in great measure in your own hands, through your ability to organize and carry out creative alternatives, through your daily efforts to ensure the three "L's" - do you agree? - (labor, lodging, land) and through your proactive participation in the great processes of change on the national, regional and global levels. Don't lose heart!

2. Secondly, you are sowers of change. Here in Bolivia I have heard a phrase which I like: "process of change". Change seen not as something which will one day result from any one political decision or change in social structure. We know from painful experience that changes of structure which are not accompanied by a sincere conversion of mind and heart sooner or later end up in bureaucratiza-

tion, corruption and failure. There must be a change of heart. That is why I like the image of a “process”, processes, where the drive to sow, to water seeds which others will see sprout, replaces the ambition to occupy every available position of power and to see immediate results. The option is to bring about processes and not to occupy positions. Each of us is just one part of a complex and differentiated whole, interacting in time: peoples who struggle to find meaning, a destiny, and to live with dignity, to “live well”, and in that sense, worthily.

As members of popular movements, you carry out your work inspired by fraternal love, which you show in opposing social injustice. When we look into the eyes of the suffering, when we see the faces of the endangered campesino, the poor laborer, the down-trodden native, the homeless family, the persecuted migrant, the unemployed young person, the exploited child, the mother who lost her child in a shootout because the barrio was occupied by drugdealers, the father who lost his daughter to enslavement.... when we think of all those names and faces, our hearts break because of so much sorrow and pain. And we are deeply moved, all of us.... We are moved because “we have seen and heard” not a cold statistic but the pain of a suffering humanity, our own pain, our own flesh. This is something quite different than abstract theorizing or eloquent indignation. It moves us; it makes us attentive to others in an effort to move forward together. That emotion which turns into community action is not something which can be understood by reason alone: it has a surplus of meaning which only peoples understand, and it gives a special feel to genuine popular movements.

Each day you are caught up in the storms of people’s lives. You have told me about their causes, you have shared your own struggles with me, ever since I was in Buenos Aires, and I thank you for

that. You, dear brothers and sisters, often work on little things, in local situations, amid forms of injustice which you do not simply accept but actively resist, standing up to an idolatrous system which excludes, debases and kills. I have seen you work tirelessly for the soil and crops of campesinos, for their lands and communities, for a more dignified local economy, for the urbanization of their homes and settlements; you have helped them build their own homes and develop neighborhood infrastructures. You have also promoted any number of community activities aimed at reaffirming so elementary and undeniably necessary a right as that of the three “L’s”: land, lodging and labor.

This rootedness in the barrio, the land, the office, the labor union, this ability to see yourselves in the faces of others, this daily proximity to their share of troubles – because they exist and we all have them – and their little acts of heroism: this is what enables you to practice the commandment of love, not on the basis of ideas or concepts, but rather on the basis of genuine interpersonal encounter. We need to build up this culture of encounter. We do not love concepts or ideas; no one loves a concept or an idea. We love people... Commitment, true commitment, is born of the love of men and women, of children and the elderly, of peoples and communities... of names and faces which fill our hearts. From those seeds of hope patiently sown in the forgotten fringes of our planet, from those seedlings of a tenderness which struggles to grow amid the shadows of exclusion, great trees will spring up, great groves of hope to give oxygen to our world.

So I am pleased to see that you are working at close hand to care for those seedlings, but at the same time, with a broader perspective, to protect the entire forest. Your work is carried out against a horizon which, while concentrating on your own specific area, also aims to

resolve at their root the more general problems of poverty, inequality and exclusion.

I congratulate you on this. It is essential that, along with the defense of their legitimate rights, peoples and their social organizations be able to construct a humane alternative to a globalization which excludes. You are sowers of change. May God grant you the courage, joy, perseverance and passion to continue sowing. Be assured that sooner or later we will see its fruits. Of the leadership I ask this: be creative and never stop being rooted in local realities, since the father of lies is able to usurp noble words, to promote intellectual fads and to adopt ideological stances. But if you build on solid foundations, on real needs and on the lived experience of your brothers and sisters, of campesinos and natives, of excluded workers and marginalized families, you will surely be on the right path.

The Church cannot and must not remain aloof from this process in her proclamation of the Gospel. Many priests and pastoral workers carry out an enormous work of accompanying and promoting the excluded throughout the world, alongside cooperatives, favouring businesses, providing housing, working generously in the fields of health, sports and education. I am convinced that respectful cooperation with the popular movements can revitalize these efforts and strengthen processes of change.

Let us always have at heart the Virgin Mary, a humble girl from small people lost on the fringes of a great empire, a homeless mother who could turn a stable for beasts into a home for Jesus with just a few swaddling clothes and much tenderness. Mary is a sign of hope for peoples suffering the birth pangs of justice. I pray that Our Lady of Mount Carmel, patroness of Bolivia, will allow this

meeting of ours to be a leaven of change.

3. Third and lastly, I would like us all to consider some important tasks for the present historical moment, since we desire a positive change for the benefit of all our brothers and sisters. We know this. We desire change enriched by the collaboration of governments, popular movements and other social forces. This too we know. But it is not so easy to define the content of change - in other words, a social program which can embody this project of fraternity and justice which we are seeking. It is not easy to define it. So don't expect a recipe from this Pope. Neither the Pope nor the Church have a monopoly on the interpretation of social reality or the proposal of solutions to contemporary issues. I dare say that no recipe exists. History is made by each generation as it follows in the footsteps of those preceding it, as it seeks its own path and respects the values which God has placed in the human heart.

I would like, all the same, to propose three great tasks which demand a decisive and shared contribution from popular movements:

3.1 The first task is to put the economy at the service of peoples. Human beings and nature must not be at the service of money. Let us say NO to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules, rather than service. That economy kills. That economy excludes. That economy destroys Mother Earth.

The economy should not be a mechanism for accumulating goods, but rather the proper administration of our common home. This entails a commitment to care for that home and to the fitting distribution of its goods among all. It is not only about ensuring a supply of food or "decent sustenance". Nor, although this is already a great step forward, is it to guarantee the three "L's" of land, lodging and labor for which

you are working. A truly communitarian economy, one might say an economy of Christian inspiration, must ensure peoples' dignity and their "general, temporal welfare and prosperity".[1] (Pope John XXIII spoke this last phrase fifty years ago, and Jesus says in the Gospel that whoever freely offers a glass of water to one who is thirsty will be remembered in the Kingdom of Heaven.) All of this includes the three "L's", but also access to education, health care, new technologies, artistic and cultural manifestations, communications, sports and recreation. A just economy must create the conditions for everyone to be able to enjoy a childhood without want, to develop their talents when young, to work with full rights during their active years and to enjoy a dignified retirement as they grow older. It is an economy where human beings, in harmony with nature, structure the entire system of production and distribution in such a way that the abilities and needs of each individual find suitable expression in social life. You, and other peoples as well, sum up this desire in a simple and beautiful expression: "to live well", which is not the same as "to have a good time".

Such an economy is not only desirable and necessary, but also possible. It is no utopia or chimera. It is an extremely realistic prospect. We can achieve it. The available resources in our world, the fruit of the intergenerational labors of peoples and the gifts of creation, more than suffice for the integral development of "each man and the whole man".[2] The problem is of another kind. There exists a system with different aims. A system which, in addition to irresponsibly accelerating the pace of production, and using industrial and agricultural methods which damage Mother Earth in the name of "productivity", continues to deny many millions of our brothers and sisters their most elementary economic, social and cultural rights. This system runs counter to the plan of Jesus, against the Good News that Jesus brought.

Working for a just distribution of the fruits of the earth and human labor is not mere philanthropy. It is a moral obligation. For Christians, the responsibility is even greater: it is a commandment. It is about giving to the poor and to peoples what is theirs by right. The universal destination of goods is not a figure of speech found in the Church's social teaching. It is a reality prior to private property. Property, especially when it affects natural resources, must always serve the needs of peoples. And those needs are not restricted to consumption. It is not enough to let a few drops fall whenever the poor shake a cup which never runs over by itself. Welfare programs geared to certain emergencies can only be considered temporary and incidental responses. They could never replace true inclusion, an inclusion which provides worthy, free, creative, participatory and solidary work.

Along this path, popular movements play an essential role, not only by making demands and lodging protests, but even more basically by being creative. You are social poets: creators of work, builders of housing, producers of food, above all for people left behind by the world market.

I have seen first hand a variety of experiences where workers united in cooperatives and other forms of community organization were able to create work where there were only crumbs of an idolatrous economy. I have seen some of you here. Recuperated businesses, local fairs and cooperatives of paper collectors are examples of that popular economy which is born of exclusion and which, slowly, patiently and resolutely adopts solidary forms which dignify it. How different this is than the situation which results when those left behind by the formal market are exploited like slaves!

Governments which make it their responsibility to put the economy

at the service of peoples must promote the strengthening, improvement, coordination and expansion of these forms of popular economy and communitarian production. This entails bettering the processes of work, providing adequate infrastructures and guaranteeing workers their full rights in this alternative sector. When the state and social organizations join in working for the three “L’s”, the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity come into play; and these allow the common good to be achieved in a full and participatory democracy.

3.2. The second task is to unite our peoples on the path of peace and justice.

The world’s peoples want to be artisans of their own destiny. They want to advance peacefully towards justice. They do not want forms of tutelage or interference by which those with greater power subordinate those with less. They want their culture, their language, their social processes and their religious traditions to be respected. No actual or established power has the right to deprive peoples of the full exercise of their sovereignty. Whenever they do so, we see the rise of new forms of colonialism which seriously prejudice the possibility of peace and justice. For “peace is founded not only on respect for human rights but also on respect for the rights of peoples, in particular the right to independence”.[3]

The peoples of Latin America fought to gain their political independence and for almost two centuries their history has been dramatic and filled with contradictions, as they have striven to achieve full independence.

In recent years, after any number of misunderstandings, many Latin American countries have seen the growth of fraternity between their peoples. The governments of the region have pooled forces in

order to ensure respect for the sovereignty of their own countries and the entire region, which our forebears so beautifully called the “greater country”. I ask you, my brothers and sisters of the popular movements, to foster and increase this unity. It is necessary to maintain unity in the face of every effort to divide, if the region is to grow in peace and justice.

Despite the progress made, there are factors which still threaten this equitable human development and restrict the sovereignty of the countries of the “greater country” and other areas of our planet.

The new colonialism takes on different faces. At times it appears as the anonymous influence of mammon: corporations, loan agencies, certain “free trade” treaties, and the imposition of measures of “austerity” which always tighten the belt of workers and the poor. We, the bishops of Latin America, denounce this with utter clarity in the Aparecida Document, stating that “financial institutions and transnational companies are becoming stronger to the point that local economies are subordinated, especially weakening the local states, which seem ever more powerless to carry out development projects in the service of their populations”.[4] At other times, under the noble guise of battling corruption, the narcotics trade and terrorism – grave evils of our time which call for coordinated international action – we see states being saddled with measures which have little to do with the resolution of these problems and which not infrequently worsen matters.

Similarly, the monopolizing of the communications media, which would impose alienating examples of consumerism and a certain cultural uniformity, is another one of the forms taken by the new colonialism. It is ideological colonialism. As the African bishops have observed, poor countries are often treated like “parts of a machine, cogs on a gigantic wheel”.[5]

It must be acknowledged that none of the grave problems of humanity can be resolved without interaction between states and peoples at the international level. Every significant action carried out in one part of the planet has universal, ecological, social and cultural repercussions. Even crime and violence have become globalized. Consequently, no government can act independently of a common responsibility. If we truly desire positive change, we have to humbly accept our interdependence, that is to say, our healthy interdependence. Interaction, however, is not the same as imposition; it is not the subordination of some to serve the interests of others. Colonialism, both old and new, which reduces poor countries to mere providers of raw material and cheap labor, engenders violence, poverty, forced migrations and all the evils which go hand in hand with these, precisely because, by placing the periphery at the service of the center, it denies those countries the right to an integral development. That is inequality, brothers and sisters, and inequality generates a violence which no police, military, or intelligence resources can control.

Let us say NO, then, to forms of colonialism old and new. Let us say YES to the encounter between peoples and cultures. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Here I wish to bring up an important issue. Some may rightly say, "When the Pope speaks of colonialism, he overlooks certain actions of the Church". I say this to you with regret: many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God. My predecessors acknowledged this, CELAM, the Council of Latin American Bishops, has said it, and I too wish to say it. Like Saint John Paul II, I ask that the Church - I repeat what he said - "kneel before God and implore forgiveness for the past and present sins of her sons and daughters".[6] I would also say, and here I wish to be quite

clear, as was Saint John Paul II: I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America. Together with this request for forgiveness and in order to be just, I also would like us to remember the thousands of priests and bishops who strongly opposed the logic of the sword with the power of the Cross. There was sin, a great deal of it, for which we did not ask pardon. So for this, we ask forgiveness, I ask forgiveness. But here also, where there was sin, great sin, grace abounded through the men and women who defended the rights of indigenous peoples.

I also ask everyone, believers and nonbelievers alike, to think of those many bishops, priests and laity who preached and continue to preach the Good News of Jesus with courage and meekness, respectfully and pacifically - though I said bishops, priests and laity, I do not wish to forget the religious sisters who have been so present to our poor neighborhoods, bringing a message of peace and wellbeing - ; who left behind them impressive works of human promotion and of love, often standing alongside the native peoples or accompanying their popular movements even to the point of martyrdom. The Church, her sons and daughters, are part of the identity of the peoples of Latin America. An identity which here, as in other countries, some powers are committed to erasing, at times because our faith is revolutionary, because our faith challenges the tyranny of mammon. Today we are dismayed to see how in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world many of our brothers and sisters are persecuted, tortured and killed for their faith in Jesus. This too needs to be denounced: in this third world war, waged peaceably, which we are now experiencing, a form of genocide - I insist on the word - is taking place, and it must end.

To our brothers and sisters in the Latin American indigenous move-

ment, allow me to express my deep affection and appreciation of their efforts to bring peoples and cultures together - a coming together of peoples and cultures - in a form of coexistence which I like to call polyhedric, where each group preserves its own identity by building together a plurality which does not threaten but rather reinforces unity. Your quest for an interculturalism, which combines the defense of the rights of the native peoples with respect for the territorial integrity of states, is for all of us a source of enrichment and encouragement.

3.3. The third task, perhaps the most important facing us today, is to defend Mother Earth.

Our common home is being pillaged, laid waste and harmed with impunity. Cowardice in defending it is a grave sin. We see with growing disappointment how one international summit after another takes place without any significant result. There exists a clear, definite and pressing ethical imperative to implement what has not yet been done. We cannot allow certain interests - interests which are global but not universal - to take over, to dominate states and international organizations, and to continue destroying creation. People and their movements are called to cry out, to mobilize and to demand - peacefully, but firmly - that appropriate and urgently-needed measures be taken. I ask you, in the name of God, to defend Mother Earth. I have duly addressed this issue in my Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, which I believe will be distributed at the end.

4. In conclusion, I would like to repeat: the future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change. I am with you. Each of us, let repeat

from the heart: no family without lodging, no rural worker without land, no laborer without rights, no people without sovereignty, no individual without dignity, no child without childhood, no young person without a future, no elderly person without a venerable old age. Keep up your struggle and, please, take great care of Mother Earth. Believe me; I am sincere when I say from the heart that I pray for you and with you, and I ask God our Father to accompany you and to bless you, to fill you with his love and defend you on your way by granting you in abundance that strength which keeps us on our feet: that strength is hope. It is something important: hope does not disappoint. I ask you, please, to pray for me. If some of you are unable to pray, with all respect, I ask you to send me your good thoughts and energy. Thank you.

[1] Jean XXIII, Lett. enc. *Mater et Magistra* (15 mai 1961), n. 3 : AAS 53 (1961), 402

[2] Paul VI, Lett. enc. *Populorum Progressio*, n. 14.

[3] Conseil Pontifical "Justice et Paix", *Compendium de la Doctrine Sociale de l'Église*, n. 157.

[4] Vème Conférence Générale de l'Épiscopat Latino-américain (2007), Document de Conclusion, *Aparecida*, n. 66.

[5] Jean-Paul II, Exhort. ap. postsynodale *Ecclesia in Africa* (14 septembre 1995), 52 : AAS 88 (1996), 32-33 ; Id., Lett. enc. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 décembre 1987), n. 22 : AAS 80 (1988), 539.

[6] Jean-Paul II, *Bulle Incarnationis mysterium*, n. 11.

