

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

**CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CONFERENCE  
AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION,  
XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE**

(Durban, 31 August - 7 September 2001)

*Introduction*

1. In 1988, only slightly more than ten years ago, the Holy Father requested that the then Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax" publish a detailed document entitled *The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*. Since that time, the situation with regard to "Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance", the basic concerns of the next World Conference to be held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August - 7 September, calls for further observations on the part of the Holy See. Therefore, on the occasion of this important Conference, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace decided to republish the document *The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*, with the addition of an introductory update.

***The increase of racism: between globalization and ethnic conflicts***

2. *Globalization*, which was already under way in 1988, is accelerating at an ever-greater pace; countries, economies, cultures and ways of life are drawing closer together and becoming more universal and intermingled. The phenomenon of interdependence is evident in every area: political, economic, financial, social and cultural. Scientific discoveries and the development of communications technology have "shrunk" the planet considerably. The globalization now emerging manifests itself in various ways; for example, the impact of a political, economic or financial incident occurring unexpectedly in one country is felt by other countries as well, and the great problems or questions of our time are global in scale (immigration, the environment, food resources, etc.).

3. Paradoxically, at the same time disagreements are growing sharper, *ethnic violence* is increasing, the quest for group, ethnic or national identity is becoming more relentless as the stranger and those who are different are rejected, to such a degree that at times barbarous acts are committed against them. Thus the last ten years have been marked by ethnic or nationalistic wars which give rise to growing unease about the future. This paradox is well known and is explained in part by fear of a loss of identity in a world becoming planetary too rapidly, at the very time when inequalities are also increasing. But the paradox actually has many causes. It is clear that the fall of the Berlin Wall aroused resentments and nationalism which had been kept under a tight lid for years, that borders inherited from colonial times had too often failed to respect history and the identity of peoples, or that, in societies where the social fabric is disintegrating, solidarity is cruelly lacking (cf. Part II of the document published by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace *The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*, cited henceforth as *CR*).

4. Therefore, given these tensions, the situation since 1988 with regard to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance has regrettably not improved; indeed it has perhaps deteriorated, at a time when the movement of peoples has continued to increase and the intermingling of cultures and multi-ethnicity have become "social facts". Hence the importance of the forthcoming World Conference on racism, an importance which the Holy See would like to emphasize.

It is right to rejoice at the end of the *apartheid* regime in South Africa, but the racist massacres or the "ethnic cleansing" of recent years, often in a context of general destruction, show to what extremes hatred and the will to dominate others can lead people. Other situations that gravely compromise the equal dignity of every human person continue to exist. For example, while the law may have abolished slavery virtually everywhere, the practice still persists, notably in Africa among people of different ethnic groups, or under new forms elsewhere, with the cruel exploitation of children, prostitutes or illegal immigrants. In addition, it is necessary to denounce the evil persistence of anti-Semitic prejudice, which was the cause of the Jewish Holocaust in the last century (cf. *CR*, Part II, n. 15). A century, it should be recalled, that began and ended with planned massacres in the name of race.

#### ***The Catholic Church's unceasing appeal for a conversion of heart***

5. Murder, wickedness, envy, pride and folly have their source in the human heart (cf. Mk 7,21), and it is at this point that the contribution of the Catholic Church, in its constant appeal for personal conversion, is most important and necessary (cf. *CR*, Part IV, n. 24). We must look first to the human heart; it is the heart that must be continually purified so that it is no longer governed by fear or the spirit of domination, but by openness to others, by fraternity and solidarity (cf. *ibid.*). This is a fundamental role of religions. Christians in particular have the responsibility to offer a teaching that stresses the dignity of every human being and the unity of the human race (cf. *CR*, Part III). If war or other terrible circumstances make others the enemy, the first and most radical Christian commandment is to love that enemy and to respond to evil with good. Efforts in recent years to impose greater and more effective penalties for racist actions and claims, both within States and internationally, especially through the International Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, have not succeeded in changing attitudes. These penal measures are necessary and important in order to punish those responsible for certain acts and as a collective demonstration of fundamental values, without which a society cannot hold together.

#### ***The Catholic Church's requests for pardon***

6. The Christian should never make racist claims or indulge in racist or discriminatory behaviour, but sadly that has not always been the case in practice nor has it been so in history. In this regard, Pope John Paul II wanted to mark the Jubilee of the Year 2000 by *requests for pardon* made in the name of the Church, so that the Church's memory might be purified from all "forms of counter-witness and scandal" (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 33) which have taken place in the past millennium (cf. International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*. In its recent conclusions forwarded to the Holy See the Committee for the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination [CERD] notes: "The Committee welcomes the solemn request of His Holiness for pardon for past acts and omissions of the Church which may have encouraged and/or perpetuated discrimination against particular groups of people around the world" [*Conclusions of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Holy See, 1 May 2001. CERD/C/304/Add. 89, 1 May 2001, n. 4*]). There are situations where the evil done survives the person who has done it, through the consequences of certain actions, and can become a burden weighing on the conscience and memory of later generations. *A purification of memory* then becomes necessary. "Purifying memory means eliminating from personal and collective conscience all forms of resentment or violence left by the inheritance of the past, on the basis of a new and rigorous historical-theological judgement, which becomes the foundation for a renewed moral way of acting. This occurs whenever it becomes possible to attribute to past historical deeds a different quality, having a new and different effect on the present, in view of progress in reconciliation in truth, justice and charity among human beings and, in particular, between the Church and the different religious, cultural and civil communities with whom she is related" (cf. International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*).

7. In this context, during the Jubilee Year, a Solemn Mass was celebrated in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome on 12 March 2000, in the course of which special prayers confessing faults and requesting pardon were offered. Among the particular intentions, there were confessions for faults committed in relations with the people of Israel, as well as for actions contrary to love, peace, the rights of peoples, cultures and religions. After the confession of sins against the dignity of women and the unity of the human race, the Holy Father himself prayed in the following words: "Lord God, our Father, you created the human being, man and woman, in your image and likeness, and you willed the diversity of peoples within the unity of the human family. At times, however, the equality of your sons and daughters has not been acknowledged, and Christians have been guilty of attitudes of rejection and exclusion, consenting to acts of discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic difference. Forgive us and grant us the grace to heal the wounds still present in your community on account of sin, so that we will all feel ourselves to be your sons and daughters" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 22 March 2000, p. 4). Having already asked pardon of the peoples of Africa for the slave trade (cf. Address to Intellectuals and University Students, Yaoundé [13 August 1985], 7: *Insegnamenti* VIII, 2 [1985], 370; also *CR*, Part I, n. 4. Pope John Paul II took up this theme again on his visit to Senegal, when he visited the "House of Slaves" on the island of Gorée on 22 February 1992; cf. *Insegnamenti* XV, 1 [1992], 390), the Pope wanted to make "an act of expiation" and ask pardon of the American Indians and of Africans deported as slaves (cf. Message to Afro-Americans, Santo Domingo [13 October 1992], 2: *Insegnamenti* XV, 2 [1992], 358; Address at the General Audience [21 October 1992], 3: *Insegnamenti* XV, 2 [1992], 399).

### ***Pardon as the only path to national reconciliation***

8. The request for pardon concerns the life of the Church first of all. It is still legitimate however to "hope that political leaders and peoples, especially those involved in tragic conflicts, fuelled by hatred and the memory of often ancient wounds, will be guided by the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation exemplified by the Church and will make every effort

to resolve their differences through open and honest dialogue" (John Paul II, Address to the participants in the International Symposium on the Inquisition [31 October 1998], 5: *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 11 November 1998, p. 3). In fact, in recent years, in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe or Asia, at the end of international, inter-ethnic or civil wars, or with the fall of military or communist dictatorships, legislation has been passed in order to seek the truth and identify those responsible.

These laws have sought to re-establish national peace by offering amnesty under certain conditions. Thus "truth and reconciliation commissions" (as in South Africa) were established. As non-judicial institutions, their mandate is to cast light upon these troubled periods and to identify the people responsible for them, without however condemning them to penal sanctions. Experience shows that such institutions cannot succeed on their own; beyond the laws of amnesty, countries that have been destroyed and divided by serious conflicts must engage in a process of *reconciliation*.

Reconciliation has further demands: "No process of peace can ever begin unless an attitude of sincere forgiveness takes root in human hearts. When such forgiveness is lacking, wounds continue to fester, fuelling in the younger generation endless resentment, producing a desire for revenge and causing fresh destruction" (John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 1997*, n. 1). The Church is aware of the difficulty, the "folly" of this forgiveness, but does not see it as either a sign of weakness or cowardliness. Quite the contrary. The Church proclaims the way of pardon because of her unshakeable confidence in the infinite forgiveness of God.

9. Given this fundamental premise, the Church proposes concrete means of reconciliation, which must be realized at every level. The weight of history, with its litany of resentments, fears, suspicions between families, ethnic groups or populations must first be overcome. "One cannot remain a prisoner of the past: individuals and peoples need a sort of "healing of memories" (*ibid.*, n. 3). This will require especially a correct re-reading of each other's history (at the level of education, culture...), resisting all hasty and partisan judgements, in order to acquire a better knowledge and therefore acceptance of others.

10. This reconciliation will only be possible if the various religions, governments and the international community sincerely and actively opt for a "culture of peace", so that there is no more resort to arms in order to solve problems and there is an end to the growth of the arms industry and the sale of arms, etc. (cf. *ibid.*, n. 4; See also the Holy Father's letter to the Bishops of El Salvador, *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 6 September 1982, 7). The local Churches have an active role to play, notably through their messages of forgiveness and reconciliation (see in particular the Lenten Message of the Catholic Bishops of Rwanda 1992; their Pastoral Letters for Advent 1993 and Lent 1993; their Christmas and New Year Messages to Christians in 1994 and 1995; documents published in the Holy See's Report to CERD, CERD/C/338/Add. 11 [26 May 2000], pp. 79-86), but even more through their action on the ground. It is the task of governments and world or regional organizations to put in place solid structures "capable of withstanding the uncertainties of politics, thus guaranteeing to everyone freedom and security in every circumstance". (*Message for World Day of Peace 1997*, n. 4). All forms of mediation therefore should be encouraged. Existing structures must also be strengthened. In particular, the United Nations, which has done much in the area of

maintaining and restoring peace, should benefit from means better adapted to the new missions entrusted to it. Yet structures and processes will not be enough to build a lasting peace, only the path of forgiveness will make this possible.

11. As an act of gratuitous love, forgiveness has its own demands: the evil which has been done must be acknowledged and, as far as possible, corrected (cf. *ibid.*, n. 5). The primary demand is therefore respect for *truth*. Lying, untrustworthiness, corruption, and ideological or political manipulation make it impossible to restore peaceful social relations. Hence the importance of procedures which allow truth to be established. Such procedures are necessary but delicate, for the search for truth risks becoming a thirst for vengeance. Often as part of such a process governments grant "amnesty to those who have publicly admitted crimes committed during a period of turmoil.

Such an initiative can be judged favourably as an effort to promote good relations between groups previously opposed to one another" (*ibid.*). To the requirement of truth there must be added a second: *justice*. For "forgiveness neither eliminates or lessens the need for the reparation which justice requires, but seeks to reintegrate individuals and groups into society, and States into the community of Nations" (*ibid.*). Such justice must respect the fundamental dignity of the human person at all times.

12. From the legal point of view, all persons (individual or corporate) have a right to equitable *reparation* if personally and directly they have suffered injury (material or moral). The duty to make reparation must be fulfilled in an appropriate way. As far as possible, reparation should erase all the consequences of the illicit action and restore things to the way they would most probably be if that action had not occurred. When such a restoration is not possible, reparation should be made through compensation (equivalent reparation). This is the most common form of reparation, but the calculation of the compensation is often difficult. When compensation does not suffice to make reparation for a moral injury, moral reparation can be made, that is satisfaction. An example of this is the offering of an apology or expression of regret to the victim State by the State responsible for the wrong.

The Holy See is aware of the great difficulty that this "need for reparation" can pose when it becomes a demand for compensation. It is not the Church's task to propose a technical solution to so complex a problem (in this context, one could mention the Message of the Twelfth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar [SECAM], dated 7 October 2000: "Not only should the rich nations cancel debts, but they should also agree to compensation for both the debt and the wrongs they have done to Africa" [n. 18]). But the Holy See wishes to emphasize that the need for reparation reinforces the obligation of giving substantial help to developing countries, an obligation weighing chiefly on the more developed countries. This is not only a moral obligation; it is also a requirement resulting from the right of each people to development. As Pope John Paul II has insisted: "Both peoples and individuals must enjoy the fundamental equality ... which is the basis of the right of all to share in the process of full development" (Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 33).

### ***The fundamental role of education in the struggle against racism and discrimination***

13. The international community is aware that the roots of racism, discrimination and intolerance are found in prejudice and ignorance, which are first of all the fruits of sin, but also of faulty and inadequate *education* (cf. *CR*, Part IV, n. 28). To take a main theme of the Durban Conference, the role of education, understood as a "good practice to be promoted" in the struggle against these evils, is fundamental. In this regard too, the Catholic Church recalls her very extensive active role "on the ground", in educating and instructing young people of every confession and on every continent through many centuries. Faithful to her values, the Church educates at the service of every person and of the whole person (see for example, the address of Pope John Paul II to the President of Gabon, Libreville [17 February 1982], n. 5: *Insegnamenti*, V, 1 [1982], 569. See also the Holy See's Report to CERD, pp. 36-66. Detailed in the area of education, the Report gives many statistics and a series of very concrete examples of the Church's role in the field, notably in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel and the territories of the Palestinian Authority. In its Conclusions, CERD stresses positively this action of the Church: "The Committee expresses its appreciation for the role of the Catholic Church in promoting education, particularly in developing countries. The Committee further welcomes the opening up of Catholic schools to children from different religious creeds as well as the promotion of tolerance, peace and integration through education. The Committee notes with satisfaction that in many countries where the majority of the population is non-Christian, Catholic schools are places where children and young people of different faiths, cultures, social classes or ethnic backgrounds come into contact with each other" [n. 8]).

For, in the Church's view, "all people of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons have an inalienable right to education. This education should be suitable to the particular destiny of the individuals, ... and should be conducive to fraternal relations with other nations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world" (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1).

14. From the material point of view, the Church encourages efforts of international cooperation aimed at helping the poorer nations "in a better instruction of youth with a view to the future" (John Paul II, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps* [11 January 1986], n. 8: *Insegnamenti*, IX, 1 [1986], 69-70). For "the illiterate is a starved spirit" (Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* [26 March 1967], n. 35) and illiteracy is "a kind of daily slavery in a world that presupposes education" (John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 1981*, n. 3; see also his Address to the Brazilian Bishops of the North-Eastern region on the occasion of their *ad limina* Visit [30 September 1985], 4: *Insegnamenti*, VIII, 2 [1985], 815-816). In another context, Pope John Paul II explained that the prime role of culture is to educate the person. The grave crises currently affecting the educational system in more affluent societies show that "the work of a human being's education is not carried out only with the help of institutions, with the help of organizational and material means, however excellent they may be", and that an education which places efficiency and performance before all else is doomed to failure. Education is a matter of teaching the human being to become "ever more human", to "be more" rather than to "have more". Thus the human being learns to "be" "with others", but even more to be "for others". That is why "education is of fundamental

importance for the formation of inter-personal and social relations" (John Paul II, Address to UNESCO [2 June 1980], n. 11: *Insegnamenti* III, 1 [1980], 1644).

15. As part of the general education process, to counteract racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance associated with it, there must be a specific effort to present - especially to the young - certain major values such as the unity of the human race, the dignity of every human being, the solidarity which binds together all the members of the human family. Equally important is *an education in respect for human rights* and, in this regard, mention should be made of the initiative launched by the United Nations Decade for Education in Human Rights (1995-2004). In addition to students in schools or universities, certain professions are in special need of a theoretical and practical formation in the area of human rights (government officials, lawyers, judges and law enforcement officers, but also teachers, social workers and journalists) (see especially the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action [25 June 1993], I 33, II, nn. 68-69). This is not to deny that education in human rights is a slow and complex process, especially when the country concerned has been through years of conflict and everything has to be rebuilt: administration, electoral system, police force, educational system, etc.

If peace cannot be attained without respect for human rights (cf. John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 1999*), by the same token without education in human rights, peace and respect for others are impossible: "without education in moral values, in the people and with their leaders or future leaders, every construction of peace remains fragile; it is even doomed to failure, whatever be the cleverness of diplomats or the forces displayed. It is the duty of politicians, educators, families, and those in charge of the media to contribute to this formation. And the Church is always ready to make her contribution" (John Paul II, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps* [12 January 1985], n. 7: *Insegnamenti* VIII, 1 [1985], 66).

### ***The role of the media in human rights education***

16. In order to promote the culture of human rights, everyone has the duty to educate for peace; but the *media* have an important role in this area (cf. John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 2000*, n. 12). Given the prodigious and positive development of the means of social communication, the Church recalls that the responsibilities of the individuals using them have become still greater. In fact, serious risks are involved, not so much with regard to the techniques used as to the content of what is communicated. Those responsible for information must never forget their duties to society as a whole. The first of these concerns the common good, for "society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice and solidarity" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2494). In communicating information, therefore, the primary duty is truth (cf. *Communicationis Socialis Praepositi*, Communication et progrès, n. 34: AAS 63 [1971], 606); but a corollary of this is that the right to communicate the truth is not unconditional (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2488). This right must be guided by charity, because it is not an end in itself; the private life and reputation of people must be respected, as must the common good.

Moreover, public authorities have the important responsibility of guaranteeing this freedom within the framework of respect for the common good (On these points, cf. Second Vatican

Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication *Inter mirifica*, nn. 3-12). In particular, they should avoid letting serious prejudices enter society by the means of communication, and especially that they do not transmit racist and discriminatory messages, as sometimes happens, for example, through the Internet. In the world of today, the new information technologies have a great impact on the lives of individuals and peoples. This is a phenomenon which offers great possibilities, but which also has its dangers: "The fact that a few countries have a monopoly on these cultural 'industries' and distribute their products to an ever growing public in every corner of the earth can be a powerful factor in undermining cultural distinctness. These products include and transmit implicit value-systems, and can therefore lead to a kind of dispossession and loss of cultural identity in those who receive them" (John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 2001*, n. 11).

### ***The role of religions and of the Catholic Church in particular in human rights education***

17. First and foremost, the Church insists on the irreplaceable role of religions, and of the Christian faith especially, in the area of education regarding human rights. At the Interreligious Assembly of 1999, Pope John Paul II declared: "The task before us ... is to promote a culture of dialogue. Individually and together, we must show that religious belief inspires peace, encourages solidarity, promotes justice and upholds liberty" (Address at the Closing Ceremony, Vatican City [28 October 1999]: *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition [3 November 1999], pp. 1-2. On interreligious dialogue, see the activities of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Holy See's Report to CERD, nn. 77 ff.). On another occasion, he stated to the German Bishops that "religious instruction ... can help to recognize clearly ... new emerging forms of idolatry ... such as nationalism and racism" (Address to a group of Bishops of Germany on the occasion of their *ad limina* Visit [4 December 1992], n. 7: *Insegnamenti* XV, 2 [1992], 812, quoted in the Report to CERD, n. 23). The Catholic Church in fact elaborates and teaches an important social doctrine focussing on the person and the person's rights at every stage of life and in every situation. The Church's moral teaching has two poles: the salvation of souls and respect for human dignity. In the year designated by the United Nations as the year of "dialogue between civilizations", it is good to remember that the basis of this dialogue is the existence of values common to all cultures. Pope John Paul II has written: "The different religions too can and ought to contribute decisively to this process. My many encounters with representatives of other religions - I recall especially the meeting in Assisi in 1986 and in Saint Peter's Square in 1999 - have made me more confident that mutual openness between the followers of the various religions can greatly serve the cause of peace and the common good of the human family" (John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace 2001*, n. 16. See also the *Message for World Day of Peace 1992*: "Believers united in building peace").

### ***Positive discrimination as a means of counteracting racism and forms of discrimination***

18. Regarding "good practices to promote" and more especially what is called "positive discrimination" or "affirmative distinctions", it is well known that the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, of 21 December 1965, envisages in Article 1, 4 the possibility of adopting special measures "for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such



protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights ... " (the Holy See ratified this Convention in 1969; see *CR*, Part IV, n. 30. See also the Holy See's Report to CERD, n. 4 k: "So far as the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination* is concerned, the Holy See takes special pleasure in reiterating its support of the Convention as the Catholic Church considers it its duty to preach the equal dignity of all human beings, created by God in His image"). On this basis of "affirmative action", various countries have adopted legislation providing special protection notably for indigenous peoples and minorities. These voluntary measures are intended to ensure effective recognition of the equality of all, for example by facilitating access to bank loans for a particular category of the population. There are different systems of applying such measures: the many more or less obligatory provisions for *affirmative action*, the system of quotas imposing a fixed percentage of one or other group of people (in public employment, schools, universities, elections ...), etc.

19. The choice of this kind of policy remains controversial. There is a real risk that such measures will crystallize differences rather than foster social cohesion, that in the area of employment or political life, for example, there will be recruitment or election of individuals on the basis of their ethnic group rather than their competence, and finally that freedom of choice will be compromised. Those who support these voluntary policies reply that it is not enough to recognize equality - it has to be created. And in fact it cannot be denied that the weight of historical, social and cultural precedents requires at times positive action by States.

The Catholic Church is always keen to defend the reality of the concrete person, situated in history (cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* [4 March 1979], n. 13), and she calls for effective respect for human rights. These policies are legitimate to the extent that they respect the prudent reserve of Article 1, 4 of the 1965 Convention, which provides that these measures of positive discrimination must be temporary, that they ought not have the effect of maintaining different rights for different groups, and that they must not be kept in force once their objectives have been achieved.

### ***The increased mobility of peoples demands more than ever an openness to others***

20. The *movement of peoples*, as previously stated, has accelerated in recent years for various reasons, which are often dramatic (wars, forced displacement, natural disasters, etc.). As the number of foreigners grows, some people become alarmed and demand, for instance, "zero immigration" laws, or indulge in still more violent forms of behaviour (cf. *CR*, Part II, n. 14). The Catholic Church is aware of these problems (cf. *CR*, Part IV, n. 29), and has always paid special attention to refugees, migrants and expatriates. The Pope, for example, dedicates an annual message to migrants and refugees. On every occasion, he seeks to encourage everyone, and especially Christians, to be generous in their welcome, particularly through positive actions such as family reunification, and to recognize that immigrants bring with them the riches of their culture, history and traditions (see among others the Holy Father's *Message for World Day of Migrants 1992* "To welcome the stranger with the joy of one who can recognize in him the face of Christ", *Insegnamenti*, XV, 2 [1992], 80-84. In its conclusions, CERD remarks: "The Committee notes with satisfaction that the laws and teachings of the Catholic Church promote tolerance, friendly co-existence and multiracial integration and that Pope John

Paul II has, in a number of speeches, openly condemned all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia manifested through racial tensions and conflicts around the world" [n. 4]. See also the activity of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants, especially in the Holy See's Report to CERD, nn. 82 ff., see Note 16. In its conclusions CERD notes: "The Committee expresses its appreciation for the contributions made by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People through, inter alia, declarations and programmes of action to promote non-discrimination against refugees and migrants in various parts of the world. In this context, the Committee notes the efforts undertaken by the State party to promote the rights of the Roma populations" [n. 7]). The local Churches, especially through the Episcopal Conferences, have not hesitated to enter into public debate in order to condemn racism and foster openness to immigrants (see for example the Message of the French Episcopal Commission on Migration to immigrants in France, published at a time when the movement towards a policy of "zero immigration" was in full swing, *Nous avons besoin de vous* [20 May 1993]: *Documentation catholique* 2074 [1993], 569; the Message of the Japanese Bishops, *Seeking the Kingdom of God which transcends differences of nationality*, which addressed the increase of immigrants to Japan especially from poor countries and which encourages Christians to develop positive attitudes towards them. See also the documents published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the U.S.A., such as *Who are my brothers and sisters? A Catholic educational guide for understanding and welcoming immigrants and refugees*, Washington, D. C., 1996, which is an educational programme for Catholic primary and secondary schools; and also *Welcoming the stranger among us: unity in diversity*, Washington, D. C., 2001).

### ***New and dramatic forms of discrimination***

21. Since 1988, two great global divides have grown deeper: the first is the ever more tragic phenomenon of poverty and social discrimination (cf. *CR*, Part II, n. 13), and the other, more recent and less widely condemned, concerns the unborn child (cf. *CR*, Part II, n. 16) as the subject of experimentation and technological intervention (through techniques of artificial procreation, the use of "superfluous embryos", so-called therapeutic cloning, etc.). Here there is a risk of a new form of racism, for the development of these techniques could lead to the creation of a "sub-category of human beings", destined basically for the convenience of certain others. This would be a new and terrible form of slavery. Regrettably, it cannot be denied that the temptation of eugenics is still latent, especially if powerful commercial interests exploit it. Governments and the scientific community must be very vigilant in this domain.

### ***Conclusion***

22. When he visited South Africa in 1995, Pope John Paul II stated that solidarity is "the only path forward, out of the complete moral bankruptcy of racial prejudice and ethnic animosity" (Homily at Germiston Racecourse, Johannesburg [17 September 1995], n.

4: *Insegnamenti* XVIII, 2 [1995], 581). Solidarity must be fostered among States, but also within every society where a process of de-humanization and the disintegration of the social fabric undeniably aggravates racist and xenophobic attitudes and behaviour. This negative process results in rejection of the weakest, be it the foreigner, the handicapped or the homeless. Solidarity must be based upon the unity of the human family, because all people,

created in the image and likeness of God, have the same origin and are called to the same destiny (cf. *CR*, Part III, nn. 19-20). On this basis the contribution of religion remains irreplaceable, a contribution made by each believer who, freely adhering to faith, lives it out every day. Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion remain the premise, the principle and the foundation of every other freedom, human and civil, individual and communal.

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