

## **Intervention of Joseph Cardijn, 23 September 1965**

Venerable Fathers,

In this Pastoral Constitution, worthy of the greatest praise, our Council wishes to bring light to all people of our time. This is why it is extremely important that it considers people not in a general manner but as they are *concretely* in the world today.

There are principally 3 categories of people who are truly concerned by these difficult problems: young people, workers and the peoples of the Third World. They expect the Council to speak to them as Christ did when he said: “The Father sent me to bring good news to the poor.”

This is why I greatly desire:

- that the introduction to the first part of the document should be entitled “the human condition in the world today” and
- that there be added three sections, or one section with three paragraphs, consecrated respectively to young people, to workers and to the peoples of the Third World. These sections or paragraphs would give a concrete and dynamic character to the whole introduction.

Today, if you do not mind, I will speak only about young people and the Third World, reserving the worker problem for another occasion.

### **The Responsibility of Young People in the Construction of a Better World**

The demographic situation of the world is such that today young people constitute around half of the whole population of the world. This half of humanity should still less be forgotten by the Council if only for the simple reason that it is the most dynamic, that it is called to exercise the greatest influence on the future and that the lives of young people are very different from those of young people in the past. As a result of their studies, their work and their leisure, they live further and further away from their parents, from their families, and even from their homeland. They are more *united among themselves* and they live more in groups. They are at the age when they must decide their vocation or their service in life. The world in which they enter and begin to work faces new and serious problems. It depends on them whether this new world will become better or worse. If we *abandon* these young people, if we leave them *alone*, they cannot resolve the problems of their age and of the modern world as they must.

This is why, by this constitution, the Council must address to young people today a special message in which it will express its confidence and encourage them in their respective milieux to become *conscious of their responsibilities* with respect to our era and that of tomorrow.

Rather than addressing young people with *paternal* exhortations, the Council must give them a *virile consciousness of their responsibilities*. The world of today will be *what they themselves will be by means of the options that they will freely accept*. Their

faults, certainly, but also the reprehensible activities to which greed could lead them, must not distract them from the great and beautiful vocation and responsibility that they have today.

All the authorities, civil as well as private authorities, *must honestly and courageously help young people of the whole world* to respond generously and joyfully to this vocation in order that the whole world should be renewed and become better.

Our Holy Mother Church expects young people today – whom our Lord Jesus Christ certainly loves, he who loved young people so much during his terrestrial life – that they should be in these new times efficient artisans of the divine mission in the world for the greater glory of God today and tomorrow.

### **The Great International Injustice**

In its solicitude for the condition of people today, the Church must have *the greatest consideration* for the general aspiration of the people of the Third World to *equality* with the old countries in every domain of human life. Both by its concrete understanding of human problems as well as by the divine love in which it participates, and by its missionary action, *the Church must do everything in its power to help* these young peoples effectively, while simultaneously deeply respecting their own character.

The *faithful* of the old Christian nations must, by all means, help relieve the suffering, the present misery and anguish of the Third World. Their help must not consist only of money or of technical means and equipment. What these young nations need above all is *fraternal education* in order to be able to take in hand themselves the cause of their human and divine development. *It will certainly become a historic scandal* if the present state of affairs should continue whereby countries considered as Christian have the possession and use of the greater part of the riches of the world.

The Council, very strongly manifesting its Christian concern, must *solemnly implore* the old rich nations to unite – in a truly universal and sincerely human spirit – all their scientific, technical, economic and political resources of which, if they have the will, they certainly dispose of today in order to relieve and suppress all the great sufferings, all the great anguishes of the Third World. If as a result of egoism, racism or nationalism, they refuse to obey this evident precept of Divine Providence, we can be sure that God's judgment of today's great international injustice will be severe and immediate.

If you will allow me to do so, I will speak of workers today on another occasion.

I have finished.

**Joseph Card. Cardijn**