

Pope Francis Cites Dangers of Racism © *Vatican Media*

The Other is a Brother or Sister to Love

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“The other is not only a person to be respected by virtue of his inherent dignity but above all a brother or sister to love,” Pope Francis on September 20, 2018, told the participants at the World Conference on Xenophobia, Racism, and Populism in the context of migration, organized from 18 to 20 September 18-20, 2018 at the Vatican. He invites us to transform “tolerance” into “fraternal love, tenderness, and active solidarity”.

On the last day of this meeting promoted by the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development and the World Council of Churches, the Pope improvised a few words and gave them his speech prepared in advance, where he denounces today acts of intolerance, discrimination or exclusion that seriously endanger the dignity of the persons involved and their fundamental rights, including the right to life and to physical and moral integrity “.

“Unfortunately,” he laments, “it even happens that in the world of politics, we give in to the temptation to exploit the fears or objective difficulties of certain groups and to use illusory promises for electoral interests. short-sighted. ”

“The gravity of these phenomena can not leave us indifferent,” insists the Pope: “We are all called upon, in our respective roles, to cultivate and promote respect for the intrinsic dignity of every person, starting with the family ... but also in the various contexts in which we act “. It particularly encourages the media, trainers and religious leaders.

Here is a ZENIT working translation of the speech prepared in advance.

Speech by Pope Francis

Cardinal, Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to welcome you to the World Conference on Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration (Rome, 18-20 September 2018). I warmly greet the representatives of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Christian Churches, in particular, the World Council of Churches, and other religions. I thank Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Department of Integral Human Development, for the kind words he addressed to me on behalf of all the participants.

We live in a time when feelings that many thought were outmoded seem to be reviving and spreading. Feelings of suspicion, fear, contempt and even hatred of individuals or groups deemed to be different because of their ethnic, national or religious affiliation, and as such considered unworthy to participate fully in the life of society. These feelings, too, all too often lead to acts of intolerance, discrimination or exclusion, which seriously undermine the dignity of the persons involved and their fundamental rights, including the right to life and physical integrity, and morality. Unfortunately, it even happens that in the world of politics,

The gravity of these phenomena can not leave us indifferent. We are all called upon, in our respective roles, to cultivate and promote respect for the intrinsic dignity of every person, starting with the family – a place where we learn from an early age the values of sharing, of welcome, fraternity, and solidarity – but also in the various contexts in which we act.

I think, first and foremost, of trainers and educators, who are asked to renew their commitment so that at school, at university and in other places of learning, the respect of every person, including physical and cultural differences that distinguish it, overcoming prejudices.

In a world where access to information and communication tools is ever more common, special responsibility rests with those working in the social communications world, who have a duty to serve the truth and spread the word. Information by being attentive to fostering a culture of encounter and openness to others, with mutual respect for diversity.

Those who derive economic benefits from the climate of mistrust abroad, where the irregularity or the illegality of the stay favors and nourishes a system of precariousness and exploitation – sometimes to a level that generates true forms of slavery – should make a profound examination of conscience, in the consciousness that one day they will have to give an account to God of the choices they have made.

Faced with the spread of new forms of xenophobia and racism, leaders of all religions also have an important mission: to spread among their faithful the principles and ethical values inscribed by God in the heart of man, known as the natural law. It is about realizing and inspiring gestures that help to build societies based on the principle of the sacredness of human life and respect for the dignity of every person, on charity, on fraternity, – which goes well beyond tolerance – and on solidarity.

In particular, let the Christian churches be humble and active witnesses to the love of Christ. For Christians, the moral responsibilities mentioned above assume an even deeper meaning in the light of faith.

The common origin and the unique bond with the Creator make all the members of a single family, brothers, and sisters, created in the image and likeness of God, as taught by the Biblical Revelation.

The dignity of all men, the fundamental unity of mankind and the call to live as brothers, find their confirmation and reinforce themselves to the extent that we welcome the Good News that all are also saved and gathered by the Christ, to the point that – as Saint Paul says – “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is no longer the man and the woman, because all, we are one in Christ Jesus “(Gal 3,28).

In this perspective, the other is not only a being to be respected by virtue of his intrinsic dignity, but above all a brother or sister to love. In Christ, tolerance is transformed into fraternal love, tenderness, and active solidarity. This is especially true of the smallest of our brothers, among whom we can recognize the stranger with whom Jesus identified himself. In the day of universal judgment, the Lord will remind us: “I was a stranger and you did not welcome me” (Mt 25,43). But he is already challenging us today: “I am a stranger, you do not recognize me? ”

And when Jesus said to the Twelve, “Among you, it shall not be so” (Mt 20,26), it did not refer only to the domination of the leaders of the nations in the political power, but to the whole Christian being. To be Christians, in fact, is a call to go against the grain, to recognize, welcome and serve the rejected Christ in the brothers.

Aware of the many expressions of proximity, welcome and integration already existing towards foreigners, I hope that this meeting, which has just been concluded, may spring from many other collaborative initiatives so that together we can build more just and more just societies. solidarity.

I entrust each one of you and your families to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of tenderness, and with all my heart I give you the Apostolic Blessing to you and those you love.