



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE WRITERS OF THE COLLEGE
OF "LA CIVILTÀ CATTOLICA"**

*Hall of Popes
Friday, 17 February 2006*

Dear Writers of La Civiltà Cattolica College,

I am pleased to welcome you with all those who collaborate with you in various capacities. I know and appreciate the work that the Journal has carried out at the Church's service since 1850, when Bl. Pius IX, my Predecessor of venerable memory, founded it. He then endowed it with a permanent special statute that established its special connection with the Holy See.

This expresses particular trust in the Journal on the part of the Pontiffs, my Predecessors, but it is also an appeal to your fidelity to the Holy See's directives. Despite the tumultuous changes in historical situations, this bond has never been broken, as the Roman Pontiffs' benevolent communications to the Journal throughout the 155 years of its existence testify.

These documents, in fact, show the interest with which they have followed and still follow the work of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, recognizing its usefulness for the Church's good and appreciating its constant fidelity to the directives of the Magisterium.

In our time, however, when the Lord Jesus is calling his Church to proclaim the Gospel of salvation with new dynamism, one cannot dispense with the search for new approaches to the historical situation in which men and women live today, so as to proclaim the Good News effectively to them.

Consequently, to be faithful to its nature and its task, *La Civiltà Cattolica* should not fail to renew itself continually and to interpret the "signs of the times" correctly.

Today, in fact, a culture marked by individualistic relativism and positivist scientism is continuing to

gain ground. It is a culture, therefore, that is tendentially closed to God and to his moral law, even if not always prejudicially opposed to Christianity. A great effort is therefore asked of Catholics to increase dialogue with the contemporary culture in order to open it to the perennial values of Transcendence.

In this effort, believers should avail themselves of the means offered by faith and reason; at first sight, these instruments seem barely adequate but they are rendered effective by the power of God, who follows paths remote from power and success. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that today there are also numerous signs of hope in the world, the fruit of the Spirit's action in history.

Such examples include the new awareness of religious values on the part of many men and women, the renewed attention to Sacred Scripture, the respect for human rights in a far greater measure than in the recent past and the desire for dialogue with other religions. In particular, faith in Jesus can help many people grasp the meaning of life and of the human adventure, offering them those reference points that are often absent in our frenetic and disoriented world.

Here then, is where the mission of a cultural journal such as *La Civiltà Cattolica* fits in: active participation in the contemporary cultural debate, both to propose and at the same time to spread the Christian faith in a serious way. Its purpose is both to present it clearly and in fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church, and to defend without polemics the truth that is sometimes distorted by unfounded accusations directed at the Ecclesial Community.

I would like to point out the Second Vatican Council as a beacon on the path that *La Civiltà Cattolica* is called to take. The doctrinal and pastoral riches it contains and especially its basic inspiration, have not yet been fully assimilated by the Christian community, despite the 40 years that have passed since its conclusion. The Council undoubtedly gave the Church an impetus capable of renewing her and preparing her to respond adequately to the new problems with which contemporary culture confronts the people of our time.

On the other hand, the Second Vatican Council has been integrated with numerous doctrinal and pastoral documents which the Holy See and the Bishops' Conferences of many nations have published on problems that have recently arisen. They constitute an ever living source from which *La Civiltà Cattolica* can draw for its work. It is a matter of spreading and sustaining the Church's action in all areas of her mission. The Journal must concentrate on disseminating the Church's social doctrine, one of the topics it has broadly treated in its 155 years of existence.

I would like to end our meeting by confirming the trust that the Holy See places in your Journal, in the certainty that all its editors and collaborators, following the example of those who preceded them, will be able to respond to this trust in joyous fidelity and a spirit of service.

As I entrust the work of *La Civiltà Cattolica* to Mary, Seat of Wisdom, I impart a special Apostolic

Blessing to you all, editors and contributors to the Journal, and also to all your devoted readers.

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