



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO CARDINAL RENATO RAFFAELE MARTINO
PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE**

*To my Venerable Brother
Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino
President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*

I was pleased to be informed of the international seminar on "*Poverty and Globalization: Financing for Development, including the Millennium Development Goals*", which is taking place on Friday 9 July 2004 under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In extending my heartfelt greetings to Your Eminence, to government representatives and to other distinguished participants present in Rome for this occasion, I should like to assure you of my prayers and encouragement for this most important work.

The conditions of extreme poverty afflicting many millions of people are a cause of grave concern to the international community. The Church, committed to a "preferential option for the poor", naturally shares in that concern and strongly supports the Millennium goal of halving the number of people living in poverty by the year 2015. Through the many Catholic aid and development agencies she makes her own contribution to relief efforts, thereby continuing the work of Christ himself, who came to bring good news to the poor, to feed the hungry, to serve and not to be served. What is needed now is a new "creativity" in charity (cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 50) so that ever more effective ways may be found of achieving a more just distribution of the world's resources.

Much work has already been done to reduce the burden of debt afflicting poor countries, but more is needed if developing nations are to escape from the crippling effects of underinvestment and if developed countries are to fulfil their duty of solidarity with their less fortunate brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. In the short to medium term, a commitment to increase foreign aid

seems the only way forward, and the Church therefore welcomes the search for innovative solutions, such as the *International Finance Facility*. She also encourages other initiatives being sponsored in many parts of the world both by various organizations of the United Nations and by individual governments. At the same time, financial support from wealthy nations places an obligation on the receiver to demonstrate transparency and accountability in the use made of such assistance. I am confident that the governments of rich and poor countries alike will take seriously their responsibilities towards each other and towards their people.

Trusting that your important discussions will bear abundant fruit, I invoke the light of the Lord upon all who are participating in this seminar and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 5 July 2004

JOHN PAUL II