

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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[Link](#)

[...] I welcome you, members of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and those attending this plenary session dedicated to human trafficking. I am grateful for the kind words of the President, Ms Margaret Archer. I cordially greet and assure you that I greatly appreciate how much this Academy is doing to increase awareness of the new forms of slavery and to eradicate the trafficking of human beings, with the single intent to serve mankind, especially marginalized and excluded people.

As Christians, you feel challenged by the Lord Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and also by the 'protocol' by which we shall be judged at the end of our lives, according to the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25. "Blessed are the poor, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the merciful, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for they shall inherit the earth, they shall be called sons of God, they shall see God" (cf. Mt 5:3-10). Those who are "blessed by the Father" — his sons and daughters who shall see Him — are those who concern themselves with the least and who love the smallest among their brothers: "as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" says the Lord (cf. Mt 25:40). And today, among these most needy brothers and sisters are those who suffer from the tragedy of modern forms of slavery, from forced labour, slave labour, prostitution, organ trafficking, drugs. [...]

[...] Unfortunately, in a global economic system dominated by profit, new forms of slavery have developed, worse and more inhuman in a certain way, than those of the past. Thus even more today, following the Lord's message of redemption, we are called to denounce and fight against them. First of all, we must raise awareness of this new evil which, in the world at large, wants to be hidden since it is scandalous and "politically incorrect". No one likes to acknowledge that in one's own city, even in one's own neighbourhood, in one's region or nation there are new forms of slavery, while we know that this plagues almost all countries. We must then denounce the seriousness of this terrible scourge. Previously Pope Benedict XVI, without mincing words, condemned every violation of the equality of dignity among human beings (cf. Address to the New Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See, 7 November 2011). For my part, I have declared many times that these new forms of slavery — human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution, organ trade — are extremely serious crimes, "an open wound on the body of contemporary society" (Address to Participants in the Second International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking, 10 April 2014). All of society is called to grow in this awareness, especially with regard to national and international legislation, in order to be able to ensure that traffickers be brought to justice and their unjust earnings redirected for the rehabilitation of victims.[...]