

FOR A NEW EVANGELIZATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL-RURAL WORLD

SOME LINES OF PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK EMERGING FROM THE FOURTH WORLD CONGRESS ON RURAL LIFE, ORGANIZED BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE AND ICRA (Rome, 24-27 June 2012, at Domus Mariae-Palazzo Carpegna)

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A “new” evangelization

1. The new evangelization of the agricultural-rural world is a need connected to the growth of the Kingdom of God that takes place within changing historical and cultural coordinates. God is at work in this world and needs collaborators so that every reality, including the agricultural and rural world, is “recapitulated” in Christ, the New Adam, to the glory of the Trinity.

The first and principal factor of the development of the agricultural-rural world is the announcement of Jesus Christ

2. This affirmation of Benedict XVI, expressed earlier by Pope Paul VI, must be taken as the theological-pastoral guideline for the new evangelization: "the first and main factor of development is the announcement of Jesus Christ" (*Caritas in veritate* [CIV] n. 8). The announcement of Jesus Christ must, therefore, be considered essential so that people who cultivate the land are able to meet the Savior, to love Him above all things and live *in* Him, *of* Him, *for* Him. From the life of communion with Jesus Christ a new light and new moral energy will come to the agricultural-rural world, essential for its development.

The new evangelization, source of a new Humanism

3. The renewed announcement of Jesus Christ is the cause of an *integral* development for the people and for the same agricultural-rural world, because it allows one to live the first moral principle of growth with *a love full of truth, abiding* in Him who is *Agápe* and *Logos*. *Living* Christ it is possible to access a new cultural synthesis, a more complete view of man, a *social Humanism* substantiated by *fraternity*, by a relationality of mutual reinforcement, by the sharing of spiritual and material goods, pillars of sustainable and inclusive development. Thanks to a new evangelization it is possible to interpret the social rural question in *anthropological terms*. By it the relations between man and nature are not foreshadowed in the sign of a naïve naturalism, which considers creation untouchable, nor in the sign of a dominion that destroys it. Creation is God's gift to all to admire Him in His greatness, and for a wise and responsible

use for the poorest, entire humanity, the future generations. While the primacy of the person over creation must be recognized, that this is ultimately a wondrous work of God must also be borne in mind, containing in itself a "grammar" that indicates the purpose and criteria for its non-instrumental and non-arbitrary use. The new evangelization of the ecclesial communities must not be lacking/scarce, but *passionate* and *effective*, especially in a context where the environmental issue is alive. Without it the house of humanity undergoes violence by people and groups who do not consider the conditions of its sustainability, resulting in irreparable damage.

The historical and concrete ideal of an integral, fraternal, inclusive, sustainable development in solidarity, open to Transcendence

4. In a context of globalization - namely a set of interconnections and communications, which make the various parts of the world and the various economic sectors more interdependent and more unified - the historical and concrete ideal of an integral development of all peoples must be proposed as a goal: a development in solidarity, fraternal, inclusive and sustainable, open to Transcendence.

Such a development is to be achieved with reference to the rural world that, in not a few parts of the world, records a state of poverty and invokes a sense of justice.

The indispensability of transcendence

5. The announcement of Jesus Christ as the first and principle factor of development, from a prospective of *human fulfillment in God*, stresses to highlight - without diminishing the relevance of technical, intellectual, scientific, institutional factors, indeed reaffirming and strengthening it according to a proper scale of values, within the human *telos* - the importance and indispensability of *transcendence* with respect to the growth of the peoples, along with the economic dimension of human existence itself. The economic development of peoples, as well as of the agricultural-rural world, the markets, transformative, commercial, and productive activity, take advantage of all that goes beyond the material dimension, namely, the *constitutive relational structure* of persons in terms of freedom and responsibility, of fraternity, of convivial reciprocity according to a Trinitarian imprint.

Transcendence and the market economy

6. The *dimension of transcendence*, horizontal and vertical, which characterizes the being of the people requires that the integral development of people and of the

agricultural and rural world is supported by a *market economy* capable of including tendentially all people, especially the poorest, or, that is to say, an economy animated by a logic not only of exchange of equivalents, but also of gift, of gratuity, of solidarity and of justice. But the dimension also postulates that the economic world in general, and the agricultural-rural world in particular, make use of multivalent business *structures*, especially those that pursue with profit also human and social finalities, as in the case of cooperatives and family businesses.

Agriculture and family

7. In a context in which agriculture has always more need of the support of a “human ecology” – that is, an “ecology” attentive to the moral and religious formation of persons – its close relationship with the family, which is the first and fundamental structure of that ecology, appears vital and indispensable (cf., *Centesimus annus* n. 39). The UN has decided that 2014 will be the International Year dedicated to family farming. The tradition of Catholic social thought can give to the expression “family farming” all that semantic and value-based depth that is seen from that relational unity that is the “we” of the family, in which the subjects love each other in mutual reinforcement of being. What better than a similar relationality and familial conviviality can be fertile *soil* and role model also for an organic or “green” farming, or namely, for a sustainable agriculture that aims to transmit values and that must live a steady relationship of solidarity between men, of *alliance between man and nature*?

The agricultural-rural sector is not only a mere economic sector

8. According to the new evangelization of society encouraged by CIV, the rural-agricultural world must not be regarded as a mere economic sector, the orientation of which prevailed in the past and in which continue to be inserted ideologies cultivated by all the schools of economic thought which absolutize the power of money, of short-term profit, up to undersize the work of the land. Compared to that, one task of the new evangelization will be precisely that of reasserting the anthropological, ethical, social and environmental importance of work in general and of agricultural labor in particular. Work is a fundamental *good* of man and has *primacy* on economic and technical values.

The agricultural-rural world is above all “living environment”

9. The agricultural-rural world must not be thought of merely in *mercantile* terms nor as a variable dependent of financial mechanisms. The agricultural-rural world *is more than just a simple territory* or a soil having a recognizable intended use as

to produce this or that good. It is a "*living environment*" of the local community, nationally and globally. It is the living environment of humanity. As such, it represents a "place", a "communitarian and cultural context" in which the connections of the conduct of agricultural activities and the very presence of rural settlements become inseparable from biological and natural phenomena. In it, the social and cultural dynamics are inextricably intertwined with the land and the environment. The productive wealth and environmental and food security of the agricultural-rural world depend on the level of cultural and ethical maturity of the peoples who inhabit it. Encouraging their social, ethical-cultural, religious development increases the protection and promotion of their living environment. To protect nature and the agricultural-rural world it is not enough to intervene with economic incentives or disincentives, and nor with an adequate education. These are important steps, the CIV reminds us, "but the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society" (CIV, 51).

Nature and purpose of agriculture

10. Agriculture, human work done in the temple of creation, must be considered as an *ensemble of many activities, of social wisdom and traditions, lifestyles, practices, institutions, technical resources, innovations*, through which men, as individuals and as groups of people, ensure to *feed* humanity and also - taking care of farmland, parks, forests and waterways of the hills and mountains - *protect* the environmental goods, *developing* their intrinsic potentialities to benefit of all, of the present and future generations.

Agriculture "green economy"

11. In the actual context of globalization and of ecological problems, agriculture is considered to be a part of the so-called "*green*" *economy*, a concept that is becoming all the more affirmed, although it needs to have a more precise definition. The prospect of agriculture in the "*green*" *economy* takes on a more complete sense in light of the teaching of the social doctrine of the Church (SDC), where it is understood as an activity allowing the production of goods and wealth - and therefore allows the creation of decent work, not exploited - preserves and, together, strengthens the potentialities of the environment to allow future generations a better life and, also, the freedom of choice between the use and non-use of the natural heritage among different levels of natural wellbeing and of quality of the environment.

Agriculture and new ideologies, a new model of development

12. In a context of insufficiently governed globalization, the financialization of the economy, deregulated financial capitalism, and technocracy submit agriculture to pressures and deleterious mechanisms, marked by productivist and consumerist models that come to deconstruct the agricultural companies, ignore the importance of food security, of the respect/wellbeing of animals, of the local production. Compared to these trends is growing a *new model of agricultural development* that blends it in terms of quality, of authenticity, of multifunctionality, of oversight or maintenance of land, of food security. Such a model appears more commensurate with the dignity of farmers and to the needs of creation whose intrinsic order must be learned and respected.

Agriculture in the unitary context of the other economic activities and of the common good

13. It is typical of the patrimonial of wisdom of the SDC, which must be considered an essential element of the new evangelization (cf. CIV, 15), to consider the agricultural-rural activity in the *unitary context* of the other economic activities but, above all, in the context of the *national and world common good*. From this point of view, farming is considered a *communitarian good*, that is, a good that is the *condition* of achieving the *common good* of a nation, of the entire human family.

Agricultural and fishery sectors promoted simultaneously, gradually, proportionately

14. The reading in personalist, communitarian, relational, fraternal terms of the agriculture and fishery sectors by the SDC presents them as “parts” of a whole human social-economic-environmental-cultural issue, guided by the principles of the universal destination of goods, of social justice, of solidarity and subsidiarity, in addition to the above-mentioned principle of the common good. This approach sheds particular light on the consideration of the various economic “sectors” and on their relationships. The various sectors must be thought of and organized in a manner that must not be disjointed, unequal, undersized. As taught in *Mater et magistra*, the fiftieth anniversary of whose promulgation was celebrated last year, the various productive sectors must be promoted *simultaneously, gradually* and *proportionately*, so that all who work there can be responsible and protagonists of their economic progression and of the realization of the common good.

Essentiality, not residuality, of the agricultural sector

15. A similar approach emphasizes, with the essentiality of the various sectors from the point of view of the national and world economy, also their anthropological and civil value. The multiple economic sectors have a value and an intrinsic function indistinguishable from a human and social function. The unity and interdependence among the economic sectors are given by the multiplication of the interconnections and of the proper communications of globalization, but above all from the unity and from the intrinsic solidarity of human beings, of the groups and of the peoples, who work together in the local communities and in the world community so that they are assured the conditions in which they are able to fully develop their life. The wealth of a people is not measured so much by the abundance of total goods, but also, and even more, by their *quality* and by their real and efficacious redistribution according to justice, to guarantee the personal development of all, the ultimate goal of the national economies and of the world economy.

Unitary approach and socio-economic and environmental policies needed to overcome persistent imbalances between sectors

16. The “holistic” approach of the economic sectors, that see them related and subordinated to the common good, drives economic-social-environmental policies in the name of social justice and of equity, that is, of a justice not abstract or detached from experience, but rather commensurate to the persons, to the groups and to the concrete people, situated within particular social relations, of countries having their own culture, degree of development and other income. The framework of value and criteria offered by this holistic approach does not accept that there are *imbalances* among the economic sectors. Those who live in a sector that is unequal should not suffer injustices in education, in remuneration and social security, of participation in the management of public affairs.

The paradoxes of a globalization insufficiently oriented to the realization of the common good of the world

17. One cannot, therefore, remain indifferent to the paradox of today, and that is that the increase of global wealth in absolute terms does not correspond to the development of all, including the farmers and fishermen, especially in poorer countries. If the phenomenon of globalization has contributed in part to reduce extreme poverty, it has, above all, favored the concentration of the wealth in the hands of few. In this regard it is enough to think that the 10% of the wealthiest population in the OCSE countries has a median income nine times greater than the 10% of those of the poorest populations; and in other countries, in particular of

Latin America, also twenty-seven times higher. Similar gaps are particularly evident on the level of salaries. The compensation of the *top managers*, in many cases, are incomparably higher with respect to those of the common industrial workers or of the land or those who, while working all day, without rest, earn a wage insufficient for their family and for a dignified existence.

Agricultural and fishery sectors to be promoted as sustainable sectors also through global institutions responsible for managing global problems

18. According to the unitary approach of the SDC, agriculture, which also includes in its interior good levels of development and of income for some, cannot be considered overall a sector perennially depressed and not even a sector of assistance, as happens not infrequently in Europe when they reinforce the position instead of the company. Thus, agriculture and fishery cannot be considered as marginal or peripheral sectors of a national economy and much less as variables dependent on deregulated financial capitalism, to global projection. The agricultural sector and fishery sector, instead, must be promoted as *sustainable sectors*, that play fundamental functions for the wellbeing of humanity, although in some geographical zones, for many reasons, the number of employees and also their contribution to GDP diminishes. However, in order to make agriculture and fishery sustainable sectors, from the environmental and social point of view, there is need of a *better harmonization of the policies* on the national and supranational level, as well as of the reform of the actual *global institutions* and of the creation of other ones considered necessary, capable of addressing and resolving equally global questions such as: pollution and environmental degradation; global warming; the redistribution of resources – especially those of energy – and their sustainable use; poverty, hunger and conflicts; the lack of access to safe water for all; food (in)security; the limited availability of water for cultivation and drought; the over-exploitation of fisheries; the speculation on the food commodities and their counterfeiting; the waist of food; the subsidies and technical restrictions on imports when they are disguised protectionism; the extension of the cities in fertile zones previously cultivated; the epidemics and the various health crises of the food sector, including those caused by human superficiality; the diffusion, always more necessary in the rural zones, of effective means of communication, of health centers and educational facilities; the spread of new edible plants; land ownership; the land grabs by powerful economic actors; the overcoming of the financial crisis, of the economic depression, of the volatility of prices. To resolve these challenges, political will is indispensable.

The need for a true world political authority

19. In order to make the above global institutions more coordinated and operative, *a true world political authority* is needed, regulated by law, constituted in a democratic manner, organized according to polyarchy, directed by the principle of the common good and of subsidiarity. It must be recognized by all and endowed with an effective power to guarantee to all people the security, the observation of justice, the respect of rights. Regarding the establishment of a public authority with global competence, the reflections of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace *Towards reforming the international financial and monetary systems in the context of global public authority*,¹ underlines that it cannot be reached if not gradually, and not without the prior practice of multilateralism, not only at the diplomatic level, but also and overall in the area of the plans for the sustainable development and for peace. The establishment of a world political authority will have to be based on the *principle of subsidiarity*, that is, by a gradual and balanced transfer on the part of national attributes, that does not signify dissolution of national sovereignties, but rather their review, their connection and their integration within the wider context of the *world common good*, in which the efficacious achievement foresees the creation of appropriate global and regional institutions (like the political union of African, European, Latin American, Asian peoples).

The indispensability of adequate institutions, of infrastructure and of relations investments

20. In the solution of the scourges of poverty and hunger, as the international organizations like the FAO and as *Caritas in veritate* recall, the lack of *institutions* - both capable of guaranteeing an access to land, to food and to regular and adequate water from the nutritional point of view and to face the necessities connected with the primary needs and with the emergencies of the real food crisis provoked by natural causes or by national and international political irresponsibility - influences more than the quantitative shortage of material resources. The economics relative to agricultural development, in the various local communities, that are the first responsible for the choices and of the relative decisions regarding the use of the cultivatable land, should be able to benefit from *investments* in rural infrastructure - especially storage capacity, seed banks,

¹ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Towards reforming the international financial and monetary systems in the context of global public authority*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2012, second edition.

irrigation systems, transport – in organization of the markets, in formation, in research and capacity of analyses, in legal protection and diffusion of appropriate techniques. That is techniques capable of utilizing, as best as possible, human, natural and socio-economic resources more readily available at the local level, in order to guarantee in the long term their sustainability.

The importance of reforming the international financial and monetary system and microcredit

21. As is well known, today the phenomena of financial speculation also with reference to the land, to water, to the food commodities, takes place that contribute to impoverish even more those who live in precarious situations, and increase the instability and the unpredictability of the markets. The rise in the food prices leads millions of persons to hunger, laying the foundations of strong social unrest, while the major food companies and the new economic powers register a constant growth of turnover and profits. Similarly, the increase of the prices of the primary energy resources - with the consequent spasmodic and uncontrolled search for alternative energy resources - ends up having negative consequences on the environment and on biodiversity, as well as on man himself. Given, then, the situations of economic difficulties, many of which, especially in conjunction with the financial crisis, are not created for demerit of the business owners,² and given the urgency to create new areas of industriousness, there is the need of a credit “friend”, that does not support, obviously, passivity or social dependency. But a finance “friend” appears always less available, especially because of the primacy accorded to short-term profit which is the “gospel” of the banks devoted to speculation. This renders problematic the existence of many small and medium enterprises, not only those that live in the agricultural and fishery sector, but also of those that, carrying out activity that have strong social value, have relevance with the *welfare of the society* or, better, with the wellbeing of the society, with the collective goods such as the environment, food security, water. For this, CIV recommends the development of microcredit, of ethical banks and that the reason for the use of the financial resources is not only speculative or involves the temptation of seeking only short-term profit, but is, instead, also the sustainability of the long term business and its punctual service to the real economy (cf CIV, 40). For this, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in its

² In the current climate of the financial crisis, which began in 2007, many companies have closed down because, for example, they have not received a timely payment for work performed on behalf of the government, because they have not found sufficient credit from banks and because sometimes they have not received timely by them their own savings deposited at their counters.

already cited reflection, proposes, in line with CIV, a more pertinent regulation of the international financial and monetary system on the international level, through the reform of the existing institutions (UN, IMF, World Bank). It also proposes the creation of new institutions, especially on the regional level such as the central regional banks with corresponding political unification, the launch of fiscal or industrial policies that contrast financial speculation aimed at profit in the short, and encourage commercial banks to provide credit to businesses, families and local communities.³

Sustainable development of agriculture and new technologies

22. In view of a sustainable development in agriculture, as CIV notes, “it could be useful to consider the new possibilities that are opening up through proper use of traditional as well as innovative farming techniques, always assuming that these have been judged, *after sufficient testing, to be appropriate, respectful of the environment and attentive to the needs of the most deprived peoples*” (CIV n. 27). With respect to the use of advanced technologies, that concern also transgenic products, CIV expresses a prudent position, without preconceived narrowness. The Church is not prejudicially closed to innovative techniques, but neither she is open to them in an indiscriminate manner. It requires an attentive *discernment* that, moreover, extends also to those traditional ones. With reference to interventions on creation, therefore, she encourages a *prudential attitude*, offering essential *ethical coordinates* with which to frame and address problems that arise. The “yes” or “no” use, for example, of crops for biofuels instead of food, or biological and biogenetic techniques, must be expressed taking into account many factors in play. With regard to use of GMOs, the reflection also relates to the fact that the seed is held and distributed by multinational companies that set prices practically operating under oligopoly. In this way, agricultural activity would take place in a state of dependence of farmers on multinational corporations.

The promotion of the agricultural sector through coordinated and planned policies

23. The agricultural-rural sector, which in some parts of the world still seems depressed, must not be treated as dependent only on assistance. It must be valued according to all its potential in the framework of the national economy and service of the common good of the world. The agricultural sector will be able to contribute better in the solution of the problems of nutrition, of a healthy food, of

³ Cf PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Towards reforming the international financial and monetary systems in the context of global public authority*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2012, second edition.

the protection of the environment, of the same plague of unemployment that affects in particular the Western countries, when it is inserted in a framework of *coordinated* and *programmed* policies relative to the many economic sectors, to an efficacious access to the information and to legal protection, especially in relation to some banks or multinationals or various suppliers that do not hesitate to enrich themselves at the expense of the farmers; to the relationship between school and the agricultural world, to revenue, to credit, to innovation, to social security, on the national level and on the international level. The policies relative to agriculture should be inspired by social justice, without making the farmers dependent on assistance, but talented entrepreneurs, at the service of the communities, of a sustainable development, inclusive, open to Transcendence, in a globalized socio-economic context. The same policies should play a supportive attitude and promotion in a particular way in relation to *women*, from whom, in various regions, depends the survival of entire populations. Their genius and their elevated sense of dedication are strategic in the development of a sustainable agriculture, functional to the creation of a healthy food and of the respect of the environment. Since, then, malnutrition affects them significantly, interventions aimed at improving their social status are hoped for, offering them better access to health care, to formation and also to credit.

New prospects of agricultural development on the international level

24. Thanks to a better harmonization of the *policies on the international level*, agriculture must be *sustainable* from the social and environmental point of view. The relative advantages of each area for possible specializations must be considered, with due attention to the energy cost of transport. Aware of the increase in living standards in different countries and, therefore, of the progressive evolution of billions of persons toward richer and more complex diets, we should invest more in other animal species, in other edible plants, in other healthy and productive options. For example, regarding the supply of protein, it is known that some *pillars* of today's diet of the most developed countries are not easily extensible to all humanity. Moreover, there are numerous analyses on the constraints that the limited water resources impose to the increase of livestock, or even of the effects of some sectors of livestock production on greenhouse gas.

A renewed spirit of mutuality and cooperation

25. In a global context, dominated by neo-individualism and by neo-utilitarianism, a strong spirit of *mutuality* and *cooperation* is required for the reconstruction of the social fabric, to better meet the growing demand for goods and services of higher

quality by workers of the earth, but also to grow better from the civil and political point of view.⁴ The *organization* of the farmers remains a crucial need for greater unity among themselves and to interact more effectively with other sectors and public institutions, and with other national or international organizations of different inspiration (movements, professional associations, Christian-based NGOs, "lobbying"), to better negotiate and compete in a global market. The formation and the organization of the farmers represents, in a particular way, a commitment essential especially in developing areas, where human rights are not easily recognized, where private ownership of land, although socially accepted, is not sufficiently protected against *landgrabbing* - the loss of arable land by the local population involves the transfer of workers of the land to a condition of dependence on multinationals and sometimes even foreign governments; where the environment, through ignorance, through lack of institutions of control or of sufficient legislation, is particularly vulnerable to pollution and to exploitation.

Socio-cultural growth of the agricultural-rural world and substantive and participatory democracy for all

26. The growth of the agricultural sector, from the economic, technical, social, ecological and cultural point of view, is condition for the realization of *a substantial and participative democracy for all*. Backwardness of the agricultural sector within national economies and the global economy would mean, in fact, the social and political marginalization of farmers from democracy. A depressed agricultural sector would be a tear in the continuity of the democratic fabric of a country. A real growth, also of the agricultural sector, implies a development not only from the technological point of view, not only from the sales point of view, not only from the point of view of the quantity and quality of production, not only from the point of view of the more rational use of resources, but also from the social point of view, with respect to participation in the responsible realization of the common good, also through the creation of *movements of the civil society*, active and able to promote the specific instances of the people of the land within the context of the common good. Never forget that with reference to the great problems relative to *common or collective goods*, such as *land, water, the environment, food security*, the primary responsibility, even with respect to

⁴ As Blessed John XXIII wrote, albeit at different times, the same holds true today: "Rural workers should feel a sense of solidarity with one another, and should unite to form co-operatives and professional associations. These are very necessary if farm workers are to benefit from scientific and technical methods of production and protect the prices of their products. They are necessary, too, if they are to attain an equal footing with other professional classes who, in most cases, have joined together in associations. They are necessary, finally, if farm workers are to have their proper voice in political circles and in public administration. The lone voice is not likely to command much of a hearing in times such as ours" (*Mater et magistra* n. 132).

politics, is that of the *civil society*, which shows a *primary* competence with respect to the same States.⁵

Pastoral structuring of the social evangelization relative to the agricultural-rural world

27. In view of a evangelization of society relative to the agricultural sector, and including the above and much more in terms of the humanization of it, it is fundamental not only to deepen its ecclesiological, theological, anthropological and ethical, and pedagogical content, from a theoretical point of view, but we must also give to it a *structure* on the pastoral level. There is also need to develop *pastoral projects*, attentive to the agricultural-rural environment, conceived as *ecclesial acts*, not as acts of individual priests or believers. The *discernment* must be communitarian, as work of the community must be the *preparation* of the subjects of pastoral care relative to the agricultural-rural world. They must above all be evangelists, aware of the demands of the Gospel, knowing the patrimony of the SDC, rich in a strong spirituality. Animated by a strong missionary spirit, they promote a *social catechesis* and a formation that enable the farmers to build the structure of their life on Jesus Christ, to participate in the life of Christian and civil communities.

The establishment of Offices or diocesan Centers

28. To make more efficacious the evangelizing mission of the agricultural-rural world on the local level, it is necessary that the Churches institute, where they do not exist, or reinforce the *Office* or the diocesan *Center* for the social pastoral work of the agricultural-rural world, that acts in a coordinated manner with the other *Offices* or diocesan *Centers* dedicated to social evangelization. The establishment of Offices or Centers allows, as the letter *Octogesima adveniens* of Paul VI suggests, the elaboration and the testing of pastoral projects related to the needs of the territories or regions regarding, for example, the situation of women in Africa and in Asia, the problems of those indigenous to South America or other regions, to a paralyzing welfarism that forms a sediment of agricultural revenue in Europe.

The contribution required of universities, cultural centers and media

⁵ This was reaffirmed, with reference to the theme of water, by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in *Water, an essential element for life, Designing effective solutions, an update, the contribution of the Holy See at the Sixth World Water Forum*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2012.

29. The pastoral work, relating to the agricultural-rural world, in view of its fecundity, requires the concurrent and convergent work of all those who, in the universities and various cultural institutions, are called to form the new generations from the professional and ethical point of view. But, moreover, it needs the cooperation of all who are able to enlighten national and global public opinion. In a particular way, it is fundamental that one helps to appreciate the values and benefits of rural civilization so that they who live in agricultural areas overcome every sense of inferiority with respect to other citizens.

Conclusion

30. In the current uncertainty and indeterminacy, typical of every transition of civilization, in a society capable of mobilizing substantial resources, but whose reflections on the cultural and moral plane remain inadequate, one must not be afraid to propose new things, even if they can disrupt obsolete patterns and preexisting balances of forces that dominate those who are weaker. New things are a seed planted in the earth, that will sprout and will not delay in bearing their fruit.