



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF THE HIGH COUNCIL OF THE JUDICIARY

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 13 June 2015*

[Multimedia]

Mr Vice President, Distinguished Counselors, Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

I would like first of all to express my most heartfelt best wishes to you for the task that has been assigned to each one of you after the renewal of the Superior Council of the Judiciary. This role is a responsibility of which you are fully aware and which constitutes a fundamental point of balance and stability for the exercise of judicial authority.

Jurisdiction today takes on a growing complexity, in regard to the multiplying of interests and rights which seek to be considered and which are not always able to find in the law a precise and full response to the variety of concrete cases before it.

Likewise globalization — as it was appropriately recalled — in fact also brings with it aspects of potential confusion and uncertainty, such as when it becomes a means of introducing customs, concepts, even rules, extraneous to a social fabric, with the consequent *deterioration of the cultural roots of reality* which should instead be respected; and this is the *result of the tendencies proper to other cultures which are economically advanced but ethically debilitated* (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 62). So many times I have spoken of ideological colonization when I refer to this problem.

In this context of profoundly shaken cultural roots, it is important that the public authorities, including the judicial authorities as well, use the space granted to them to provide stability and to render more solid the bases of human coexistence through the recovery of fundamental values. Christianity offers to these values the true most appropriate foundation: the love of God, which is

inseparable from the love of neighbour (cf. Mt 22:34-40).

Beginning from these foundations, even phenomena such as the expansion of the crime rate, in its economic and financial aspects, and the scourge of corruption, which affects even the most evolved democracies, can find an effective barrier. It is necessary to intervene not only in a suppressive but also an educational manner. This must be addressed in a particular way to the younger generations, by offering an anthropology — which must not be relativist — and a model of life capable of responding to the highest aspirations of the human spirit. For this purpose institutions are called to rehabilitate a long-term strategy, directed at promoting the human person and peaceful coexistence.

All those who are invested with a judicial function contribute, and I believe in the forefront, to this work of construction. Although, as you have rightly emphasized, judges are called to intervene in the event of a violation of the law, it is also true that the reaffirmation of the law is not only an act directed at the single person, but always goes beyond the individual case in the interests of the community as a whole. In this sense, every judicial pronouncement crosses the threshold of the single proceeding, to open itself and become an occasion for the entire community (“the people”, in whose name the sentences are pronounced) to find itself again in that law, reaffirm its value and in this way, something even more important, identify itself in it.

Rightly, then, in this time particular emphasis is placed on the theme of human rights, which constitute the fundamental core of recognition of the essential dignity of man. This must be done without this group’s abuse in wanting you to turn to practices and behaviours which, rather than promoting and guaranteeing human dignity, in reality threaten it or even violate it.

Justice is not done in the abstract, but in always considering man in his true value, as a being created in the image of God and called to realize likeness to Him here on earth.

Among those who were attracted by this task — and who gave their life for it — I too would like to remember, joining with you, Mr Vice President, the figure of Vittorio Bachelet, who occupied the same post and was killed 35 years ago. His testimony as a man, as a Christian and as a jurist continues to vivify your commitment to the service of justice and of the common good.

May the Lord bless each one of you and your work. Thank you.