

HEALTHCARE CANNOT DIVORCE ITSELF FROM MORAL RULES

VATICAN CITY, 18 NOV 2010 (VIS) - Benedict XVI has written a Message to Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, and to participants in the council's twenty-fifth international conference which is currently being held on the theme: "Towards egalitarian and human healthcare in the light of 'Caritas in veritate'".

In his Message the Pope highlights "the need to work with greater commitment at all levels in order for the right to healthcare to be effective, facilitating access to primary medical assistance. In our own time", he continues, "we are witnessing, on the one hand, a care for health which risks turning into pharmacological, medical and surgical consumerism, almost a cult of the body while, on the other hand, we see the difficulties millions of people face as they seek to obtain minimal subsistence and the medicines they need to cure themselves".

After highlighting the importance of "establishing true distributive justice which guarantees everyone adequate care on the basis of objective needs", the Pope insists that "the world of healthcare cannot divorce itself from moral rules, which must govern it in order to ensure it does not become inhuman".

"Justice is promoted when we welcome the life of others and take responsibility for them, answering their expectations because in them we see the face of the Son of God, Who became man for us. The divine image impressed in the features of our brothers and sisters is the basis of the exalted dignity of each individual and arouses in each of us the duty to respect, care and serve".

The Holy Father writes that "healthcare justice must be one of the priorities on the agendas of governments and international institutions. Unfortunately, along with positive and encouraging results, opinions and schools of thought exist which harm this justice. I am thinking of questions such as those associated with so-called 'reproductive health', the use of artificial procreation techniques that involve the destruction of embryos, and legalised euthanasia. Love for justice, the defence of life from conception until natural end, must be supported and proclaimed, even if this means going against the tide. Fundamental ethical values are the shared heritage of universal morality and the basis for democratic coexistence", he says.

"Only by looking at the world with the gaze of the Creator, which is a gaze of love, will humanity learn to live on earth in peace and justice, equitably sharing the planet and its resources for the good of each man and woman. For this reason", the Pope concludes, "I would advocate the adoption of a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, on the promotion and sharing of the common good, on responsibility, on a realisation of our need for a changed lifestyle, and on prudence, the virtue which tells us what needs to be done today in view of what might happen tomorrow".

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