

The Catholic Church and the Globalization of Solidarity

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Introduction

It is a great honor and joy for me to address you, dear brothers and sisters, the participants in the XVII General Assembly of Caritas Internationalis, which has chosen as its central theme, THE GLOBALIZATION OF SOLIDARITY.

1. A New World

There is no doubt that globalization, about which very much has been written, is producing a new world.

As a result, the first question should be: What do we mean by this term? Globalization is a highly complex process. It affects all the levels involved in building up the social sphere: economic, socio-political and cultural. These levels are not autonomous or independent; they are all interconnected and mutually reinforce one another within the global system in which they originate, which they serve, and to which they conform: namely, neo-liberal capitalism. Even though the roots of the current globalization have a long history (it originated with the expansion of colonial Europe in the fifteenth century), it incubated with the development of the new technologies and took shape with the liberalization of the transnational capital produced as a result of the disappearance of the socialism of the Eastern European countries at the beginning of the 90s.

To define it in a few words, it might be said that there are three pillars on which globalization is founded: *technological development, the neo-liberal economic system as the only global project, and the expansion of a ðone idea systemö.*

Now let us take a look at some of its manifestations.

We are living in an era of unprecedented change. Technological advances are produced, as never before, at a vertiginous speed. What we considered a value just a few years ago now seems useless to us.

It is certain that what we know as globalization involves both dangers and opportunities.

On the one hand, we are living in an exceptional, privileged situation. Never before have we been so aware of the inter-relations between different persons and cultures as in our times thanks to technologies like Internet that can connect us with the other end of the planet in seconds.

However, if we contemplate our world globally, the lack of changes that are really important for humanity cannot fail to call our attention.

We continue to live in a world full of flagrant inequalities, and despite the production and the wealth, the latter is increasingly concentrated in fewer hands. Actually, a world is being created where the greediness of a few is leaving the majority on the margin of history.

Some societies that enjoy technological progress and possibilities never seen before are manufacturing and reproducing exclusion.

In this sense, the much-acclaimed globalization appears more like a myth than a reality to us.

Rather than being in a global world, we are in a world that continues to be strongly divided between those who can enjoy the opportunities globalization brings, and those who are left on the margin.

It is a world in which there is a desire to open up all frontiers to goods, while a host of obstacles hinder the free movement of persons from the countries of the South towards those of the North, as we unfortunately see in the border shields imposed by the rich countries.

The new world order that is presented to us comes from the unification of markets in order to facilitate the circulation of money and goods.

In short, only the logic of financial markets has been globalized and the absolutism of this capital is creating havoc.

We might say that only the rich are globalized. Technology protects them and, at the same time, keeps them at a distance from the poor, who are kept subject to and working for them, because the system needs poor people in certain parts of the world, and it tries to keep from moving so they can continue producing cheap misery for the rich.

Injustice and inequality are distinctive signs of today's world. We are not heading towards a more just system, even though the marketing of a "one idea system" presents it to us in this way.

Globalization is highly selective. There have been no substantial changes in the social structure.

The advantages of globalization only benefit the same ones as always and the distribution of wealth as well.

The world is becoming globalized to the rhythm and in the way the major economic powers want.

Moreover, a savage capitalism is returning in part, which history has already judged harshly in view of the conditions to which it subjected the proletariat in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In this way, the historical achievements of the welfare State are being dismantled and, as a result, the differences between the rich and the poor are growing. Moreover, whereas States won a protagonist role on the economic terrain in the twentieth century, today, on the contrary, their power is decreasing more and more.

From different requests, we are reminded about the need to put an end to this scandal and take steps towards a sustainable model by humanizing globalization and transforming it into a promise and a project that are authentically universal.

The consequences of transforming the world into one enormous market have to be faced, and for this a new world has to be built, a world in which there is room for all the worlds.

While this phenomenon affects the entire world, it produces different effects on persons and is interiorized in different ways, depending on the persons, groups and situations.

To some this process appears exciting, and they live the present situation with optimism and try to fit into the new order and profit from all the opportunities it offers them.

Others are unsettled and upset by such rapid change, and they mistrust the present that seems to be turning everything upside-down.

Lastly, there are those who look at the present and future with fear and seek certainties by trying to return to a past that no longer exists, with the constant danger this entails of drifting towards fundamentalist positions.

The above considerations fully justify the fact that a Congress of Caritas Internationalis has taken up the theme of globalization from the only possible angle, the viewpoint of the Gospel: namely, the globalization of solidarity.

2. The Challenge of Globalizing Solidarity

Solidarity is a concrete expression of the fundamental good of sociability. It comes from the discovery of interdependencies with our fellow men whom we feel inclined to help with their needs because they are persons.

Solidarity is the contribution to the common good within the social interdependencies according to one's ability and real possibilities.

The common good in a very general sense refers to the personal good of each and every member of society. It also indicates the whole series of external elements in social life that contribute to the human growth or development of the persons and groups in a community.

As basic elements of the common good, respect for human rights, a reasonable development and well being, social stability, and peace in a just order are usually cited.

Solidarity reaches the whole world, which has become like a "global village": in some way, everyone depends on everyone else.

However, solidarity has to be put in order and start from the most immediate interdependencies. A business manager has to have solidarity first of all with his collaborators, shareholders, customers, suppliers, and the local community, and then with the society as a whole.

Solidarity makes it necessary to put oneself in another's place in order to discover his/her needs and try to satisfy them according to the possibilities of each situation.

The most elementary solidarity is avoiding actions that go against solidarity (for instance, contaminating the environment, destroying confidence or fomenting corruption in business, etc.).

Solidarity encourages giving the greatest possible service to each interdependent group: making efforts to maintain jobs, making investments to create new jobs; improving the quality of service to clients and users; helping the local community; improving the environment; contributing to social and educational initiatives, etc.

The practice of solidarity needs to respect the initiative, creativity and sense of responsibility of others without absorbing or depriving them of what they are capable of doing. The opposite would not be respectful of the identity of persons, who are rational and free beings, and would not favor their human development. This refers to the principle of subsidiarity, which is of great importance in the Social Doctrine of the Church.

3. The Ethics of Solidarity

Solidarity is one of the basic ethical-theological categories of human life and, more concretely, of social life. It is an essential ethical component in shaping the authentic model of participative society with equity.

On the other hand, solidarity has to be indissolubly bound to the fundamental values of justice, freedom, equality and participation and blend and guide them along the ways of the ethics of solidarity.

Solidarity is an omnipresent value and attitude in all moral life, and especially in the social morality that is needed so much in our world.

Because of its Latin etymology and initial use, the word "solidarity" had a juridical connotation. It was used to refer to the kind of obligations contracted "in solidum".

At present, the term "solidarity" has gone beyond the juridical barriers and pervades broad areas of human reality. It is a detonating term that expresses in language the "solid" condition of human reality: we human beings form a compact reality, a bloc, and we are governed by the law of empathy and cooperation (faced with the degradation of selfishness).

Solidarity expresses the ethical condition of human life.

The "Golden Rule" of Charity, which constitutes the basic moral norm, is none other than the development of solidarity: "Do to others as you would have them do to you".

The foundation of solidarity consists in the reality of ethical empathy: knowing, feeling and taking on the human condition as a whole in which every human being has solidarity with the others.

However, if empathy is the basis of solidarity, sharing is its apex.

Solidarity is achieved by seeing to it that all human beings share in the available goods as a whole.

These goods have to be divided up and shared without excluding anyone in the distribution, without some hoarding them at the cost of depriving others, and without introducing discriminatory measures in the distribution.

Human sharing implies that the goods are scarce with respect to the needs to be satisfied. The fair way of sharing scarce goods is governed by the law of solidarity: the goods are "of" all and "for" all. In turn, solidarity culminates in fair human sharing.

From the awareness of empathy to the practice of sharing, the broad meaning of the ethical category of solidarity unfolds. Social ethics can be understood as the normative development of human solidarity.

4. Some Theological Considerations

The purpose of this introductory address is not to make an in-depth study of Theology, but there is no doubt that the anthropological content of solidarity is enriched by putting it in the Christian horizon.

- Our God is a God with solidarity. The affirmation of religious monotheism is at the same a choice for ethical monotheism. Christianity sets the power of God, the guarantor of the oneness and the equality of humankind, against the neo-pagan currents that attempt to justify human inequality by exhuming Greek-Roman polytheism.
- God is first of all the defender of what has no value in human eyes: solidarity with the poor is one of the ways to give witness to the existence of God.
- If God has solidarity, the people who gather around him must also have solidarity: the people of God are a people with solidarity, as attested to by the revelation of both the Old and the New Testaments.
- For Christians, there is also a Christological root in the understanding and practice of human solidarity.

The Second Vatican Council presents a synthesis of this dimension of human solidarity in No. 32 of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. Christians see Christ in "others". For believers, solidarity is communion in Christ. Every baptized person feels the urgent call to increase solidarity continuously "until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother".

- The ecclesiological conscience rests on the theological and Christological justification of solidarity.

Belonging to the Church makes the understanding and requirements of solidarity more radical; it takes on a new context: the context of the promise and hope. Solidarity takes shape as a Messianic good and a value of the Kingdom.

Theological-Moral Function of Solidarity

There is one passage in the New Testament that expresses the moral function of the ethical-theological category of solidarity in a wonderful way. It is the passage in *Matthew* 25:31-46.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on this throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me..

For the Christian faith in every era, this text is the place where the urgent call for solidarity among human beings has its foundation and explanation.

From St. John Chrysostom to John Paul II, we find a special predilection for this text.

For John Paul II, this text takes up some fundamental questions related to our faith and ethical behavior.

These areas are closely united to one another. Perhaps no other passage in the Gospel speaks about this relation in such a convincing way.

The Holy Father made a deep and original consideration on solidarity in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (Nos. 38-40).

He tells us that solidarity is a "new virtue", very close to the "virtue of charity", with its own human basis, which is the interdependency between individuals, groups and nations, and with its own particular ethic, that is, to introduce the "order of ethical reason" in achieving and transforming interdependency with solidarity, and thus avoiding the "structures of sin" that grew from the wrong use of interdependency.

The new front proposed by the Encyclical for the Christian Social Ethic can be summed up in one word: **SOLIDARITY**. This is the category-synthesis of Christian social ethics. The practice of solidarity coincides with the exercise of the Christian social commitment.

5. A New Approach

By integrating the exposition made in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (Nos. 39-39) with previous teachings of the ecclesiastical Magisterium and the contributions from theological reflection, I would like to draw up a new approach to solidarity that is both theoretical and practical.

- Solidarity as a **pedagogy** to discover a real "neighbor" in others, an "equal" in the banquet of life. Solidarity helps us to see another "a person, people or nation" not as an instrument, but as our fellow man, an aid in order to let him/her take part, like us, in the banquet of life.
- Solidarity as a **channel** for the Christian identity in social commitment. The practice of solidarity can be understood as the fulfillment of God's plan both on the individual and on the national and international levels.

In the light of faith, solidarity tends to outdo itself and take on the specifically Christian dimensions of gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The solidarity of Christians, based on justice and governed by charity, elevates the moral sense to accept something that seems contrary to the norms of justice among humans: "to give up" what is one's own in order to enrich another.

This is the message Pope John Paul II wanted to convey to us in the Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*: without denying the value of justice, mercy completes it and transmits the moral superabundance of charity to it.

Mercy is the channel for justice and charity. Ethical-theological solidarity in turn is the functional channel for mercy.

In the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II synthesizes his thought and coins the axiom, "PEACE AS THE FRUIT OF SOLIDARITY" (No. 39).

The conclusion to which the Holy Father arrives is right on the mark: "The goal of peace, so desired by everyone, will certainly be achieved through the putting into effect of social and international justice, but also through the practice of the virtues which favor togetherness, and which teach us to live in unity, so as to build in unity, by giving and receiving, a new society and a better world" (No. 39).

In this way, the cause of peace is transformed into the fruit of the Christian practice of charity, which, in turn, is the face of charity today.

Economic Solidarity

The ethical-theological category of solidarity has a special application in the area of economic ethics. The Magisterium of the Church (especially the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, Pope Paul VI's Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, John Paul II's Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and the document of the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace "At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Consideration on the International Debt") has indicated that the moral problems of economic development and the relations between countries must be guided by the criterion of solidarity.

The economic crisis raises one basic question to the moral conscience: the way we face it will depend on whether or not our society will have much more solidarity in the coming years or, on the contrary, become even more selfish.

The core of the moral solution to the current economic crisis involves an ethical component: the reconstruction, both theoretical and practical, of human solidarity.

This criterion has to enlighten and guide people of good will, especially believers, in order to face the situation.

The moral meaning of solidarity in the area of economics is made concrete in a whole series of guidelines or axiological criteria that are the foundation of the entire edifice of economic morality.

Among the general guidelines that economic morality receives from the criterion of solidarity, we can point out the following:

- the sharing of goods
- the universal destination of goods
- the preferential choice for the poor.

Some concrete problems must also be raised when taking solidarity into consideration. We indicate these:

- economic development
- the new international economic order
- North-South relations
- the moral problem of the foreign debt.

6. Relations between Ethics, Integral Development and Solidarity

It is not a mere coincidence that we find the term "solidarity" in many proposals for reform in the most diverse sources and in the central message of John Paul II's Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*.

This means that all these projects are driven by a moral concern, and that they are not only dealing with technical questions.

Since the 60s, the Social Doctrine of the Church (a process in which the whole ecclesial community is involved in three stages: analysis of reality: judgment based on the Gospel values, and discernment for action) has incorporated the theme of DEVELOPMENT as one of the key dimensions of contemporary social ethics.

Blessed John XXIII already denounced the grave inequalities between the different regions of the planet and criticized the anti-birth policies that some wanted to use in order to tackle them.

In this way he highlighted the worldwide dimension of the "social questions" which, until that time, had been overly limited to the industrialized countries.

This new viewpoint was expressed forcefully in the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council: all the traditional themes of the social doctrine (labor, propriety, etc.) went on to occupy second place, while in first place the ethical category of "development" appeared to be the one that had to serve as the guiding principle for all the rest. The Council defines authentic development with two requirements: it must be integral (i.e., it must respond not only to the economic and material needs, but also to the cultural, affective, ethical and spiritual needs of the human being), and it must have solidarity (so that it will reach all men and all peoples).

The positive, optimistic viewpoint of the Council is in contrast with the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* of Paul VI, which, in a certain way, acts as its counterpoint.

Conceived as a document meant to explain the doctrine outlined earlier by *Gaudium et Spes*, it appeared to the conscience of humanity as an urgent call to action.

The Encyclical denounces the commercial mechanisms that bring about the exploitation of the less advanced peoples; it criticizes rigid capitalism with its unlimited desire for profit; it calls for a radical, planned transformation of the economies of the Third World (also to keep them from ultimately finding a justification for the alternatives of violent revolution).

However, there are two points on which Paul VI insists in particular:

- the obligation of the industrialized countries to help the poorest as compensation for unjustifiable behaviors in past eras, and
- the need to build an international order based on justice since *development* is the *new name for peace*.

The collegial effort, among others, of the Latin American Episcopate at its four General Conferences, to apply Vatican II to the situation on that continent have to be situated along the lines of *Populorum Progressio*.

We, the Latin American Bishops, are the spokesmen for our peoples' deep aspiration for liberation, and we see in this the voice of the poor that the Christians of the whole continent and the rest of the world cannot ignore.

This is not just a task of human promotion or reductionism of the evangelization message.

It is a constitutive dimension of evangelization, of the mission of the Church that is called to be the sacrament of man's intimate union with God and of humankind's unity.

This synthesis of human liberation and Christian salvation, of promotion and evangelization, has been adopted by various Synods during the papacies of Paul VI and John Paul II.

Unhappily, since John Paul II published *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, twenty years after *Populorum Progressio* (1987), things have not evolved towards anything better.

In seeking the causes of the scandalous contrast between the over development of the North and the underdevelopment of the South, the Pope pointed to the confrontation between the blocs existing at that time.

The confrontation was multifaceted: political, economic, ideological and military.

The mutual mistrust between the blocs led them to try and expand their areas of influence continuously by subjecting the peoples of the South to the dictates of their economic and strategic interests (neo-imperialism).

The eagerness for profit and the longing for power, which became the supreme, absolute values of our society, are in fact the most generalized, innate criteria of behavior: they regulate both the spontaneous relations between individuals and groups, and relations between nations.

Pope John Paul II sets a new system based on solidarity against this system of values that has competition as its backbone.

7. A Proposal Based on Solidarity

Caritas Internationalis has the responsibility to be the hands and heart of God in many parts of the world, especially among the most disadvantaged.

Its disinterested service, which is the fruit of acknowledging God's love, is a guarantee that life, every life, has value. Hence the first way to globalize solidarity is TO GLOBALIZE RESPECT FOR LIFE and, I insist, every life.

No rule or law of any kind — whether economic, commercial, political or ethical — is above respect for the human person. If we are not capable of globalizing, that is, extending to everyone everywhere, the firm commitment to overcome differences and wars through dialogue and respect, then we are not taking advantage of the opportunities given to us by a world that has greater means of communication, but ironically less communion.

But I would like us to be clear with one another: when we speak about a commitment in favor of life, we do not make this commitment merely from the perspective of human solidarity; we are inspired by Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, who suffers with the most disadvantaged and says to us, "Give them something to eat yourselves" (Mk. 6:37).

The struggle for human rights, which considered itself very favored by the ease in communications, is a task that always seems unfinished.

Christian social justice is based on Jesus Christ the liberator who broke the chains of those oppressed by sin. We are the ones who continue this task of redemption in the contexts where God has put us. This is not an altruistic response to the suffering of others; it is our duty as brothers.

Therefore, it is unquestionable that the second element to be globalized in our world is *FRATERNITY*. This is not merely intended in the parameters of the French Revolution, because even though it brought about the emancipation from one established power, it raised up new lords and dominions.

Fraternity among peoples, and even more among persons, is the way to the globalization of solidarity.

In our era as never before, we all share the same destiny. The world economic recession that accompanied and, in some places, preceded the terrorist attack on September 11th in New York, the AIDS pandemic or the more recent SARS epidemic, the civil wars in the poorest countries of the world that call for a response from the most powerful, the effects of climatic phenomena like El Niño, the outcome of ecological disaster in different areas of the world all affect us and indicate to us that we have to join forces as brothers in order to face the difficulties together.

Fraternity is needed in the face of the world's violence, for those for whom there is only the enemy, the adversary.

So much violence and suffering can only have a positive response to the extent that we will be capable of bringing a kind of solidarity to the world that is not just expressed in words or on paper, but in concrete actions.

We have to globalize dialogue: not a dialogue between deaf persons or a dialogue that brings about the submission of the weakest. The nations and the international financial institutions must improve their ability to listen.

In No. 55 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, the "Magna Charta" of the theme that concerns us for the Continent of Hope, the Holy Father told us that "by her social doctrine the Church makes an effective contribution to the issues presented by the current globalized economy. Her moral vision in this area rests on the threefold cornerstone of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity" (*Ecclesia in America*, 55).

7. Conclusion

Today the conviction is also being expressed that persons are not the only subjects of rights and duties and that entire peoples are also subjects. This calls for a re-reading of the fundamental rights in order to adapt them to the specific nature of peoples. By way of conclusion, along these lines we would like to suggest some areas for reflection that may aid the work of this assembly:

- 1) TO GLOBALIZE SOLIDARITY IN RESPECT FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES
- 2) TO GLOBALIZE SOLIDARITY SO THAT THE USE OF UNIVERSAL GOODS WILL BE EQUITABLE

3) TO GLOBALIZE SOLIDARITY TO MAKE THE PREFERENTIAL CHOICE FOR THE POOR EFFECTIVE

4) TO GLOBALIZE SOLIDARITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

By acknowledging that only God can save, the person goes from the slavery generated by the enticement of material well being to the exercise of free mastery over things, and this enables him to make use of them gratefully, with the awareness that they are at our service¹

Then it becomes possible to adopt out of solidarity, and not out of masochism, the criterion of moderation in consumption as an attitude needed in order to build universal fraternity that will become operational in the economic area. To state this in an effective, well-known formula: To live more simply so that others can simply live.

The change of mentality that faith makes possible also generates an attitude in the person with regard to nature whereby an amazed contemplation of the wonders of creation and its care replace the wasteful attitude that prevails today. We are the gardeners of the world, not its plunderers.

No one says that this change in attitudes will be easy in our cultural context. It will require a long personal process or itinerary.

Is it possible to get out of this system? Among all the contributions of ecological science, there is one particularly important theorem that the beneficiaries of globalization ought to consider: the more a system is unified, the more fragile it becomes. The greater the diversity of a system, the more stable it is. In other words, the unifying internationalization to which globalization has led brings its own cracks and crises along with it.¹[1]

Therefore, in the face of any kind of defeatism, we believe that it is possible to overcome these dangers, and that this possibility lies within us, in the free responsibility of every human being. Things are not solved anywhere in the world, and so the possibility of achieving greater levels of humanization is always open. Everything depends on us. Before this neo-liberal globalization that is tearing us to pieces, we must not and do not want to be fatalistic or resigned, and so we are planning another kind of globalization that some call **macro-solidarity**. This includes many micro-solidarities from different traditions, one of which is the Christian tradition in which we find ourselves.

In view of the situation we have just described, no one can remain indifferent because everyone, in one way or another, is involved and affected by it. It is necessary for all of us, both as individuals and institutions, to appeal to our responsibility and see what we can do. Indifference and inactivity are manifestations of complicity with the situation of injustice and inhumanity that reigns in the world. We can make our efforts concrete on three fronts:

- a) **The universe of cultural values.** While acknowledging the contributions that modernity has brought in the ethical area, we cannot hide the fact that the trilogy of liberty, equality, fraternity needs to be deepened and universalized if we want it to stop being a nice slogan used by the most powerful in an interested way, and turn it into a project of authentic humanization for all. We suggest two values – solidarity and gratuity – that would have to be incorporated into personal and social dynamics as a usual way of behavior and make up the basis for new macro ethics that express and make a more human world possible.

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- b) **The area of socio-political action.** It is in this area where the future of the poor and the excluded is really played out and the values mentioned earlier are tested in the clearest way. For the moment, it does not seem that poverty and inequality is the theme of greatest concern to the great "estates" of economic and political power (financial centers, multinational companies and governments of the different countries); however, great concern for these problems is emerging in many international bodies and, above all, in a host of collective groups and associations. It will be necessary to work from these platforms to extend this sensitivity to solidarity to the entire population and thereby compel the power centers to transform their current mechanisms of exploitation into new systems that favor the human development of all and are less exploitive of the environment.
- c) **The micro-social area and solidarity in personal action.** This is also a very important channel for our action regarding exclusion. The micro social area is the space where the identity of a group develops or fails and its protagonism in social life. If we start from the fact that exclusion is not just a lack of certain economic goods, but that it is also being set apart from the areas of participation, then fighting against exclusion calls for seeing the possibilities of the persons suffering from this situation, and recreating with them (from their demands) organizational, educational, cultural and living contexts of participation with solidarity.

Solidarity in personal action, which is carried out through proximity and support, is essential in helping to regain the self-esteem and identity that were lost in the processes of impoverishment and exclusion. When poverty takes on the characteristics of marginalization, only proximity that creates a warm, accepting atmosphere can remake the last meanings; only being present can strike at the environmental frivolity, the mean lack of solidarity, the savage consumerism, and the fundamentalism of money. The logic of the gift must be vindicated in order to heal the area of the soul that has been destroyed or weakened by marginalization. This is the area where meanings are celebrated, symbols are elaborated, and energies are recycled. Only proximity, communication and personalization appear to be suitable vehicles. The setting of the gift calls for recognizing the other in his/her difference and in this way ensuring the community's existence. The struggle against exclusion makes it necessary to recreate and vindicate the area of the gift characterized by proximity, communication and personalization: i.e., the area that is structured as an alliance and sustained by cooperative strategies, and which has gratuity as its moral basis.

Dear friends: the dawn of globalization has broken with its first war, which has surely brought greater poverty. We have to continue to insist on the truth of peace.

Now, through the wishes of some persons, death has come. There is nothing more regrettable. However, the globalization of the economy, the globalization of politics, should not disturb us. They should not disturb us if we have acted beforehand with clarity and courage and put a prerequisite into effect that changes the sign of things.

That prerequisite is the "globalization of solidarity".

If this globalization does not come about, then all the other facets of globalization will destroy us. Economic globalization without the globalization of solidarity is suicide for the poor and thus for the majority of humanity.

I still recall when the Holy Father outlined this idea in the Synod for America. He was clear-sighted and able to see beyond history. He was capable of looking beyond history when he demonstrated to everyone that valueless globalization is worthless globalization.

We cannot continue to be blind. We are not just heading towards the globalization of markets, which means the concentration of wealth, but also towards the globalization of poverty, which means accepting that for the poor, hope has been put to death.

What is morally false cannot be economically correct. The current world situation will lead us to make the decision to destroy ourselves, or to recover the tracks of certain hopes, the ones that grow to the rhythm of the Gospel and are sealed by it.

The Gospel continues to be in force and filled with challenges. It tells us that we have to be reborn in the waters of the Spirit, to live love for the Lord Jesus Christ by globalizing solidarity, and to see in our neighbors eyes the Lord who will say in the end at the last judgment: "In so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Thank you very much.