



The World Political Forum
Turin, 23 October 2003

40th Anniversary of the *“Pacem In Terris”*

H.E. Card. Roger Etchegaray meets President M.S. Gorbachev

INDICE

40th Anniversary of the “*Pacem In Terris*”

H.E. Card. Roger Etchegaray meets President M.S. Gorbachev

Mons. Severino Poletto, Archbishop of Turin2
**Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Archbishop of Marseilles and President Emeritus of the
Justitia et Pax Pontifical Council**.....3
Mikhail S. Gorbachev, President of The World Political Forum.....7

Mons. Severino Poletto, Archbishop of Turin

The important Encyclical by the Blessed Pope John XXIII, which gets its name from the first words in Latin, "*Pacem in Terris*" was made public on April 11th, 1963, about two months before Pope John's death. Forty years after the Encyclical, we still have a world which knows no peace: Pope John laid out a path: peace is based on four pillars: truth, justice, love and freedom.

I am pleased to have two peace experts, experts of the theory and practice: Mr Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union and Cardinal Etchegaray, Archbishop Emeritus of Marseilles, a Frenchman from the Bayonne, Archbishop of Marseilles and then in Rome, as President of the Corunum and then of the Justitia and Pax Pontifical Council, and later Ambassador to the Pope in situations of war and tension. His latest missions have been in Palestine and Baghdad, before the attack on Iraq.

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Archbishop of Marseilles and President Emeritus of the *Justitia et Pax Pontifical Council*

The Church has been celebrating the 40th anniversary of “*Pacem in Terris*” everywhere: however, the celebration acquires a special meaning here in the capital of Piedmont in the presence of President Gorbachev, especially considering that this Encyclical dates back to the coldest times of the cold war. This evening the Church of Turin welcomes the last leader of the Supreme Soviet and the man behind the *Perestroika*, thus acknowledging the efforts of his Foundation in examining the adequacy of international bodies to deal with the key problems of ‘War and Peace’ as Tolstoy would say.

As a moral function, Pope John the XXIII’s “*Pacem in Terris*” Encyclical is considered as a milestone on the road to peace. Over the past twenty centuries, the Church and peace have often embraced, to refer to a Biblical image, but never as warmly as April 11th, 1963 – Easter Thursday – when Pope John the XXIII signed the Encyclical “*Pacem in Terris*”, suffering as he was of the disease that was to kill him only a few weeks later. The whole world saw those pages as his testament and they still are to this day the Charter of Peace on Earth, which is overwhelmingly considered Pope John XXIII’s hallmark of identity.

“*Pacem in Terris*” is the first Encyclical to extend its remit, addressing itself not just to Roman Catholics, but to ‘all men of good will’, to use the Pope’s words. The expression is neither vague nor sentimental: it identifies all those who bear witness to God’s will even though they may not necessarily openly or expressly profess God. A few weeks before that, on March 7, John XXIII had been awarded the Balzan Foundation prize. At the time, the Foundation had members from 21 nationalities, including four Soviet members. The ceremony was also attended by about fifty journalists, including a Soviet one, Nikita Krushchev’s son-in-law. On that occasion, the Pope declared peace was everyone’s house, which means that building this house was everyone’s task. At the end of the Encyclical, Pope John XXIII summarised the foundation and meaning of his teaching: “It is our duty to use all our energy to build this house, this good, but unless peace is based on the type of order this document outlines with trusting hope, peace will be nothing but the hollow sound of words”. As our Cardinal said, peace is based on order founded on truth, built according to justice, completed, brought alive by charity, and raised in freedom: truth, justice, charity and freedom are the four pillars upon which the universal house of peace has to be built and stand.

Nowadays, we fail to fully appreciate the outstanding resonance of a letter such as the one the 80 year old Pope had: as soon as he became Pope, Paul VI recalled the ovation that had followed these words, in New York as in Moscow. In Pope Paul’s words the sign of a ‘secret complicity between the Church and human beings’ was detected and many of these ideas have since become part and parcel of Paul Vim’s and John Paul Id’s social teachings, touching as they did the anxiety and suffering in human beings.

“*Pacem in Terris*” has been called the *Rearm NorAm* of peace. Just like the Encyclical which preceded it, it walks new paths. The elderly Pope who listened to the

signs of the times, died, in his words, seeing men who walked the land and built a shared history on Earth, seeing them walk towards the Church. He reminded the Roman Catholics that they were not alone, and told them they would be even less so in future. This Encyclical holds the seeds of what the church has been trying to do for the past forty years, its strength and light for peace. This is why in his latest New Year's message, when celebrating World Peace Day, the current Pope encourages us to re-read it: in spite of its bearing the signs of its age, it is still fresh and up-to-date, speaking of the Author's foresight.

So forty years later, on an evening like this, it may be useful to take a bird's eye view of some of the most significant traits in the steps of "*Pacem in Terris*": what the Church is doing to favour peace and the world, what roads to peace are open to Christians. Well, there is the oldest of all paths, which takes us back to our origins: the Church encourages us to read the first page of the Bible, Cain and Abel who seem to say: "My children, war does not belong to the past, peace is not for the near future". Understandably there are squabbles when over six billion people live on this planet, but one needs to be determined to kill one's brother, murder and fratricide, when there are but a few people in the whole place. This means that all of us have a common forefather who is a murderer, that we are potentially all criminals. Nor can we forget the story of those two young people, the two youngsters, the first two youngsters of the human race, where one killed the other. The Church is like a mother, obsessed by Peace, who speaks the voice of blood, that streak of blood of Abel's which became bigger in time, a stream, a river, a sea of blood.

At the end of World War II it was thought that the world had only had 60 days of total peace, but actually not one day has gone by without the blood of one person, of uncountable just men, being spilled. What about us? TV spectators of all forms of violence can we still hear the voice of the blood from many victims calling us, waking us suddenly and setting us off on the road to peace.

What is the road to peace? The Church is aware that not all roads lead to peace, there is only one road to peace, Christ's road. Our responsibility as Christians is to work for peace, a responsibility that can not be avoided or measured. Christ's peace reveals the deeper roots of peace, recalling the need to fight evil. Peace in Christ communicates very sound certainties, reminding us that peace is a gift of God and must be welcomed in prayer and fasting. Peace in Christ rekindles the reasons why we have to work for peace, remembering that Christians can be called God's children unless they also act for peace. Peace in Christ refers to all levels of our lives, right into the inner depths of the person Pope John XXIII recalled in "*Pacem in Terris*" the complete disarmament which touches souls; peace among all men requires peace with God.

Peace is not the exclusive property of the Church: the Church walks with all men, North, South, East and West, a community where the fate of peace is defined. The Church speaks about peace for everyone, strives for peace for all.

In John Paul II's words, the Church is the spokesperson for the moral awareness of human beings in their purity, humanity which wishes for peace, that needs peace. Possibly never before has the Church been so heavy from head to toe, members of the vanguard of peace.

The building site of peace is open to youngsters in particular: when years ago our present Pope launched the slogan ‘Youth and Peace walk hand in hand’ his was neither an attempt to blandish them nor to push them into some venture, but simply because the wish for peace clings to their skin even more than to their soles and the future of peace is to be found in hearts that know no frontiers. Youth and peace walk hand in hand till they die together: when peace dies it is in particular the young who die. Army graveyards are well known to harbour the harvest of unripe crops.

The Church turns to all men of science and I can still hear the words John Paul II spoke at the UNESCO meeting, as I was standing next to him: here I stand, Bishop of Rome, son of Man, turning to you the most important people in all fields of modern science. Let us use all our strength to preserve human beings from the horrible prospect of a nuclear war. It was then that he launched his plea: ‘Consciences must be awoken’. His plea was considered as an appeal to act according to conscience (conscientious objection) to all scientists, appealing to them to stop the death trap.

The Church entrusts nations and not just people with peace: this is why it carries out intense and little known action inside the many international organisations where its voice is listened to because it is not the voice of special interests which often thrive in these meetings, bringing them to a halt. This is why we are fighting against the current trends to favour bilateral relations or to prefer them to multilateral ones. This is why we are encouraging the UN and its family of agencies while well aware of the reforms needed.

The Church dares to appeal to public opinion, to a well-informed and free (not manipulated) public opinion, because nothing is more vulnerable than people’s aspirations for peace. In “*Gaudium et Spes*” the Church had acknowledged the rulers of nations, who depend on the feelings and opinions of the masses. This is why John Paul II has taken stock of the situation generated by peace movements, the range of their projects and policies. The Church does not identify with any particular strategy. As mentioned in “*Pacem in terris*”, the Church specialises in educating consciences and information as the first step towards peace education. Faced with trivial, chaotic documents we have to gather reliable information, to do so stubbornly, with good standards, with reference to high level political and economic national and international arenas. Promoting peace can not be seen as an easy task, a sort of do-it-yourself of good intentions evoking good feelings. It’s not enough to say ‘welcome peace’ or ‘say goodbye to war’.

Faced with the complexity and #entanglement of problems, we might be tempted to say ‘peace should be left to more expert hands’. Peace needs specialists but it is also in our hands, in the thousand of small actions of our daily lives. Day in day out, the way in which we live with others, is a choice, in favour of or against peace. How many people are prepared to march or sign a declaration for peace while their lives speak of selfishness or refusing dialogue? How many Christians are asking their Church to take a stand on issues they are not prepared to take on in the course of their lives?

Educating for peace is a test for the Church’s experience in the community. We hold great responsibility because we can witness our ecclesiastical experience where Christians of all denominations labour in learning how to reconcile with and in Christ and are therefore able to create or at least outline patterns of peaceful behaviour. The Church is

unlikely to speak of peace in an effective manner unless it shows signs of it in its own life. The Church must be like a parable of the brotherly communion all people aspire to.

Peace: we realise it has to be built up in times of peace even more than in times of war. Never before has war developed so much in times of peace. Blind, polymorphous violence, which fills every nook and cranny, to the point it is making peace belligerent. After the great wars, the wars between nation states, here come the wars in nations, the wars of the provinces, guerrilla warfare, ethnic and identity-based conflicts. As well as globalisation of terrorist networks, there is weapons dealing in poor countries and proliferation of nuclear weapons not just in rich countries.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most comprehensive panoply for the defence and illustration of peace. A lot has been said about the Church and Human Rights: it might be more appropriate to speak about the return of Human Rights to the Church, as John XXIII demonstrated in "*Pacem in terris*", because the Gospel is the source they originated from. The Church has no monopoly. It merely shows how the light of Christ can transfigure and strengthen man's rational requests of being a man, something which our day and age fails to ensure. A source which comes from far away, farther than human beings themselves, and which makes it possible to escape all powers, be they political or religious.

I would like to briefly pay homage to all those who defend human rights: their struggle is like a war of attrition and one has to persevere. Sometimes they are misunderstood, at times it is dangerous. It is not a weapon in the hands of unselfish people who commit their entire lives, soul and body. The recent experience of the people who have emerged from darkness in Eastern Europe bears witness to the fact that anyone who is not free within can not be freed. As F.M. Dostoevsky explained in the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' the natural tendency of men is to consider freedom as a burden to pass on to the strongest: it is easier to be a slave than a master.

Many years ago I was struck by a book: it was called *The right to be a man* a collection of a thousand and one quotations about men of all times and from all cultures. The book was published by UNESCO: its director at the time, René Maheu, underlined these words in his preface: "However great the efforts made, the progress achieved, however heroic his countless sacrifices, the price of the free man has not yet been paid by man, nor has its just value even been defined". At this very moment, millions of human beings, our fellow creatures, overwhelmed or outraged, are waiting for us, you and me, as John XXIII used to say, to live in inseparable peace and justice. So be it, Amen.

Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *President of The World Political Forum*

The Encyclical was written by Pope John XXIII, but it is not addressed exclusively to Catholics. It is an Encyclical which is addressed to the believers of all faiths; for those who have read it, for those who know the facts, it is a document of consequence. There is meaning, and there is also significance, in this document. The encyclical is imbued with both a deep, profound respect for human beings and a great deal of faith in their forces.

I want to remind you of some things which happened at the time when these words, so rich in meaning, were uttered. It was 11 April 1963, straight after the Cuban Missile Crisis. We experienced that phase, in which the world had come to the brink of a nuclear war. It was the Pope who gave an answer, who expressed the concern and the anxiety which were beginning to creep into people all over the world. Back then, the world was in a profound state of disorder.

I have just come back from the United States, where, on my request, a meeting was organised at the Washington University, where President Kennedy had held a speech on 10 June 1963. With that meeting I wanted to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the speech held in that university by a great President, an eminent citizen of the world.

At that time John Kennedy had addressed himself to the students and to all the people attending that lecture by saying (I'm not quoting, I'm just reporting the meaning of Kennedy's words): "If you think that peace will be a *pax americana* in the future, then I have to say that either there will be peace for all men and women of the world or there will be no peace at all".

When you read the Encyclical, it gives you the same feelings you have when you read President Kennedy's speech. I venture to say that President Kennedy's speech had been influenced not only by his experience during the Cuban Missile Crisis, but probably also by the encyclical, which had been published a few months before.

Here are some abstracts from the "*Pacem in Terris*": "In a culture and civilisation like our own, which is so remarkable for its scientific knowledge and its technical discoveries, clearly no one can insinuate himself into public life unless he be scientifically competent, technically capable, and skilled in the practice of his own profession. And yet even this must be reckoned insufficient to bring the relationships of daily life into conformity with a more human standard, based, as it must be, on truth, tempered by justice, motivated by mutual love, and holding fast to the practice of freedom".

This is an impressive statement, a statement of consequence, which can be a point of reference not only for us, but also for future generations.

"It is useless to admit that a man has a right to the necessities of life, unless we also do all in our power to supply him with means sufficient for his livelihood".

When I think about our time, about the several statements we have heard, there is an abyss between words and actions. "There is nothing human about living in a society that is welded together by violence. Some nations may have attained a superior degree of scientific, cultural and economic development, but that does not entitle them to exert unjust political domination over other nations. True and lasting peace among nations can consist only in mutual trust".

These are impressive precepts, which had already been expressed by prophets in the past, and which are also expressed by the prophets of our time. I have recently talked about the 25th anniversary of John Paul II's ascension to the papal throne and I remember the extraordinary things the Pope once said about the new world order. He said: "We need a new world order, founded on more stability, more justice and more humanity". These are the points of reference politicians and institutions should use as a basis for the new world order.

John XXIII's Encyclical contains a lot of statements whose value is now greater than it was when they were written. There are so many causes for concern in our world. We are living in a globalised world, but we do not know how we should behave in it. We are facing a lot of new challenges and threats. We do not know how to react to this new situation. We always make recourse to force and violence, trying to solve any problem by the force of arms.

Today, at this second meeting of the World Political Forum, we have discussed the situation of the world and of peace. Why haven't we fulfilled our hopes of a better world, and of establishing – slowly but firmly – a new world order? Conflicts have increased, and so has the number of the poor, compared to ten years ago. The gap between rich and poor has widened. A few years ago we thought we could defeat poverty, or at least we could take the path towards poverty alleviation, thanks to the financial resources which would be available after stopping the arms race. Back then, democratisation processes in many parts of the world were a great stimulus for us. According to the UN data, about eighty countries left a dictatorship behind, and came out of totalitarian political systems. On the contrary, we are now experiencing a return to totalitarian systems. Authoritarian trends have grown so strong that, in an international conference held two years ago, political scientists conjectured that the 21st century may become the century of authoritarianism.

It is a very intense discussion we're conducting at the Forum. We are already thinking about what we should say, on behalf of our Forum, to both politicians and citizens. What politicians need is advice, guidelines which can call them to order, expert help. John XXIII's Encyclical is not a code of conduct in the strict sense of the word, but in any case it represents a point of reference for us, who are in search of a path leading to a new world order.

I was criticised when I was President, and I keep on being criticised now, with no respect for my age, but I am happy when people criticise me for trying to unite politics and morals. It has become a cliché to describe politics and morals as being incompatible, as being polar opposites. Only cynics can think so, both in politics and in morals. If politicians lose their perception of what can cause happiness, joy, sorrow, and bitterness, then they are simply party hacks, and their activity is no longer politics, but manipulation, amateur politics. Morals are the leitmotiv of all the statements contained in the Encyclical. These words have a greater value today, if we are willing to create a better world order, based on democratic principles, on the most profound values of human beings.

The Italians amaze me for their love for life, for their ability to build relationships in society, especially when the government is going through a crisis, when it is resigning; this is the period in which Italian public life is most intense, in which this indicator is at an all-

time high. This merit has to be attributed to generations of politicians, who have been able to create a self-regulation capacity in Italian society.

Let me seize the opportunity to say that the encyclical is addressed to all ecclesiastics and servants of God, because if morals have a profound meaning, then both the role and the responsibility of the Church become more important. I have great esteem for Pope John Paul II. I think he is the humanist par excellence: he is the man who, in our first meeting, criticised both communism and capitalism; he is the man who has always fought and keeps on fighting for the poor, for human rights, for minorities; he is the man who has expressed repentance for the mistakes made by the Church. I believe that the Catholic Church has never been as active as in recent decades.