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Faith Is Good for the Country, Say Cardinal Scherer

Adds That Peace Is an Achievable Goal

São Paulo, Brazil, OCT. 6, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The good Christian is also called to be a good citizen; hence, faith enriches one's native country, says the archbishop of São Paulo.

Cardinal Odilo Scherer reflected on the role of faith and the state in an article published in the diocesan magazine "O Sao Paulo," in which he acknowledged that although "as persons of faith we are conscious of the fact that we do not have a 'permanent city' here, we are on the way toward the future homeland."

"We are also very conscious of being citizens of this world, with a homeland that receives us and is our home," he added. "We are members of a people, with whom we identify and for whose good we are -- and must be -- totally committed."

It is true that globalization promotes a "notion of belonging to one large and unique human family, with which we must feel united and in solidarity," said the prelate.

"The Church herself, in her anthropology and social teaching, spreads this awareness and it could not be otherwise. We believe in one God and Father, who loves all as children and wants them to live as brothers," he added.

"A people cannot be indifferent to others, or fail to be concerned about the good and for the increasingly shared fate of all the members of the human community," the cardinal continued. "Territorial boundaries, cultural traditions, racial differences, historical heritage and economic interests, including opposite ones, should be increasingly combined and harmonized."

The dream

Cardinal Scherer recalled that the recent World Youth Day of Madrid -- in which young people of 170 different countries took part, living together "in harmony and solidarity, sharing the same essential principles" -- "demonstrated that the dream of a united and integrated human family that lives in peace is not unreal."

"The impression one got is that all were brothers, children of one great family, in which the differences did not divide but came together and were enriched," he added.

Hence, Cardinal Scherer recalled that "for us Christians and Catholics, in particular, it is clear that the faith cannot be detached from our participation in building the world, in the light of the values of the Kingdom of God. A good Christian must also be a good citizen."

"In addition to fulfilling the civic duties, as the rest of the citizens, what other contribution can people of faith make for the good of a nation?" he asked.

The cardinal acknowledged that it is a question that "needs a long reflection, because it introduces us in the proper meaning of religion, often put in discussion."

"We have something specific to contribute for the good of humanity and of the homeland," he said. "Faith itself in God, well lived and manifested publicly, with the convictions that derive from it translated into culture, is a fundamental contribution to the common good. The faith well lived and attested enriches social coexistence in many ways.

"When room is made for God, the importance of man also increases: his dignity, his rights and the meaning of his life in this world are illumined."

When, the cardinal continued, "God is excluded from human coexistence, at the private or public sphere, shadows begin to fall on human existence and solid bases begin to lack for values and virtues and social relations."

"To have faith in God and to manifest it openly, including its ethical and anthropological consequences, is good for the fatherland," he concluded.

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