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PRELATE STRESSES INTERCULTURAL MENTALITY

Says Tolerance Is Insufficient

ROME, JUNE 21, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The secretary of the Pontifical Council of Migrants and Travelers is stressing the need to move from multiculturalism to "interculturalism" in order to live in harmony with different people.

Archbishop Agostino Marchetto said this during an address at a three-day meeting in Rome of the National Forensic Council, which concluded Friday.

The meeting, which focused on the theme, "The Safeguarding of Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties," was convened to mark the 60th anniversary of the signing of the European Convention on this topic.

In his address, Archbishop Marchetto noted that "in the cultural realm a mentality is beginning to unfold that is increasingly 'transnational' -- we can describe it as 'intercultural' because, thanks also to the continuous technological innovations, we are able to 'live' at the same time in different social environments."

He stated that "the urgency of today and the secret of the future lies in the dialogue between persons, communities, authorities and civil organizations, peoples, cultures and religions, to counteract the blockage and intolerance that at the bottom is born from the idolatry of oneself, of one's group and of one's socio-cultural tradition."

He added that "a dialoguing acceptance is expressed in an authentic meeting, which serves the difficult and never exhausted art of combining the personal and group aspect, of articulating identity, complementarity, co-responsibility and creativity, moving from multi-culturality to inter-culturality, offering dynamic areas to reciprocity and fruitfulness."

This does not mean having one man "'over,' 'against' or 'without' the other man, but all together, for a new society, beginning from Europe, so that it will be in line with its original humanism," the prelate said.

Coexistence

"Tolerance is no longer sufficient," he noted. It is necessary to move to the "coexistence of differences."

In the light of multiculturalism, the archbishop noted, "we religious men are invited to consider that there are no abstract cultures separated from persons or vice versa."

"Hence, the question is not resolved by wondering 'who the other one is' or 'who I am,' but in the first place 'who am I in relation to the other,'" he added.

In this sense, Archbishop Marchetto highlighted the "important contribution of education, including permanent education, of the work of the mass media, of the commitment of politics and of the mission typical of religions, to attain the goal we have set for ourselves."

He observed that "our age is the time of encounter between persons and peoples of different cultures, nationalities and religions."

"Migrations carry out an important function in this process," the prelate added.

The archbishop lamented that "legitimate differences have been used to dominate or discriminate; hence, they have never been justly appreciated."

Therefore, he pointed out the need to "conceive correct diversity as a value, developing a plural vision of reality."

Pluralism

"In fact," Archbishop Marchetto stated, "pluralism implies, in principle and in itself, recognition, respect, promotion of diversity, of the rights of all in a regime of harmony and peaceful coexistence."

"Its realization, however, cannot be limited to the mere confirmation of a fact, of a statement," he continued.

Thus the prelate highlighted the important function of religion "either to favor the acceptance of the changing reality of our time, without losing one's identity, or in the commitment to increase respect for men and women of different provenance, in particular in areas where the migratory reality is more present."

"And respect is not enough, because we must accept others as an expression of love," he added.

Hence, the archbishop said, there is need of "a vision that will allow in the present complex, difficult and contradictory reality the acceptance also in Europe of the signs of a new world being born, where religion has a very important function, whether we like it or not."

"There is, therefore, also in the religious realm the possibility of realizing a universal fraternity," he said, "that is, a unity in which differences are not eliminated but lived in their identity in relationship."

"Then the migratory phenomenon becomes an appropriate laboratory to test the openness, acceptance and respect of the other cultures," Archbishop Marchetto continued, "while human and religious values -- which are not in contradiction -- sustain and motivate itineraries and attempts."

"Moreover," he said, "it is precisely the notes of acceptance, itinerancy and communion are dynamic points of reference in the search for authentic love in confronting the other, especially in the contexts where multiculturalism is more present."

The prelate affirmed, "Migratory movements create the opportunity of encounter with persons of another culture and religion, who challenge us and invite us to abandon certain securities and mental schemes to begin to approach the other with the offer of intercultural and interreligious dialogue."

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