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POPE: EVEN RICH COUNTRIES NEED CHARITY

Says Church Works in Consciences, Not Politics

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 13, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is underlining the Church's specific role in promoting justice, not by politics, but by its announcement of the Gospel and its promotion of virtues like charity and faith.

The Pope stated this today in an audience with participants in the 28th plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum.

The assembly, which began Thursday in Rome and ends Saturday, is being led by the council's president, Cardinal Paul Cordes.

The Pontiff affirmed that the mission of this council involves "a constant tension between two poles: announcement of the Gospel and concern for the heart of the man and the environments in which he lives."

He noted that these two aspects were recently highlighted in the Church by the publication of "Caritas in Veritate" and the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.

These events, the Holy Father affirmed, underline how the Church, "in its announcement of salvation, cannot overlook the real living conditions of the human beings to whom it has been sent."

From this perspective, Benedict XVI affirmed, "we must consider the Church's commitment to the development of a more just society, one in which the rights of individuals and peoples are recognized and respected."

Proper role

He clarified that "it is certainly not the Church's task to intervene directly in the political life of states or in the construction of adequate political structures."

The Church "opens the heart to God" and "awakens consciences," the Holy Father said. It defends true human rights and lives the commitment to justice by the strength of its announcement of the Gospel, he explained.

The Pope highlighted the role of faith as "a spiritual force that purifies reason" in the search for justice, "freeing it from the ever-present risk of being 'blinded' by egoism, by interest and by power."

Even the most developed countries need charity, he said, and thus "the service of love is never superfluous because situations of suffering, solitude and need still persist, which require dedicated people and tangible aid."

The Pontiff stated that all those who serve in Catholic charitable works should have the main objective of "bringing people to know and experience the merciful face of the heavenly Father, because in the heart of God-Love is the true answer to the most intimate hopes of every human heart."

The Church, he said, which is inserted into the lives of men and their history, must fulfill its role as a "channel for the goodness and love of God."