

POPE: NO GOVERNMENT CAN MAKE LOVE SUPERFLUOUS

Says Society Depends on Charity Work

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 8, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Without charity work, society cannot last long, Benedict XVI says, since even in the most just society, love will always be necessary.

The Pope affirmed this Saturday when he addressed some 7,000 employees and volunteers of Italian civil protection services gathered in Paul VI Hall.

The audience was held exactly 11 months after the April 6 earthquake in Italy's Abruzzo region.

The Holy Father thanked the many "good Samaritans" for the commitment to the victims of that tragedy. Referencing his encyclical "Deus Caritas Est," he also affirmed that "love will always be necessary, even in the most just society."

"Love of neighbor cannot be delegated," he said, and "the state and politics, even with their necessary concern for well-being, cannot replace it."

"There is no just state legislation that can make the service of love superfluous," the Bishop of Rome contended. "Whoever wants to have nothing to do with love, disposes himself to have nothing to do with the

person as person; there will always be suffering that needs consolation, help."

Volunteers

The Holy Father then highlighted the services offered by the Italian civil service agencies, which include some 3,000 associations, with 1.3 million available volunteers.

"The volunteers are not 'provisional resources' in the social network, but persons who really contribute to delineate the human and Christian face of society," he said. "Without charitable work, the common good and society will not be able to last long, because their progress and dignity depend in large measure precisely on those persons who do more than strictly fulfill their duty."

Benedict XVI encouraged the civil protection workers to be "living icons of the good Samaritan, paying attention to your neighbor, recalling the dignity of the person and inspiring hope."

Your mission," he said, "does not consist only in the management of emergencies, but in a great conscientious and meritorious contribution to the realization of the common good," which "represents always the horizon of human coexistence also and above all in moments of great trials."

At the end of the audience, the Pope was given as a gift the blue jacket worn by the civil protection agents. He donned it immediately, bringing enthusiastic applause from the audience.