

## **ADDRESS OF POPE LEO XIV TO MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

Hall of Benediction  
Saturday, 21 June 2025

*Madam President of the Council of Ministers, and Mr President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Republic of Italy,  
Madam President and Mr Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,  
Distinguished Representatives of Academic Institutions and Religious Leaders,*

I am pleased that we can meet in the context of the Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, during the present Jubilee of Governments. I offer a warm greeting to the members of the Delegations coming from sixty-eight different countries, and, in a particular way, the Presidents of the respective Parliamentary Institutions.

Politics has rightly been defined as “the highest form of charity,” quoting [Pope Pius XI](#) (*Address to the Italian Catholic University Federation*, 18 December 1927). Indeed, if we consider the service that political life renders to society and to the common good, it can truly be seen as an act of Christian love, which is never simply a theory, but always a concrete sign and witness of God’s constant concern for the good of our human family (cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter [Fratelli Tutti](#), 176-192).

In this regard, I would like to share with you this morning three considerations that I deem important in the current cultural context.

The first concerns your responsibility to promote and protect, independent of any special interest, *the good of the community, the common good*, particularly by defending the vulnerable and the marginalized. This would mean, for example, working to overcome the unacceptable disproportion between the immense wealth concentrated in the hands of a few and the world’s poor (cf. Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter [Rerum Novarum](#), 15 May 1891, 1). Those who live in extreme conditions cry out to make their voices heard, and often find no ears willing to hear their plea. This imbalance generates situations of persistent injustice, which readily lead to violence and, sooner or later, to the tragedy of war. Sound politics, on the other hand, by promoting the equitable distribution of resources, can offer an effective service to harmony and peace both domestically and internationally.

My second reflection has to do with *religious freedom and interreligious dialogue*. This area has taken on greater significance in the present time, and political life can achieve much by encouraging the conditions for there to be authentic religious freedom and that a respectful and constructive encounter between different religious communities may develop. Belief in God, with the positive values that derive from it, is an immense source of goodness and truth for the lives of individuals and communities. Saint Augustine spoke of the need to pass from *amor sui* – egotistic, myopic and destructive self-love – to *amor Dei* – a free and generous love, grounded in God and leading to the gift of self. That passage, he taught, is essential for the building of the *civitas Dei*, a society whose fundamental law is charity (cf. *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28).

In order to have a shared point of reference in political activity, and not exclude *a priori* any consideration of the transcendent in decision-making processes, it would be helpful to seek an element that unites everyone. To this end, an essential reference point is the *natural law*, written not by human hands, but acknowledged as valid in all times and places, and finding its most plausible and convincing argument in nature itself. In the words of Cicero, already an authoritative exponent of this law in antiquity, I quote from *De Re Publica*: “Natural law is right reason, in accordance with nature, universal, constant and eternal, which with its commands, invites us to do what is right and with its prohibitions deters us from evil... No change may be made to this law, nor may any part of it be removed, nor can it be abolished altogether; neither by the Senate nor by the people, can we free ourselves from it, nor is it necessary to seek its commentator or interpreter. And there shall be no law in Rome, none in Athens, none now, none later; but one eternal and unchanging law shall govern all peoples at all times” (III, 22).

Natural law, which is universally valid apart from and above other more debatable beliefs, constitutes the compass by which to take our bearings in legislating and acting, particularly on the delicate and pressing ethical issues that, today more than in the past, regard personal life and privacy.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, approved and proclaimed by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, is now part of humanity's cultural heritage. That text, which is always relevant, can contribute greatly to placing the human person, in his or her inviolable integrity, at the foundation of the quest for truth, thus restoring dignity to those who do not feel respected in their inmost being and in the dictates of their conscience.

This brings us to a third consideration. The degree of civilization attained in our world and the goals you are charged to achieve are now facing a major challenge in the form of artificial intelligence. This is a development that will certainly be of great help to society, provided that its employment does not undermine the identity and dignity of the human person and his or her fundamental freedoms. In particular, it must not be forgotten that artificial intelligence functions as a tool for the good of human beings, not to diminish them, not to replace them. What is emerging is in fact a significant challenge, one that calls for great attention and foresight in order to project, also in the context of new scenarios, healthy, fair and sound lifestyles, especially for the good of younger generations.

Our personal life has greater value than any algorithm, and social relationships require spaces for development that far transcend the limited patterns that any soulless machine can pre-package. Let us not forget that, while able to store millions of data points and answer many questions in a matter of seconds, artificial intelligence remains equipped with a "static memory" that is in no way comparable to that of human beings. Our memory, on the other hand, is creative, dynamic, generative, capable of uniting past, present and future in a lively and fruitful search for meaning, with all the ethical and existential implications that this entails (cf. Francis, [\*Address to the G7 Session on Artificial Intelligence\*](#), 14 June 2024).

Politics cannot ignore a challenge of this magnitude. On the contrary, it is called to respond to many citizens who rightly look with both confidence and concern at the issues raised by this new digital culture.

During the Jubilee of the Year 2000, [\*Saint John Paul II\*](#) indicated Saint Thomas More as a witness for political leaders to revere and an intercessor under whose protection to place their work. Sir Thomas More was a man faithful to his civic responsibilities, a perfect servant of the state precisely because of his faith, which led him to view politics not as a profession but as a mission for the spread of truth and goodness. He "placed his public activity at the service of the person, especially the weak and poor; he handled social disputes with an exquisite sense of justice; he protected the family and defended it with strenuous commitment; and he promoted the integral education of youth" (Apostolic Letter [\*E Sancti Thomae Mori\*](#), 31 October 2000, 4). The courage he showed by his readiness to sacrifice his life rather than betray the truth makes him, also for us today, a martyr for freedom and for the primacy of conscience. May his example be a source of inspiration and guidance for each of you!

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your visit. I offer my prayerful good wishes for your work and upon you and your loved ones, I invoke God's abundant blessings.

Thank you to all of you. God's blessings upon you and your work. Thank you.