

WELCOME ADDRESS

*by His Eminence Francesco Cardinal Coccopalmerio, President
of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts at the International Conference on*

«The Challenges of Spiritual and Legal Behavior of the Contemporary Individual and Imperatives of Their Overcoming»

Good morning!

It is indeed my personal honor to be with you today. I am very happy to greet all the organizers and participants of this Conference. As President of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, my service in the Holy See is primarily about Canon Law, the law of the Catholic Church. Given that particular responsibility in the Church, I often have the opportunity to reflect upon the very concept of “right”, which is the main objective of this Conference.

Let me begin by first recalling the tremendous insight of Blessed Antonio Rosmini, a great philosopher who maintained that the human “person” is subsistent right. In other words, all rights are founded on that to which persons have a claim in so far as they are acting morally or are at least not acting immorally. The essence of right, therefore, is the activity of a person or persons relative to other persons. I believe that in our present society, we must affirm strongly, and with conviction, that there should be no difference between person and right, because indeed the human person does not possess right, but is right itself.

However, we need to specify a little more on this affirmation. In effect, in order to know a person and therefore his right, we must know altogether four elements: the person, the right, the responsibility, and the law. Furthermore, we need to know these elements in a certain logical order, for the simple reason that each element determines and explains the others, namely, the person determines and explains the right; the person and the right determine and explain the responsibility; the person, the right, and the responsibility determine and explain the law. In short, we find ourselves in the presence of a certain conceptual chain that moves from the person to the law. The correct conception of each element is thus determined by the correct conception of each of the others.

I hope that this Conference will be productive, and that it will create a new impetus for further in-depth reflections on human right and the way it must be exercised either by individuals or by persons acting as members of a society.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the dedicated organizers who have worked very hard to make this Conference a reality today. I wish the event a great success, and all guests and participants a most rewarding and enjoyable time. May the Holy Spirit enlighten your minds and fill your hearts with His Truth!

Thank you and God bless you!
