

Pope Benedict Blesses Caritas Internationalis at its General Assembly



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Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed the Holy See's support for Caritas Internationalis in an audience with Caritas delegates from around the world on the last day of the confederation's 19th General Assembly.

Pope Benedict said that "national Caritas agencies are called to continue their vital witness to the mystery of God's healing and transforming love made manifest in Jesus Christ. The same holds true for Caritas Internationalis, which can rest assured that it will enjoy the assistance and support of the Holy See."

He said, "Only on the basis of a daily commitment to accept and to live fully the love of God can one promoted the dignity of each and every human being."

Delegates from 165 national Caritas organisations from around the world are attending the confederation's quadrennial General Assembly in Rome this week.

"All that you say and do, the witness of your lives and activities, remains important and contributes to the advancement of the integral good of the human person," said the Pope.

The assembly has re-elected Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga as president. Michel Roy was chosen as new secretary general replacing Lesley-Anne Knight, who had served her four-year term.

In Cardinal Rodriguez's greeting to Pope Benedict, he said "Caritas dares to dream of a world of communion and charity, as one human family with zero poverty. This, dear Holy Father, is your Caritas at the heart of the Church's social mission."

Delegates have also been working on the confederation's strategic framework for the next four years: One Human Family, Zero Poverty. Caritas will focus its efforts on the following goals:

- Saving lives, relieving suffering and helping rebuild livelihoods so that women, men and children in the poorest and most vulnerable communities are able to survive and recover from humanitarian crises and live in a safe and secure environment.
- Promoting development so that women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities have equal access to essential services such as clean water, education and healthcare and the resources they need to live sustainably, with dignity.
- Striving to transform unjust systems and structures so that women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities are able to influence the systems, decisions and resources that affect them and live under governments, institutions and global structures that are just and accountable.
- Building capacity within Caritas so that we are stronger and better equipped to challenge global poverty, rooted in faith, through prayer and action in effective global partnerships.

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