Grußwort Papst Benedikts XVI.

Internationale Konferenz „Toward a New Evangelization of African Society" (Pontifical Council for Justice and peace /Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, Continental Conference on the presentation of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* in Africa

To my Venerable Brother Cardinal Polycarp Pengo,
Archbishop of Dar es Salaam,
President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar

I send prayerful greetings to Your Eminence, to Cardinal Renato Martino and to all those taking part in the Continental Meeting for Africa on the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, to be held in Dar es Salaam from 27 to 30 August 2008 under the auspices of SE-CAM and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. I gratefully acknowledge the presence of the local authorities at the opening session, and I thank the representatives of *Miserior* and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for their support and sponsorship.

The topic of the conference – "*Towards a New Evangelization of African Society*" – points to the clear link between evangelization and the Church´s social teaching. The Church has an inalienable right and duty to proclaim the Gospel in the midst of society, bearing witness to its liberating message and transforming power in the complex worlds of production, labour, business, finance, trade, politics, law, culture, social communications, where men and women live their daily lives. The Church´s social doctrine, which draws its inspiration from the word of God, seeks to apply the wisdom of the Gospel to the practical task of creating a social order based on respect for the dignity and the rights of the human person, the pursuit of justice and the advancement of the common good. I am confident that a deeper knowledge of this doctrine will assist the laity in particular, to carry out their proper mission, shaping African society in accordance with the demands of justice, solidarity and authentic development.

The First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was intended to be a "synod of resurrection" and a "synod of hope" for the Church throughout the continent. Those noble aspirations have found expression in a variety of initiatives aimed at bringing renewed impetus to the Church´s mission of evangelization. You are now preparing for the Second Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, which I have convened for October 2009 on the theme: "*The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: 'You Are the Salt of the Earth… You Are the Light of the World'*". I pray that the present Conference will contribute significantly to the preparation of the great Assembly. Guided by the true hope which is the gift of God, may your deliberations pay particular attention to the various chal-

lenges facing the continent, while encouraging those "settings for learning and practising hope" which I presented in my Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi.*

I wish also to take this occasion to encourage the vital work undertaken by Justice and Peace Commissions in Africa, and by other ecclesial organizations working in the same field. They have an essential contribution to make to the Church´s mission. By remaining faithful to their mandate to serve God´s People under the leadership and guidance of their Bishops, whose duty it is to apply the Church´s social doctrine with discernment, I am confident they will pray an indispensable role in the transformation and renewal of African society.

As I entrust these thoughts to you, my Venerable Brother, I assure you of my prayers that the Conference will bear abundant spiritual fruit as the Church in Africa continues to work tirelessly for the coming of God´s Kingdom of reconciliation, justice and peace. Commending you and all assembled in Dar es Sallam to the maternal protection of Mary Queen Africa, I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of wisdom and strength in the Lord.

From Castel Gandolfo, 14 August 2008