
Card. Zuppi: “We are called to renew”

War "fills our hearts with uncertainties owing to the unforeseeable threats it entails", said Cardinal **Matteo Zuppi**, archbishop of Bologna and President of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI), in his opening speech to the Extraordinary Permanent Council of the Italian Bishops' Conference that took place on Sunday, via videoconference. War "is a horrible pandemic, one that also unveils complicities, omissions, postponements, the alarming ease with which it wreaks havoc on human life," denounced the Cardinal. "Exhorting or deploring it is not enough - he said - it is necessary to make a positive contribution by means of reflection, culture, competence and evangelical courage." "In this world of global interconnections, the fallout of war also reaches distant countries, as evidenced by the **alarming food crisis** that will cause serious difficulties for all economies, especially those in the South of the world," Zuppi continued: "This leads to severe social consequences in our Country as well, which call us to assume greater responsibility, requiring State intervention and greater solidarity."

“We must prepare ourselves for this emergency also in Italy, in response to emerging needs and new forms of poverty”,

was the appeal of the CEI president. "This requires a renewed and responsible spirit of unity and the pursuit of the common good, overcoming unproductive and dangerously opportunistic ideological approaches, partisan interests, counterproductive polarisations, each person contributing with his or her own vision but in the awareness of our shared destiny.

The next choices are bound to shape people's existence for a long time to come!”

For Zuppi, “it will also be necessary to rejuvenate and re-orient our solidarity efforts, as Church in Italy, in many parts of the world that will be dramatically affected by the economic and food crisis, by updating our assistance and our proximity to respond to emerging needs and emergencies”. "For too long, migration has been tackled as an emergency situation or using an ideological approach - denounced the president of the Italian Bishops' Conference - while it constitutes a structural element of society that calls for a humanitarian, realistic, institutional, systemic approach, with a forward-looking vision that upholds and honours its identity.” “Granting Italian citizenship to children who attend school with our children -

the so-called *ius scholae* or *ius culturae* - must inspire ideas and not ideologies in order to provide the appropriate answers”,

the Cardinal pointed out, recalling that the Italian Bishops' Conference has long expressed its views on the subject. Cardinal Zuppi called for “**a new family and reception policy that paves the way out of precariousness and uncertainty and fosters a confident gaze toward the future.**” This requires “clear action on a number of priority issues to protect the human person – that includes everyone and all times - also through the necessary interlocution with the political sphere”, he said. Priorities include dealing with “abuses and delivering on the commitments, responding transparently, assuming, as it should be, full responsibility before God and before humankind, improving, if necessary, the existing tools.” “We will be helped by experts who are and will be called to verify our work, both at central and diocesan level, towards whom suspicions of complaisance insult their professionalism,” the cardinal explained.

“We are called to renew”,

the CEI President argued. "The suffering and poverty of our people, exacerbated by isolation and shattered relationships, require us to respond with urgency and determination," he explained. "The elderly, all those who are fragile, such as young people without desire to go outside, and the many people with psychiatric disorders, are not to be forgotten. The poor remain at the heart of Church vocation, and the Church belongs to everyone, while it belongs especially to the poor." With reference to Pope Francis' words at the National Ecclesial Convention in Florence, Card. Zuppi encouraged to bring life to a "joyful Church with a mother's face, one that understands, accompanies, caresses". "We do not have a separate story of our own, enclosed in our institutions - he emphasised - rather, we share a common story with the women, men, the poor, the peoples of our time." Faced with the "dramatic signs of the times", he continued, "we feel we must not fail to contribute to **the construction of a more humane and just society, inhabited by fraternity**. However, to this end, exhorting or deploring is not enough. Instead, it is necessary to make a positive contribution by means of reflection, culture, competence and evangelical courage." **The Cardinal's first thoughts went to "those who offer their lives for the love of the Gospel with simplicity, dedication, and in silence."** The President of the Italian Bishops' Conference thus remembered "with affection and with feelings of gratitude and obligation" Sister Luisa Dell'Orto, a Little Sister of the Gospel of Charles de Foucauld, killed on Saturday June 25 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and with her "all our missionaries who remain in so many countries so often the theatre of the world war that is so rarely remembered." "Ours is a country of generous men and women. The Church, formed by the Synodal Way, is wholly called to engage in dialogue with these men and women," said the Cardinal. He concluded his address with a quotation from Father Pino Puglisi, killed in 1993 at the age of 56, expressing his desire to visit Brancaccio and the tomb of Father Primo Mazzolari at the beginning of his mandate.

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