



SECRETARIAT OF STATE

From the Vatican, 22 January 2026

FIRST SECTION - GENERAL AFFAIRS

N. 31305

Dear Professor Garonna,

In response to your request for a Pontifical Message for the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation's 2026 European Conference, I have the honor to forward the following:

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV sends greetings to the President, the members, and to all participating in the 2026 European Conference of the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation. He was pleased to learn of your theme, "Peace Building in Europe: What Role for Catholic Social Thought and Universal Values?", which is particularly relevant given today's great resistance to discussing the universal values that religion or any belief system may contribute to the common good of society. While this resistance arises for various reasons, the underlying crisis is the spread of relativism and the reduction of truth to opinion. Yet no community, let alone a continent, can live in peace and thrive without commonly held truths that inform its norms and values. As a result, His Holiness has spoken of the urgent need to embrace once again the divinely revealed Judeo-Christian truths at the root of European society, especially the truth that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Address to Members of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group*, 10 December 2025). Here we recall the words of Saint John Paul in his Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* that, "no authentic progress is possible without respect for the natural and fundamental right to know the truth and live according to that truth" (29). In this regard, the Church's Social Teaching, which is rooted in the words and actions of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who revealed himself to be the way, the truth, and the life (cf. *Jn* 14:6), has much to offer as it goes beyond borders and provides a platform for collective interests and way of living, thus making peaceful coexistence possible. It is the Holy Father's confident hope, therefore, that this Conference will make its own contribution to furthering the role of Catholic values in building a more peaceful and just European continent. With these sentiments, Pope Leo XIV entrusts all of you to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in Christ our Risen Savior.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State

With sentiments of esteem, I am

Yours sincerely,


✠ Edgar Peña Parra
Substitute

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