

## **Bishops Urged to Address Social Justice Issues**

### *Cardinal Underlines Need for Lay-Clergy Cooperation*

ZAGREB, Croatia, JUNE 10, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Involvement in issues of justice and peace is a necessary task of evangelization, according to the archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Hungary.

Cardinal Peter Erdö affirmed this Tuesday at a meeting of the bishops in charge of social issues in Europe, which ended today in Zagreb.

In his conference titled "Justice and Peace in the Mission of the Bishop, the Bishops' Conferences and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences," he affirmed the Church's commitment to work for the good of the human person.

The cardinal stated, "Moved by love and looking for the true good of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, both in her oneness and her nature intended for communion, the Church sees politics and everything that concerns social life as an integral part of her service of God and, in the name of God, of humanity."

He added, "In fact the human person cannot be divided: the different human capabilities are part of the one organic reality of the person."

"Questions about justice and peace belong intrinsically to the Church's mission," Cardinal Erdö affirmed, and the "attempt to separate the pastoral mission or evangelization from social problems would represent a serious error."

He asserted that "all our action in defense of justice and peace, precisely because it is immersed in the love of God, binds everyone, but particularly us bishops."

### *Spiritual fatherhood*

The cardinal explained: "Since we are invested with a spiritual fatherhood, the destiny and life of all, but especially of those who suffer most or who have been abandoned, have to all intents and purposes been entrusted to us.

"Whether it is the poor, children, those already born or those still in their mother's womb, women exploited or abandoned, families in difficulties, the elderly who are ill or often alone, the unemployed, those who have been forced to flee their own country because of war or who have been left with nothing as a consequence of natural disasters; in short, all those who suffer constitute the object of particular care on the part of the Church and, consequently, of pastors."

Therefore, he said, "authentic development, which takes account of the good of every person in his integrity and the building up of a just and united society [...]" is "intimately related to the proclamation of the Gospel and, consequently, to our mission as pastors."

Cardinal Erdö noted that social justice "can and must be continually refined and animated by that strength of love which comes from God and which we call charity and which goes far beyond the simple balance of powers or a distributive justice."

He continued: "On the one hand, the bishop is guarantor of the Church's doctrine and morals, and on the other he is well aware of not being able to act in isolation.

"Only a task developed along with well-informed people, lay and priests, and a task networked between various ecclesial, but also civil institutions, will allow the Church, as much at a national as continental level, to exercise a positive influence on decision-makers at a political level and reach practical people.

*"Lay people and priests who, according to these methods, actively participate in the mission of the Church, rightly need our episcopal backing and support, so as not to run the risk of devoting themselves so much to erroneous ideas."*

*The prelate underlined the importance of being "able to discern good from evil" so as to be "authentic prophets of justice."*

*Also, he added, we must be able to "understand how to intervene in a way that our message may be effective and reflect the Word of God and his love."*

*The cardinal acknowledged that the Justice and Peace Commissions have emerged so that the Church, while "manifesting its hierarchical communion, may be able to intervene in an effective and specific way in social and political life."*

*He underlined four principles necessary for their mission, based on the Church's social doctrine: "the wholeness of the human person, solidarity and charity as methods, subsidiarity experienced as respect for the concrete realities with the aim of preventing ideological manipulation, and the common good as the objective of every action."*