



The Holy See

PREFACE BY POPE FRANCIS TO THE BOOK OF CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE ON PAPAL DIPLOMACY

A challenge for the future

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 46, 15 November 2013.

In this book, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone entrusts to those engaged in the Holy See's diplomatic service, as well as to others, a wealth of reflections on the major issues which affect the life of the community of nations and which touch upon the deepest aspirations of the human family: peace, development, human rights, religious freedom, supranational integration.

The book contains valuable information regarding papal diplomacy that allows us to grasp its uniqueness, beginning with the person of the diplomat, priest and pastor called to an undertaking who, while maintaining a strict institutional profile, is imbued with pastoral sensitivity. These qualities marked Cardinal Bertone's seven years of service as Secretary of State, in his generous and faithful support of the Pontificate of Benedict XVI. His service at the summit, both in the administrative sphere of the Roman Curia and in that of international relations of the Holy See, was fittingly extended during the first months of my Pontificate. His calm and mature experience as a servant of the Church has also helped me, called to the See of Peter from a distant land, to launch a set of institutional relations as part of my duties as Pope.

My experience of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who is well known for his role and for his jovial personality, is distinguished by three pivotal moments. Our first meeting took place on 11 January 2007 at Torre San Giovanni in the Vatican, where I was visiting with the President of the Argentine Episcopal Conference: it was a very serene exchange, and it was also very constructive with regard to the problems we were facing at the time. When in 2007, he went to Argentina as Papal

Legate for the celebration of the Beatification of Ceferino Namuncurá, his fraternal approach with the bishops of the Episcopal Conference, along with his wholly Salesian affability in dealing with people after each public celebration, gained both my interest and my admiration. In his discussions with the nation's major political institutions, Cardinal Bertone highlighted the Church's contribution to building peace and reconciliation, which are necessary elements for regenerating a social fabric that had been torn apart by the many situations that imperilled national harmony. In this way, he provided valuable support to the Argentine Episcopate in its work of rebuilding the ethical, social and institutional fabric of the country.

Some months earlier during the same year, the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops' Conference (9-14 May 2007) was held in Brazil. I attended the Conference as Primate of the Church in Argentina. There I discovered that Cardinal Bertone, who had accompanied Pope Benedict XVI, was interested not only in the most important aspects of the Church, but also in the social and cultural dimensions that were presented in the Final Document and entrusted primarily to Latin American ecclesial communities.

This interest reemerges as one scans the collection of speeches he delivered in different parts of the world, addressed to the Church and her established structures as well as to political bodies of various States and diverse audiences.

One immediately notices the attention he pays to the current and complex global crisis, which makes the idea of a world without borders far more concrete. This crisis is certainly real for everyone, and it makes us question the choices that we have made thus far and the direction that we intend to take in the future. It reminds us that individuals and institutions have the responsibility to break down the many barriers that have replaced boundaries: inequality, the arms race, underdevelopment, the violation of fundamental rights, discrimination, and the limits placed on social, cultural and religious life.

This demands a realistic reflection not only on our little everyday world, but also on the nature of the bonds that unite the international community, and the tensions present within it. He is well acquainted with diplomatic action, which through its principle exponents, its rules and its methods, is an appropriate instrument for building the common good. First and foremost, diplomacy is called to interpret international events which in turn leads to interpreting reality. We, the human family on the move, are this reality. We are a kind of work in progress which includes the time and place in which our history as men and women, communities and nations, takes flesh. Diplomacy, therefore, is a service and not an asset held hostage by special interests, whose logical yet bitter consequence is war, internal conflict and various forms of violence; nor is it an instrument serving the demands of the few to the exclusion of the majority that gives rise to poverty and marginalization, that tolerates every form of corruption, or that produces both privilege and injustice.

The profound crisis of beliefs, values and ideas offers diplomatic activity a new opportunity and a challenge. The challenge of contributing towards the realization, among the various peoples, of new and truly just and strong relationships, in which nations and persons are respected in their unique identity and dignity, and in which their freedom is upheld. This will allow various countries to plan their future and enable people to choose ways to achieve their aspirations as creatures made in the image of the Creator.

At this historic moment the international community, its laws and its institutions are in fact obliged to choose a direction which recovers their respective and essential roots, and leads the human family into a future which not only speaks of peace and development, but is also truly able to include everyone, leaving no one on the margins. This means overcoming the situation currently affecting individual States and the international community, which are seeing a lack of strong convictions and long-term programmes interlink with a profound crisis of the values that have always served as the basis for social ties.

Faced with this negative and crippling globalization, diplomacy is called upon to undertake the task of rebuilding by rediscovering its prophetic dimension, by establishing what might be called a *utopia of the good*, and laying claim to it if necessary. It is not a matter of abandoning that healthy realism, which is a virtue and not a technique of every diplomat. Rather, it is a matter of overcoming the domination of the contingent, the limits of a pragmatic action that often savours of involution. It is a way of thinking and acting which, if it prevails, limits social and political action and prevents the building up of the common good.

Through diplomatic action, the true *utopia of the good*, which is neither an ideology nor mere philanthropy, can express and strengthen the fraternity which is present in the roots of the human family and is called to grow, branch out and bear fruit.

Renewed diplomacy requires new diplomats who are capable of restoring a sense of community to international life by eliminating the logic of individualism, unfair competition and the desire to be first, by promoting an *ethic of solidarity*, by replacing the ethic of power which has been reduced to a pattern of thinking used to justify force. This is precisely the force which contributes to crushing social and structural ties between various peoples and to destroying the bonds that bind us together to such an extent that we share the same destiny. The direction that international relations takes will therefore be linked to the image we have of the *other*: person, people, or State.

This is the key to the rebirth of that unity among peoples that makes differences its own without ignoring the historical, political, religious, biological, psychological and social elements which express their diversity. Even in the face of limitations, constraints and obstacles it is still possible to establish and integrate the patterns of behaviour, values and rules that have arisen over time.

The Christian perspective is able to appreciate what is authentically human and all that springs

from the freedom of the person, from his openness to what is new, and ultimately from his spirit which unites the human dimension to the transcendent dimension. This is one of the contributions which papal diplomacy offers to all humanity in working to revive the moral dimension in international relations. This is what allows the human family to live and grow together, without becoming enemies. If man reveals his humanity through communication, relationship, and love for his fellow man, the various nations can come together around common objectives and shared practices and thereby generate a sound common approach. Moreover, they can found unitary institutions in the heart of the international community, which are able to provide services without denying the identity, dignity and responsible freedom of each country. The service of these institutions will consist in bending down to the needs of various peoples, in discovering the abilities and the needs of others. It is the rejection of indifference or of an international cooperation born of utilitarian egoism, in order to do something for others through common institutions.

Thus, service is neither simply an ethical commitment nor a form of voluntary work, nor even an ideal objective, but rather a choice born of a social bond based on that love which is able to build a new humanity, a new way of life. It is not by letting the reasons of state of individualism prevail that we will eliminate conflicts or give human rights their proper place. The most important right of a people or of a person does not reside in not being impeded from achieving personal aspirations, but in effectively and fully achieving them. It is not enough to prevent injustice, if you do not promote justice. It is not enough to protect children from abandonment, abuse and maltreatment, if you do not educate young people in a full and free love for human life in its different phases, if you do not give families the resources they need to accomplish their essential mission, if you do not foster in the whole of society an attitude of acceptance and love for the life of each and every one of its members.

A mature community of States will be one in which the freedom of its members is fully responsible for the freedom of others on the basis of that love which is active solidarity. This, however, is not something that grows naturally; on the contrary, it requires that we invest work, patience, daily commitment, sincerity, humility and professionalism to achieve it. Is this not the high road that diplomacy is called to take in the 21st century?

Many and meaningful are the ideas contained in this work. Its pages demonstrate that Cardinal Bertone knew how to present the Gospel message, its values and the great demands of the Church's doctrine in accord with the guidelines of the teaching of Benedict XVI, with that balance and serenity which are necessary for promoting a culture of dialogue proper to the Holy See.

The measure for the lives of the servants of the Church is not dictated by "news printed in large letters, so that people take it as unquestionably true" (Jorge Luis Borges); indeed, despite the limitations inherent in the condition and possibilities of each person, it is interwoven with silent and generous dedication to the authentic good of Christ's Body, and to the enduring service of the cause of man. History, therefore, whose measure of truth is the Cross, will clearly show the

intense action of Cardinal Bertone, who has also demonstrated the Piedmontese temperament of being a hard worker who spares no effort in promoting the good of the Church, who is culturally and intellectually prepared and motivated by a serene inner strength which recalls the words of the Apostle: "But far be it from me to glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ": he is our salvation, life and resurrection; through him we have been redeemed and liberated (cf. Gal 6:14).