

Brasilia, November 28, 2003

Message to the Movement for Unity in Politics in Brazil

Honorable Senators and Deputies,
Authorities,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

You are meeting today in Brasilia, in the national Parliament. You have come from different States in order to participate in the second national encounter of the Movement for Unity in Politics, which began in Naples, Italy, in 1996, and which has seen surprising developments in the span of a few years.

Today's national encounter is a sign of its spreading in Brazil, a nation particularly dear to me; a nation whose people, endowed with a generous heart and a keen intelligence, have been, for years now, remarkably receptive to the charisma which the goodness of God has entrusted to me.

I would have liked to be present in person, but since this was not possible, please allow me to offer you this message.

In order to tell you something that can be of light and stimulus for your commitment at the service of the common good, I feel that I must focus our attention on the present-day situation of the world.

As we can all observe, in spite of the conflicts and wars ongoing in the world, in spite of the unjust distribution of the earth's resources and the social and cultural inequalities, in spite of the terroristic violence we are experiencing even during these days, universal brother and sisterhood and the unity of all men and women, objectives of the Movement for Unity in Politics, are today more than ever a profound aspiration of humanity and a true necessity.

Indeed, unity is a "sign of the times" which clearly emerges, especially in the civil field, from the European States and from the African and South American continents which are working in different ways and for various goals towards their unification, as well as from numerous international organizations and associations aimed at unity.

In the religious field this sign of the times emerges from currents like ecumenism, permeating the Christian world with a spirit of reconciliation and communion, and from widespread events which promote interreligious dialogue in favor of peace, reaching its apex in the two encounters of Assisi promoted by the Pope.

In this context then, to work precisely for the unity of peoples, respectful of the thousand different identities, is the best thing we can do and the very goal of politics, the greatest common good.

But what is the method, the way to reach this goal?

There is no better way to reach such a high and demanding goal than to spread throughout the world a powerful current of brotherhood and sisterhood. It is the essential gift that Jesus gave to humanity. Shortly before dying, he prayed: "Father may they all be one" (see John 17: 11-21), and in revealing the paternity of God, he introduced to humanity the idea of universal fraternity.

Fraternity is also a fundamental category of the great political project of the modern world,

summed up in the motto of the French revolution: “Liberty, equality, fraternity”. The ideal was identified, but not fully attained.

While numerous countries have reached the point of building democratic systems of government, and have achieved a certain degree of liberty and equality, fraternity instead was proclaimed more than it was lived.

And as many of you already know, the specific aim of the Movement for Unity in Politics is precisely to help others and to help one another to live in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood always. The politicians who adhere to it believe in the profound, eternal values of the human person, and take political action only afterwards.

This can give rise to projects and actions in the complex political, economic, cultural and social tissue of our world. It brings peoples out of their isolation and opens the door of development to those who are still excluded. Brotherhood and sisterhood show the way to peacefully resolving differences and relegates war to history books. Put into practice it allows us to dream and even to hope for some kind of communion of goods between rich countries and poor countries, since the scandalous economic inequality in today’s world is one of the main causes of terrorism.

The profound need for peace expressed by humanity today indicates that living as one family is not only a value, not only a method, but it is a global paradigm for political development. This is why a world that is always more interdependent needs politicians, entrepreneurs, intellectuals and artists who put brother and sisterhood – a tool for unity – at the center of their actions and thoughts. Martin Luther King dreamed that brotherhood would become the order of the day for businesspersons and the password for statesmen and women. The politicians of the Movement of Unity in Politics want to make this dream come true.

For them, the choice to become politically active is an act of love through which they respond to an authentic vocation, to a personal calling. Believers discern the voice of God calling them through circumstances; non-believers respond to a human requisite, to a social need, to a problem of the city, to the sufferings of their people echoing in their conscience: in both cases, they are motivated by love.

Furthermore, the politicians of unity become aware of the fact that politics is rooted in love; this leads to understanding that others, too, political opponents, might have made their choices out of love and consequently must be respected. Indeed, the politicians of unity are also interested in bringing to fruition the good proposals of their adversaries. If such proposals answer a calling, an authentic need, they are an integral part of that common good which can only be built together. Thus the politicians of unity seek to practice the apparent paradox of loving the other’s country as they love their own, because the good of the country needs the contribution of all.

Another aspect of living brother and sisterhood in politics is the ability to listen to everyone, including opponents. In this way, the politicians of unity identify with everyone, they are open to everyone’s reality. This attitude helps to overcome forms of particularism, it reveals aspects of persons, of life and reality which can widen the political horizon. Politicians who learn this art of “making themselves one” with everyone become more capable of understanding and of offering proposals.

Moreover, brother and sisterhood is fully expressed in mutual love, which is most necessary for a correctly understood democracy: politicians who live mutual love, politicians and citizens who live mutual love. The politicians of unity are not satisfied with loving on their own; they seek to lead others to love, ally or adversary, to love, because politics is relationship, it is a shared project.

One last key point which guides the politicians of unity is that the country of others should be loved as their own. In fact, humanity’s greatest dignity would be to no longer feel that it is a collection of peoples living side by side and frequently in conflict with one another, but rather, through mutual love, a single people, enriched by one another’s diversity and safeguarding, in unity, the different identities.

All these aspects of political love, which build brother and sisterhood, require sacrifice.

So often political activity has led to loneliness, to being misunderstood even by one's closest collaborators!

Nevertheless, we know that nothing good, useful, or fruitful can be accomplished in the world without accepting fatigue, suffering; in a word, without the cross.

The commitment to build unity is not to be taken lightly! One must have courage, one must know how to suffer.

It is here then that the example of Christ crucified and risen can be of help also to those involved in politics. Even though he experienced the abandonment of the Father - "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46) – he re-abandoned himself to the Father: "Into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46), rising again, thus showing that "love wins everything".

Following his example, the politicians of unity are those who embrace the divisions, the rifts, the wounds of their people. This is the price of brotherhood and sisterhood asked of politicians: a very high price, but the reward is likewise very high. Faithfulness in the moment of trial will make politicians a model, a point of reference for their co-citizens, the pride of their people.

These are the politicians which, with the help of God, the Movement for Unity in Politics wishes to generate, nurture, and support.

I hope that your encounter today will confirm your choice to live brother and sisterhood in politics. By doing so, we can hope for great things not only for Brazil, but also for all that concerns justice, peace and unity in the world.

Chiara Lubich