WUCWO

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Union Mondiale des Organisations Féminines Catholiques
World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations
Unión Mundial de las Organizaciones Femeninas Católicas
Weltunion der Katholischen Frauenverbände

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To all WUCWO Member Organisations

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Dear Sisters in Christ:

"In the sacrament of the altar, the Lord meets us, men and women created in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:27), and becomes our companion along the way. In this sacrament, the Lord truly becomes food for us, to satisfy our hunger for truth and freedom. Since only the truth can make us free (cf. Jn 8:32), Christ becomes for us the food of truth." (Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation) Focused on our Lord as "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) moves forward into a new chapter of our history to proclaim the good news to all.

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations' erection as a *public international association of the faithful*, according to the Code of Canon Law, is a great privilege which brings with it an immense responsibility. WUCWO's new "juridical personality" means that it speaks and acts in the name of the Church, as the voice of the Church as well as the voice of women in the Church. Being nourished by the Eucharist, availing ourselves of ongoing spiritual formation and continuing education in Church teachings are vital for our ability to transmit authentic Catholic Christian values to the world.

For each of us, Board Members and Member Organizations of WUCWO, a greater attention and awareness are demanded of all that we say and do, the witness that we give both in Church and Society. Our words and actions are to be prayerfully rooted in our Catholic faith and the social teaching of the Church.

Pope Benedict XVI especially notes: *"In a particular way, the Christian laity, formed at the school of the Eucharist, are called to assume their particular political and social responsibilities. To do so, they need to be adequately prepared through practical education in charity and justice. To this end, the Synod considered it necessary for Dioceses and Christian communities to teach and promote the Church's social doctrine (248). In this precious legacy handed down from the earliest ecclesial tradition, we find elements of great wisdom that guide Christians in their involvement in today's burning social issues. This teaching, the fruit of the Church's whole history, is distinguished by realism and moderation; it can help to avoid misguided compromises or false utopias." (Sacramentum Caritatis, 91)*

As presented during the 2006 WUCWO General Assembly by our speaker, Dr. Flaminia Giovanelli, you are encouraged to use as a reference the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, compiled by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Libreria Editrice Vaticano) and now available around the world in many languages. We Catholics are blessed with a wealth of Church documents including Apostolic Exhortations, Apostolic Letters and Encyclicals, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, publications by the various dicasteries and interventions by Permanent Observers of the Holy See to various United Nations bodies. The conscientious application of all of these resources will assure the fidelity of WUCWO's work and witness in the world. Our Catholic faith defines the most notable differences between the evangelizing missionary outreach of WUCWO and the work of other non-governmental organizations: being witnesses to the truth of God's love through an intimate relationship with our Eucharistic Lord.

As the official spokeswoman of WUCWO (Bylaw IV-E), this President will carefully review any statement or document drafted to ensure that it is consistent with Church teaching while promoting WUCWO's social concerns, particularly those related to our Priority and Resolutions. All WUCWO statements will be understandable and without ambiguous language sometimes used in society. WUCWO will exclude the use of words with dubious interpretations based on world views that can be adapted to suit different purposes (e.g., see the Statement of Interpretation of the Term "Gender" by the Holy See Delegation, Beijing, 15 September 1995). Another notable educational resource is the Pontifical Council for the Family's *Lexicon of Ambiguous and Debatable Terms regarding Family Life and Ethical Questions* (Human Life International, 2006).

With the canonical status of a *public international association of the faithful*, WUCWO embraces an exciting and challenging future full of hope. May our shared prayers and work, with the grace of God, fulfill our mission to spread the Gospel through acts of great love for those in most need of our care.

"Let us encourage one another to walk joyfully, our hearts filled with wonder, towards our encounter with the Holy Eucharist, so that we may experience and proclaim to others the truth of the words with which Jesus took leave of his disciples: 'Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the world' (Mt 28:20)." (Sacramentum Caritatis, 97)

In Christ Jesus,

Karen M. Hurley

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President General