



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM  
DE SPIRITUALI MIGRANTIUM  
ATQUE ITINERANTIUM CURA  
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Vatican City, June 28, 2011

Ref. Message for the World Tourism Day 2011

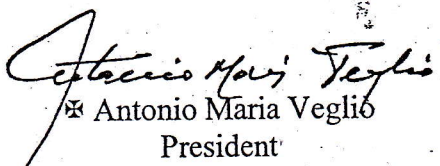
It is my pleasure to send you, herewith enclosed, the Message of this Pontifical Council on the occasion of the **World Tourism Day**, on the theme *Tourism linking cultures*.


This World Day has been promoted by the World Tourism Organization since 1980 and is celebrated annually on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September. The Church, on her part, has always considered this annual celebration as an opportunity to make known her Christian view of tourism widely, reminding everyone of his/her pastoral responsibility in this regard. This Message is being forwarded to you so that the local Churches in your country can duly promote it and prepare all materials necessary for a meaningful celebration of the said World Day.

I thank you for your kind collaboration and for any information that you would like to share with us about the initiatives regarding the celebration in your country.

With prayerful assurances and cordial greetings, I remain

Sincerely yours,

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✠ Antonio Maria Veglio  
President

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✠ Joseph Kalathiparambil  
Secretary

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To the Episcopal Promoters  
and the National Directors  
of the Pastoral Care of Tourism

Encl.



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM  
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Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

**Message for the World Tourism Day 2011**  
(27 September)

Theme: *Tourism linking cultures*

On September 27<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the World Tourism Day, promoted by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which has enjoyed even from its very first celebration in 1980 the support of the Holy See.

The theme of this year, *Tourism linking cultures*, wishes to highlight the importance that traveling has in the meeting of the different cultures of the world, especially in our present day world where more than ninety million people travel internationally, favored thus by modern means of communication and lower associated costs.

In this way, tourism presents itself as *"breaking down barriers across cultures and fostering tolerance, respect and mutual understanding. In our often divided world, these values represent the stepping stones towards a more peaceful future"*.<sup>1</sup>

With a broad concept of culture that includes - besides the history or artistic and ethnographic patrimony - the lifestyles, relationships, beliefs, and values, we not only affirm the existence of cultural diversity, but in line with the Magisterium of the Church, we value it as indeed positive. Thus *"once diversity has been accepted as a positive factor, it is necessary to ensure that people not only accept the existence of other cultures - as Benedict XVI affirms - but also desire to be enriched by them"*,<sup>2</sup> welcoming the true, good, and beautiful therein.

To achieve this objective, tourism extends to us all its possibilities. The *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism* affirms that *"when practiced with a sufficiently open mind, it is an irreplaceable factor of self-education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences between peoples and cultures and their diversity"*.<sup>3</sup> This, by its very nature, can favor meeting as well as dialogue, as it places one in contact with other places, traditions, manners of living, and other forms of seeing the world and conceiving history. For all of these reasons, tourism is certainly a privileged event.

However, regarding dialogue, the first condition that is required is that of knowing how to listen, to want to be questioned by the other, desiring to discover the message within each monument, cultural manifestation, all of this being done with respect, without prejudice or exclusion, and avoiding biased readings. It is thus equally important *"to know how to welcome"* as to *"know how to travel"*. This means that tourism should be organized with respect for the peculiar

<sup>1</sup> TALEB RIFAI, UNWTO Secretary-General, *World Tourism Day Message 2011*.

<sup>2</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Letter on the Occasion of the Study Day Organized by the Pontifical Councils for Interreligious Dialogue and for Culture on the theme "Culture and Religions in Dialogue"*, 3 December 2008.

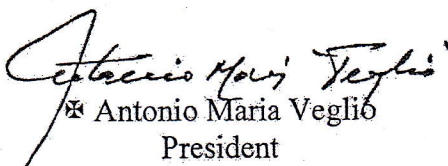
<sup>3</sup> WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION, *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, 1 October 1999, art. 2 § 1.


In this regard, and with the objective of promoting this intercultural dialogue and taking advantage of our cultural patrimony at the service of evangelization, it is fitting to adopt a series of concrete pastoral initiatives. All of these must be integrated into a broad program of interpretation that, together with historical-cultural information, illustrates in a clear and accessible way the original and profound religious meaning of these cultural manifestations, using for this modern and attractive means, and taking advantage of the personal and technological resources that are at our disposal.

Among these concrete proposals there is the elaboration of the idea of touristic travel offering visitation to the places that are most important in the religious and cultural patrimony of the diocese. Along with this, broad time periods of open hours should be favored, thus making available an adequate welcoming. In this way, the spiritual and cultural formation of tourist guides is important, and thus one can see the value in the possibility of creating organizations of catholic tour guides. With this, the elaboration of *“local publications in the guise of tourist guides, webpages, or specialized journals on patrimony, with the pedagogical aim of highlighting the soul, inspiration and message of works, scientific analysis is thereby put at the service of a deeper understanding of the work”*.<sup>11</sup>

We cannot allow ourselves to view the tourist visit as simply a step in pre-evangelization, but on the contrary, we must see it as a platform to realize the clear and explicit announcement of Jesus Christ.

I would like now also to take advantage of this opportunity to officially announce the celebration of VII World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Tourism, that will take place in Cancún (México) the week of April 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012. This event, organized by our Pontifical Council in collaboration with the Mexican Episcopal Conference and the prelature of Cancún-Chetumal, will certainly be an important opportunity to continue the consideration of concrete proposals that the pastoral care of tourism requires in the present times.

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✱ Antonio María Veglio  
President

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✱ Joseph Kalathiparambil  
Secretary

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<sup>11</sup> PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE, *Concluding Document of the Plenary Assembly “The Via Pulchritudinis, Privileged Pathway for Evangelization and Dialogue”*, 27-28 March 2006.