



The Holy See

***MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE CATHOLIC UNION OF THE ITALIAN PRESS
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS NATIONAL CONGRESS
ON THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDATION***

*Most Distinguished Dr Massimo Milone
President of the Catholic Union of the Italian Press*

I have learned that the Catholic Union of the Italian Press (UCSI), of which you are President, is currently celebrating its national Congress, recalling its 50th anniversary of foundation. The circumstance offers me the opportunity to address to you and your colleagues cordial wishes as well as to express my appreciation for the precious service that the UCSI has offered, in the course of its 50 years of existence, to the Church and the country.

At half a century from the foundation of the Union many things have changed. The most visible change has occurred in sectors such as those ranging from science to technology and from economics to geopolitics. In a less apparent but also more profound and worrying way, the milieu of mainstream culture has changed, which seems to be noticeably weaker, with respect for the dignity of the person and the sense of values such as justice, freedom and solidarity diminished, which are essential for the survival of a society.

Anchored to a patrimony of principles rooted in the Gospel, your work as Catholic journalists is today still more difficult: in addition to the sense of responsibility and to the spirit of service that mark it, you must demonstrate an ever increasingly outstanding professionalism, as well as a great capacity for dialogue with the lay world in the search for common values. You will be listened to insofar as you offer a coherent witness with your life. Among your lay colleagues many are those who ardently expect of you a silent witness, without labels but with substance, of a life inspired by the values of faith.

I am well aware of your commitment to an ever more demanding duty, in which the space of freedom is often threatened and the economic and political interests not infrequently gain the

upper hand over the spirit of service and over the criteria of the common good. I exhort you not to cede to compromises in such important values, but to have the courage of a coherent witness, also at your own expense: serenity of conscience is above price.

I am close to you with prayer, asking the Lord to help you to always be "ready to respond to whoever asks you the reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pt 3: 15). With this wish I send to you, Mr President, to the Directors and to the Members of the Catholic Union of the Italian Press, as well as to their families, a special Apostolic Blessing, propitiator of copious heavenly favours.

From the Vatican, 19 January 2009

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI