

Inauguration of the South American Hall

Dear Friends.

We are grateful to the thousands of people of South America for their support, and their names are engraved on the steel plaques of the great stele.

We are grateful to the workers, the designers, the architects, and the builders.

We are grateful to those who join us in this celebration.

...And we are grateful because we are able to inaugurate this site, which is now open for personal reflection, study, and interchange.

At this time we should not forget the other gathering places that are taking shape and multiplying on five continents. At many of these sites, in numerous halls large and small in different parts of the world, people are listening to us and watching what we say and do here today, because as we know very well the words and images roll forth from these inspiring spaces to virtual spaces, and from there they resonate through the spaces of waiting.

Though today we find ourselves located in different places, we are filled with joy at this celebration. We are joyful because we do not need to thank either governments or corporations, none of the powerful or any of the mass media. Everything at this site, as at the sites in other parts of the world, has been built thanks to the efforts of the Humanist Movement and those of a group of people who, without financial speculation or calculation of personal benefit, have supported the development of our Message.

It is appropriate at this time, therefore, to thank this great Movement by citing its ideals and fundamental proposals, formalized in the following six points:

- First, the Humanist Movement advocates placing the human being as the central value and concern, in such a way that nothing is above the human being and no human being is above another.
- Second, it affirms the equality of all people, and works so that the simple formality of "equal rights before the law" gives way to a world of equal opportunities for all.
- Third, it recognizes personal and cultural diversity, affirming the characteristics proper to each human group and condemning discrimination, whether motivated by economic, racial, ethnic, or cultural differences.
- Fourth, it encourages every tendency to develop knowledge beyond the limitations imposed by prejudices accepted as absolute and immutable truths.
- Fifth, it affirms the freedom of ideas and beliefs.
- Sixth, it repudiates the violence rooted in daily life in all regions of the world, not only the various forms of physical violence but all other forms of violence: economic, racial, sexual, religious, moral, and psychological.

For us, messengers of a new spirit, these six points of Humanism constitute the basis of our social doctrine and our commitment to action in the world.

Nevertheless, it is in our daily dealings with concrete persons and in facing the anguish of our own consciences we question ourselves about the direction that we must give to our behavior and to our lives.

How can people decide about the direction of their lives when they are very far from being in control of their daily situations? How can people decide freely about the meaning of their lives if they are subject to needs imposed by their own bodies? How can they freely choose, enchained as they are to a system of economic urgencies—a system of family relationships, work, and friendship that at times becomes a system of unemployment, despair, loneliness, helplessness, and failed hopes? How can people freely decide on the basis of manipulated information and the mass-media-induced exaltation of antivalues that hold up as the ultimate model of behavior the powerful, who shamelessly exhibit their violence, threats, abuse, arbitrariness, and lack of reason? How can people decide freely when the moral leaders of the great religions either offer justifications or remain silent in the face of genocide, holy wars, defensive wars, and preventive wars?

The social atmosphere is so poisoned by cruelty that day by day our personal relations become more cruel, and day by day we treat ourselves with greater cruelty.

It is the human beings' great fears that stop them from giving life the direction and meaning longed for. Fear of poverty, of loneliness, of illness, and of death combine and become stronger in society, in human groups, and in individuals.

But in spite of everything...in spite of everything...in spite of these unfortunate constraints, something soft as a far off sound, something light as a dawn breeze, something that begins gently is opening its way in the interior of the human being...

So, why this hope, my soul? Why this hope, that from the darkest hours of my misfortune luminously opens its way?

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Today we are holding this celebration, and since in some celebrations people exchange presents, I would like to give you a gift. Then, certainly, it will be up to you to decide whether it merits your acceptance. It consists, in fact, of the easiest and most practical recommendation I am able to offer. It is almost like a recipe from a cookbook, but I trust you will be able to go beyond simply what is indicated by the words...

In some moment of the day or night inhale a breath of air, and imagine that you carry this air to your heart. Then, ask with strength for yourself and for your loved ones. Ask with strength to move away from all that brings you contradiction; ask for your life to have unity. Don't take a lot of time with this brief prayer, this brief asking, because it is enough that you interrupt for one brief moment what is happening in your life for this contact with your interior to give clarity to your feelings and your ideas.

To move away from contradiction is the same as to overcome hatred, resentment, and the desire for revenge. To move away from contradiction is to cultivate the desire to reconcile with others and with oneself. To move away from contradiction is to forgive and to make amends twice-over for every wrong that you have inflicted on others.

This is the appropriate attitude to cultivate. Then, in the measure that time passes you will understand that what is most important is achieving a life of internal unity. This will bear fruit when what you think, feel, and do go in the same direction. Life grows thanks to its internal unity and it disintegrates because of contradiction. It happens, then, that what you do does not simply

remain inside of you, but also reaches others. Therefore, when you help others to overcome pain and suffering you make your life grow and you contribute to the world. Conversely, when you increase the suffering in others, you cause your own life to disintegrate and you poison the world. And *who* should you help? First, those who are closest to you, but your action will not end with them.

Learning does not stop with this “recipe.” Rather, it begins. This recipe says that you have to ask—but whom do you ask? That depends on what you believe. It may be your internal god, or your guide, or an inspiring and comforting image. Finally, if you don't have anyone to ask, you will also have no one to give to, and so my gift will not merit your acceptance.

Later on you may reflect on what the Message explains in its Book, in its Path, and in its Experience. And then you will also be able to count on true companions with whom you can begin a new life.

In this simple asking is also a meditation directed to your own life. And this asking and this meditation will keep on gaining force so as to be able to transform the situations of daily life.

Advancing in this way, perhaps one day you will grasp a signal, a signal that presents itself sometimes with errors and sometimes with accuracy. A signal that is like a gentle hint, but that in rare moments of one's life erupts as a sacred fire, giving rise to the lovers' rapture, the artists' inspiration, the mystics' ecstasy. It is useful to note that religions as well as works of art and life's great inspirations all arise from there. They are all different translations of this same signal—but there is no reason to believe that these translations faithfully represent the world that they translate. This signal in your consciousness is the translation into images of that which has no images. It is the contact with the Profound in the human mind, an unfathomable depth where space is infinite and time is eternal.

At some moments in history an outcry arises, a heartrending call from individuals and from entire nations. Then, from the Profound a signal arrives. May this signal be translated with kindness in these times, may it be translated in order to overcome pain and suffering—for behind this signal are blowing the winds of great change.

Years ago when we announced the fall of a system, there were many who mocked; it seemed impossible to them. Then, half a world, half of a supposedly monolithic system, came crashing down.

But this world that fell did so without violence, demonstrating the good things that exist in people. Moreover, before disappearing, that world was well-disposed towards disarmament, and a serious work towards peace was begun. And there was no Apocalypse. In half the planet the system fell, and notwithstanding the economic hardship and reorganization of structures suffered by people, there were no tragedies, no persecutions, and no genocide. How will the fall of the other half of the world take place? May the answer to the people's outcry be translated with kindness, may it be translated in the direction of surpassing pain and suffering.

As human beings we are not separate from the destiny of the world. Let us orient our lives in the direction of internal unity, let us orient our lives in the direction of surpassing contradictions, and let us orient our lives toward surpassing pain and suffering in ourselves and those around us, wherever we may act.

May our lives grow surpassing pain and suffering. May our lives advance making the lives of others advance.

On this day of celebration I would like to give very warm greetings to all those present here, and also to those who, though very far away in space, find themselves in communication with us.

La Reja. 7th of May, 2005