

Радислав Пп. I

The Measure of Power is Service

A Statement of His Apostolic Highness the Most Holy

Pope Radislav I of Rome-Ruthenia

To the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Twenty and to All People of Good Will

In Advance of the 2026 G20 Leaders' Summit

Peace be unto you.

The leaders of the world's principal economies will shortly assemble in Miami for the 2026 Summit of the Group of Twenty. They will meet at a moment marked at once by extraordinary human achievement and grave moral danger.

Our age possesses powers that earlier generations could scarcely have imagined. Knowledge crosses continents almost instantaneously. Medicine has conquered diseases that once brought terror to whole peoples. Human ingenuity has increased the productivity of agriculture, extended communication, transformed industry, and opened new possibilities in science and technology. The nations represented at the G20 command immense material, financial, military, and technological resources. Humanity already possesses many of the means by which hunger may be relieved, disease treated, human labour made fruitful, and suffering diminished. Yet the possession of power is not the same thing as wisdom.

War continues to destroy cities and families. Men, women, and children are displaced from their homes. Human beings are trafficked and sold. Many labour beneath burdens of debt they

can scarcely sustain. Hunger persists amid abundance. The unborn, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, the refugee, the prisoner, and all who possess little worldly influence remain especially vulnerable whenever political or economic calculation is separated from moral responsibility. The deepest crisis before the nations is therefore not principally technological or financial. Rather, it is moral and spiritual.

Indeed, whenever power is separated from truth, economic life from justice, liberty from responsibility, technology from wisdom, or political authority from the law of God, even achievements that are good in themselves may become instruments of disorder. The Church possesses the duty to remind rulers and peoples alike that no earthly power is absolute, that man is not the measure of good and evil, and that every authority will answer before God for the manner in which it has been exercised. The greater the power entrusted to a nation, the greater is its responsibility.

I. The Human Person and the Moral Order

Every just social order must begin with the truth about man. The human person is not merely a consumer, worker, voter, taxpayer, migrant, patient, soldier, or unit of production. Man is created in the image and likeness of God. He possesses a rational soul and is called not only to temporal flourishing but ultimately to eternal life. Human dignity is therefore neither invented nor bestowed by the state. It is not conferred by wealth, usefulness, health, intelligence, nationality, or social approval. It comes from the Creator. For this reason, the person must never be reduced to an instrument of political ambition, commercial gain, ideological experimentation, or technological efficiency.

We must, therefore, remind the governments of the world that the very concept of government exists for the common good. Likewise, economic life exists for man, not man for economic life. Property justly held is legitimate, but possession carries duties. Commerce itself can be noble, but motives of profit cannot absolve injustice. Science is a great good, and indeed its legitimate advance is supported by the Church. Authentic faith has nothing to fear from honest scientific inquiry, for God is the author both of creation and of revelation; conflict arises when either theology or science claims authority beyond its proper competence. The technical possibilities of a particular time and place cannot determine the moral legitimacy of an action. And, freedom so variously defined and so widely invoked is precious. Genuine freedom is ordered toward truth and the good; it is not mere emancipation from every restraint. It is the ability to do what we should rightly do.

We must also recall that the first communities of human life are not created by the state. The family, founded upon the marriage of man and woman and ordered toward the mutual good of the spouses and the generation and education of any children, precedes political society.

Governments therefore act unjustly when economic or social policies weaken the family, usurp the rightful authority of parents, or make the raising of children increasingly burdensome.

A sound economy should enable men and women to form households, raise children, care for ageing parents, practise their faith, obtain useful work, and possess sufficient security to exercise the responsibilities proper to free persons. Economic decisions made by those in power in distant offices eventually reach the kitchen table, the workshop, the hospital ward, and the family home. Thus we must remember that the health of a civilisation cannot be measured by production alone, but by its effects upon persons, families, and communities.

II. Peace and the Restraint of Power

Among the first temporal duties of rulers is the preservation of a just peace. The Church has never taught that peace means the absence of all conflict at any cost. Peoples possess a right to legitimate defence, and civil authority may be obliged to protect the innocent against unjust aggression. Yet the use of armed force remains subject to moral law. Neither national interest nor military advantage can make intrinsically evil acts good.

Among these restraints are that civilians may not be deliberately targeted and prisoners may not be tortured. Hatred never becomes virtuous because it wears a uniform and proclaims patriotic slogans. Likewise, unjust vengeance must not masquerade as justice as it so often does.

The wars afflicting various regions of the world should awaken not triumphalism but sorrow, prayer, and an untiring search for a just settlement. Diplomacy must not be regarded as cowardice, nor negotiation as a prize to be offered only after one's opponent has been humiliated. At the same time, diplomacy must not become a guise for manipulation or a trap laid to deceive. Negotiations undertaken in bad faith do not serve peace.

The nations of the G20 should labour for the protection of civilians, medical workers, refugees, prisoners, seafarers, and humanitarian personnel; for the security of international navigation and civilian infrastructure; and against the use of food, medicine, water, and other necessities of life as weapons against populations. No Christian may forget the words of Our Lord: *Blessed are the peacemakers.* Peacemaking, however, demands more than sentiment. It requires justice, courage, patience, truthful speech, and the refusal to surrender the soul to hatred.

III. Economic Life, Property, and the Poor

The Church condemns neither wealth nor enterprise. Honest commerce, private property, investment, craftsmanship, agriculture, and entrepreneurship may all serve the common good. Through them, families are sustained, useful goods are produced, and nations prosper. Yet, property requires stewardship. That stewardship must look beyond the present generation, refusing to sacrifice enduring goods for short-term selfish gain.

We must also remind the world that the rich man is not an absolute master of what he possesses. The employer may not treat labour merely as a commodity, nor deprive workers of their just wages, an injustice that is truly a sin crying out to Heaven for vengeance. Similarly, the state may not absorb every economic activity into itself. Overall, we must remember that the marketplace cannot be treated as though its outcomes were morally self-justifying. Both collectivism and an economic individualism detached from moral restraint misunderstand the human person. The former sacrifices the person to the state; the latter can sacrifice him to appetite and profit.

Thus, a sound social order protects private property while remembering its social obligations. It defends enterprise while restraining fraud and exploitation. It honours workers without setting class against class, and it assists those in genuine need without unnecessarily destroying personal responsibility, family obligation, local association, or initiative.

Also, particular attention should be given to the crushing burdens of sovereign debt borne by poorer nations. Financial obligations are real, and justice requires that debts not be lightly dismissed. Yet financial arrangements also become morally disordered when debt service makes it practically impossible for a nation to provide elementary food, medicine, sanitation, education, or infrastructure to its people. Similarly, richer countries commit grave moral error when they arrange international rules in their own favour and exploit weaker nations under a false banner of fairness. This must be remembered by the nations of the G20, to whom much has been entrusted. Creditors and debtors alike have duties in justice. Transparency, honesty, restraint, and responsibility are required on both sides.

The same principles should guide international trade. Food, fertiliser, medicine, and other necessities should never casually become instruments by which the innocent are punished for political purposes. The command of Christ concerning the hungry, the naked, the stranger, and the sick is not an optional adornment to Christian morality. The corporal works of mercy remain binding. A world rich enough to waste food on a vast scale cannot regard widespread starvation with a clear conscience.

IV. Human Trafficking and the Defence of the Vulnerable

Among the darkest evils of our age is the buying, selling, coercion, and exploitation of human beings. Trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation, and the abuse of the displaced cry out to Heaven for vengeance. They flourish especially where war, corruption, poverty, organised crime, and the dissolution of moral restraints converge. Civil authorities have a grave duty to prosecute traffickers, confiscate the proceeds of their crimes, devote those proceeds where possible to restitution and victim assistance, and protect victims rather than treating them merely as offenders or inconveniences. Businesses likewise bear responsibility for the conditions under

which their goods are produced. Cheapness obtained through slavery is not an economic achievement.

The home also must be protected from violence. No appeal to family honour, reputation, political loyalty, or social embarrassment can justify concealing serious abuse. Authority exists to protect those entrusted to it. The true defence of the family therefore requires fidelity, chastity, sacrifice, paternal and maternal responsibility, protection of children, care for the elderly, and justice toward every vulnerable member of the household.

V. Religious Freedom and the Rights of the Church

Among the fundamental duties of civil authority is respect for the rightful freedom of religion. Man has duties toward God that no state may usurp. The state must therefore neither compel religious belief nor prevent the Church from carrying out those works which belong properly to her mission. The faithful must remain free to worship God, teach the faith, establish churches and charitable institutions, educate their children according to conscience, and bear public witness to moral truth.

Yet, religious liberty does not mean that all religious claims are equally true. Truth and error do not possess the same rights in themselves. However, persons possess dignity, and authentic faith cannot be produced by coercion. The civil order must therefore seek peace and justice without pretending that religious conviction is merely a private preference to be hidden from public life. Our own Roman-Ruthenian inheritance bears witness to the possibility of legitimate diversity within true communion. Unity does not demand the extinction of every distinction.

The same principle has significance for the peace of nations. Men may live beside those whose religious convictions they do not share without surrendering their own faith or denying the dignity of their neighbour. Authentic dialogue requires truthfulness. It does not require indifferentism.

VI. Health, Medicine, and the Limits of Emergency Power

The care of the sick is among the clearest duties of Christian charity and a legitimate concern of public authority. The Ebola emergency in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including its spread into Uganda, has again shown that disease advances most quickly where conflict, displacement, fragile institutions, and mistrust have already wounded a people. The danger faced by seafarers and civilian commerce around the Strait of Hormuz likewise demonstrates how regional violence can place distant households at risk through disruptions of food, energy, and trade. These events are different in character, yet both reveal the cost of waiting until a crisis crosses borders before treating it as a common responsibility.

It must also be made clear that disease most cruelly afflicts communities already weakened by poverty, war, poor sanitation, or inadequate medical care. Nations capable of helping such populations should do so.

Yet the dignity of the person must remain paramount even in times of emergency. Fear does not suspend the moral law. Extraordinary governmental powers must remain proportionate to genuine necessity and must not quietly become permanent instruments of control.

Also, public health depends upon trust, and trust is earned through truthfulness. Officials should therefore communicate honestly about uncertainty, permit responsible questioning and correction, and respect the proper rights and duties of families, physicians, religious bodies, and local communities. Medicine remains a service to the human person. It must never become a means of treating the human body as raw material or of redefining the good of the patient according to convenience, ideology, or economic utility.

VII. Artificial Intelligence and the Rule of Human Reason

Artificial intelligence is one of the most powerful tools developed in our time. Properly governed, it may assist physicians, farmers, scientists, teachers, engineers, and countless others. Yet, no machine is a human person. Thus, no synthetic system bears the image of God, and neither does it possess an immortal soul, conscience, moral agency, or supernatural destiny. A machine may learn from human-generated data, process information, and convey knowledge or insights derived from human wisdom. Its operations nevertheless remain instrumental, while the broader consequences of increasingly capable systems are still emerging and require careful study.

Consequently, in terms of responsibility, to say that an algorithm made a decision is never a sufficient moral answer, particularly when the phrase is used to absolve those who designed, authorised, deployed, or relied upon it. Where decisions concern life, liberty, medicine, employment, justice, warfare, or the welfare of children, responsible human judgment must remain present. This principle is not novel. As with every instrument, moral responsibility remains with the human beings who design, direct, and employ it.

Technology must also respect legitimate privacy and must not be used to establish forms of surveillance and manipulation incompatible with human dignity. Children in particular should be guarded against systems deliberately designed to exploit weakness, encourage addiction, imitate intimate relationships deceptively, or expose the young to sexual corruption. Nor should lethal force be delegated to machines in such a way that no human person remains morally responsible for the decision to take life.

Artificial intelligence threatens human dignity when convenience displaces judgment, conscience, memory, responsibility, and genuine human relationship. What diminishes man's rational and moral nature cannot rightly be called progress.

VIII. Education and the Formation of the Young

Children are entrusted principally to their parents, not to the state or the market. Education should form the intellect in truth, the will in virtue, and the young person in responsible freedom. It should cultivate reason, discipline, knowledge, reverence, intellectual honesty, and the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood. The young should certainly be prepared to understand the technological world they inherit. But they also require what no machine can supply: family life, friendship, silence, prayer, good books, play, discipline, contact with nature, craftsmanship, and the example of adults who live virtuously.

Furthermore, a civilisation that captures children's attention for commercial gain and then wonders why they cannot concentrate has failed in stewardship. Parents must therefore be strengthened, not displaced. Teachers should assist the family in education rather than treating parental authority as an obstacle to be overcome.

IX. Creation and the Responsible Use of the Earth

We reaffirm the truth that the earth is the Lord's. Man therefore possesses creation neither as an idol to be worshipped nor as a storehouse to be consumed without measure. He is commanded to cultivate and govern it responsibly. Reliable energy, agriculture, transportation, industry, and development are genuine human goods. Poor nations must not be condemned to permanent poverty in the name of policies devised by those who already enjoy abundance.

At the same time, needless pollution, reckless destruction, and the wasteful exhaustion of resources violate our responsibility toward neighbours and descendants. Prudence rejects both indifference and fanaticism.

Energy policy should seek reliability, affordability, human development, responsible conservation, and reasonable care for future generations. Particular concern is owed to poor households, which often bear the greatest burden when wealthy societies adopt policies whose costs they themselves can easily absorb. Christian stewardship is neither the worship of nature nor the licence to ravage it. It is gratitude expressed through responsible dominion.

X. Authority, Accountability, and Judgment

The world is rich in declarations and poor in fulfilled promises. Governments should therefore be willing to answer publicly for the consequences of their policies. Economic success must be judged not only by aggregate wealth but by whether ordinary people can work, marry, raise children, find housing, obtain necessary care, worship freely, and live without fear of violence or destitution.

Thus We also affirm that there is a judgment higher than public accountability. Every ruler, legislator, financier, general, employer, and ecclesiastical superior remains a creature before God.

Authority is a sacred trust. Our Lord taught that those who would be greatest must become servants. This is not counsel that can be relegated to private devotion. Instead, it is a judgment upon every form of worldly power.

To the leaders of the G20, therefore, We say: remember that the decisions made in halls of government enter homes you will never see and affect persons whose names you will never know. Let prudence govern calculation. Let justice give each his due. Let fortitude resist both cowardice and cruelty. Let temperance restrain the appetite for wealth, power, honour, and domination. Do not mistake what is technologically possible for what is morally permissible. Do not sacrifice permanent goods for immediate political advantage. Do not call evil good because doing so is profitable. Do not forget the poor because they possess little influence. Do not imagine that nations escape the judgment under which every human person stands.

XI. Christian Hope

Christian hope is neither political optimism nor confidence in inevitable human progress. No economic system will save mankind. No technological achievement will abolish sin. No international institution can establish the Kingdom of God by administrative means.

Therefore, We affirm the sacred truth that our hope is in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet Christian hope never permits indifference toward temporal suffering. Precisely because the Christian knows that history belongs to God, he may labour for justice without making an idol of political success, serve the suffering without despair, and seek peace without believing that peace can be built upon falsehood.

Throughout the world, much quiet good endures. Parents sacrifice for children. Priests and religious serve forgotten communities. Physicians we never see care for the sick we do not know. Farmers whom we never meet cultivate the land to produce the food that we eat. Sailors upon the oceans sustain commerce, bringing us the goods on which we rely. Teachers in countless schoolhouses in cities and villages alike instruct, even amid poverty and war. Christians and other people of goodwill shelter the displaced, feed the hungry, resist corruption, and reconcile enemies. The world rarely notices such acts. Almighty God does, for He sees all.

To rulers, We say: govern as those who must give an account. To men of commerce and technology, We say: use your gifts in service of man rather than reducing man to an instrument of profit. To religious leaders, We say: do not exchange prophetic truth for proximity to worldly power. To families, workers, teachers, physicians, soldiers, and all people of goodwill, We say: remain faithful in the duties placed immediately before you. Civilisation is renewed not first by slogans and empty promises. It is renewed by virtue and built by a resolute faith.

May the deliberations of the leaders gathered for the G20 be governed by wisdom rather than ambition, justice rather than advantage, and peace rather than vengeance. May those who hold

great power remember that they remain servants beneath the sovereignty of Almighty God. May the Most Holy Mother of God, Queen of Peace, intercede for the suffering, console those who mourn, protect the innocent, and obtain the conversion of hearts hardened by hatred and pride.

And may Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, before whose judgment every earthly power must finally stand, teach the nations to use authority in justice, wealth in charity, knowledge in wisdom, and freedom in obedience to truth. To Him be honour and glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Given at Rome-Ruthenia, in the House of Saints Peter, Andrew, Stephen, and Mark, in the year of Our Lord two thousand twenty-six.

Радислав Пп. I

RADISLAV PP. I ROMANO-RUTHENICUS

POPE AND PRINCE-BISHOP OF ROME-RUTHENIA