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Audience to the members of the Development Bank of the Council of Europe

By. | Source: Zenit.org

VATICAN CITY, Monday, June 14, 2010 (ZENIT.org) .- The global economic crisis should lead us to spread Christian values and solidarity with those most in need.

Benedict XVI said it on receiving this Saturday the participants of the 45th ordinary meeting of the Development Bank of the Council of Europe, which for the first time has held its annual meeting in the Vatican.

In his speech, Benedict XVI asked not to be limited to a strictly financial assessment of the current situation.

Based on the social doctrine of the Church, he stressed that the dynamic force that regenerates the set of interpersonal relationships able to guide economic life is the relationship between love and truth.

The liberation of totalitarian ideologies has not been used unilaterally for the mere economic progress to the detriment of a more human development respecting the dignity and nobility of man and has not ignored, sometimes, spiritual riches that have shaped the European identity? I ask.

"Christianity," he said, "has allowed Europe to understand what freedom, responsibility, and ethics are what permeate its laws and social structures."

To marginalize Christianity -he warned-, also through the exclusion of the symbols that manifest it, would contribute to amputate our continent of its fundamental origin that nourishes it without rest and that contributes to its true identity.

He continued, "Christianity is at the source of the spiritual and moral values that

are the common heritage of European societies.

The Pope recalled that the member states of the Council of Europe have expressed their unwavering adherence to these values in the Preamble to the Statute of the Council of Europe.

"This accession, which was reaffirmed in the Warsaw Declaration of 2005, entrenches and guarantees the vitality of the principles on which European political and social life is based, and in particular the activity of the Council of Europe," he said.

Benedict XVI then recalled some experiences of economic development based on fraternity, which allows spaces of gratuity that, although indispensable, are hardly conceivable or possible to achieve when the only ends sought are efficiency and benefit.

"There is a rich past in Europe that has seen the development of experiences of an economy based on fraternity," he said.

"There are companies that have a social or mutualist purpose," he added. These have had to suffer the laws of the market, but wish to find again the strength of the generosity of the origins.

He added: It also seems to me that the Development Bank of the Council of Europe wishes, to truly live out solidarity, to respond to the ideal of fraternity that I have just mentioned, and to explore spaces in which fraternity and the logic of the gift can be expressed.

"These are ideals that have Christian roots and that have presided, with the desire for peace, the birth of the Council of Europe," he said.

"Fraternity is generous, it does not calculate," he recalled. Perhaps these criteria should be applied more in the internal elections of the Bank and in its external action.

For Benedict XVI, the novelty would be to introduce a logic that would make the human person, and in particular the families and people really in need, the center and the end of the economy.

"This moment should not lead to limitations based solely on strictly financial analysis," he said. Should, on the contrary, allow the Development Bank to show its originality by reinforcing social integration, environmental management and the development of public infrastructures with a social vocation.

And he strongly encouraged the work of the Bank in this sense and in that of solidarity, which will allow him to be also faithful to his vocation.

The Development Bank of the Council of Europe represents the financial instrument of the social policy of the Council of Europe. It currently has 35 member states. The Holy See has been part of it since 1973.