"Millennium Summit +5: Challenges for Global Governance"

INTRODUCTION  (Fr. Thomas Dailey, OSFS)

As we gather for this twenty-second annual Furphy Lecture, we also celebrate two anniversary milestones. One has been publicly acclaimed since September, when heads of state and government gathered to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The other has not received as much fanfare, and only one international dignitary arrived for the occasion so far; still, we like to think the opening of DeSales University 40 years ago holds some significance.

This evening we blend the two celebrations together in this lecture. The topic – “Challenges for Global Governance” – includes, yet extends far beyond, Center Valley, PA. Nevertheless, our university’s task and our speaker’s work remain interconnected, as we both operate at the intersection of faith and culture. Whether forming young people or educating world leaders, we both strive to advance and promote the cause of human dignity in the world.

And in this world of ours, there are really only two global institutions – the United Nations and the Catholic Church. (DeSales University has not yet become the third, but we’re working on it!) In the multinational arena, the Holy See functions as a “permanent observer” to the work of the U.N. In this role, the Church exercises its universal spiritual mission as a moral voice for humanity, promoting justice and solidarity among all peoples.
But to speak with such a voice is never easy. At times, that voice needs to be encouraging, as when the Church urges governments to maintain or restore peace in a world of multiple conflicts. As the beloved Pope John Paul II proclaimed at the beginning of the new millennium, “peace is a need deeply rooted in the heart of every man and woman. The will to peace therefore must not be allowed to weaken. ... Only in peace and through peace can respect for human dignity and its inalienable rights be guaranteed.

At other times, though, the voice of this Permanent Observer must be critical, especially when international policies adversely affect the ordering of human life and the organization of the world. All too often the pre-eminent dignity of human persons is threatened by governmental intrusions or ideological impositions. It is then, as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger once commented, that “The Christian – and not only him, but especially him – is obliged to protest.”

So, it should be evident that our speaker does not have an easy job! But he is eminently qualified to be this voice. He has served in diplomatic positions in Angola, Egypt, and Poland. He has represented the Church in international missions in France and in Asia. And he has even been a visiting university professor … though not yet here in Center Valley!

In these positions, he has given voice to the Church’s stance on a variety of global concerns. This year alone he has delivered twenty-one interventions at the U.N., on disaster relief, high-level threats, sustainable development, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, small arms trade, the Holocaust, Palestinian refugees, gender equality, and even older persons. Hopefully, he’s not too hoarse to speak to us.

One commentator has described him as articulately thoughtful, very personable, an affable interlocutor, and a man of great intelligence and devotion – no faint praise considering these words come from a critique of our speaker’s work! But, really, could anyone be critical of a man who was given the name “little one from heaven”?!  

Eccezzenza, ben venuto!

Ladies and Gentleman, please welcome His Excellency, Archbishop Celestino Migliore.
I am delighted to be part of this celebration marking the fortieth anniversary of this institution of higher education in the Diocese of Allentown and I warmly thank Fr. Bernard O’Connor, the President of DeSales University, and Fr. Thomas Dailey, Director of the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture, for inviting me to join you on this auspicious occasion.

As you enter your fortieth year, I am reminded of the adage that says: forty is the old age of youth, while fifty is the youth of old age! Anyway, I am sure your university has many more fruitful years ahead of it, as it matures in effectively interpreting the many signs of the time.

When I was asked to deliver the Father Thomas J. Furphy Lecture, the very first thing I did was to “google” the word Furphy. To my surprise, here is what I found: “as a noun and an adjective, furphy is defined as (a) a false report or rumor; (b) an absurd story. Behind it is the name of a blacksmith, John Furphy, who was also a Methodist lay preacher. But how did Furphy's name come to be associated with rumors and lies? Apparently Furphy manufactured water-carts with the following moral ad: “Water is a gift of God; beer and whisky of the devil; come and have a drink of water”. Drivers of these water-carts carried gossip and rumor from house to house, and no doubt the stories got better as they rode along. Whatever the reason, a nexus was soon established between the name on the cart and the rumor-mongering associated with the cart's arrival. I promise not to behave like one of those drivers this evening. The Furphy in whose honor this lecture is named, Father Thomas J. Furphy, obviously redeemed and ennobled his name with his love for knowledge and freedom!

I must confess that I feel a little daunted by the topic you have asked me to address: that is, the current trends of global governance within the general theme of “National and International Problems” of the Fr. Thomas J. Furphy Lectures.

My contribution will be based upon my three year-long experience at UN headquarters in NYC, engaged in debates and negotiations, having paced those corridors and offices almost daily. In Europe, the UN headquarters is known as the “glass palace”: it may well be a “glass palace”, but those inside do not possess a crystal ball.

I – The role of the UN in global governance

We should be clear from the outset that the UN is not some kind of super-government that legislates for the entire world. It is still today what it was originally created to be, namely, a forum for debate and negotiation on how to ensure peaceful coexistence and well being for the international community. Above all, in emergencies and crises, decisions continue to be forged in the capitals of the world, and usually the capitals with the greatest political and economic clout.

When I speak of global governance this evening, I mean global issues and the institutions and governments which address them. In terms of constructive service to the common universal good, the outcome of debates and negotiations at the United Nations depend upon a variety of factors and how much they influence the debate and help delegates to integrate their national
interest into the bigger picture. I should also mention the extraordinary sensitivity and good will of many states’ delegates towards the common good of their own countries as well of the international community. Likewise, I would also like to emphasize the contribution of many non-governmental actors.

It is in the nature of intergovernmental institutions that people sit around a table and represent their national interests. These are almost always connected with a preoccupation for national interests that are economic and financial in nature, of both public and private sectors. It is at this level that the UN is in most obvious need of reform. The ways and means of actual negotiation need to be refined so that they can find the common good in each case, and then propose it and keep it at the center of the debate.

It may surprise some to learn that NGOs and civil society are well represented in the UN system: there are more than three thousand NGOs accredited to either the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the Department of Public Information (DPI). For some years now, the Security Council has included works and initiatives of the NGOs that from time to time represent common interests. There has also been a campaign to promote a similar collaboration between NGOs and the General Assembly.

The term “multilateralism” is one that used to refer to interaction between more than two governments at once. Governments alone used to indicate priorities, conduct negotiations, arrive at consensus or majority decisions, and then put them into practice with the collaboration of local and regional powers and other groups such as NGOs. Today, however, with the emergence of many other actors in national and international public life – like civil society, public and private enterprise, national parliaments, and NGOs – a fresh multilateralism is needed to take into account these new actors in all the phases just mentioned. The debate about human society’s priority questions will gradually take place not so much in international settings as in regional conferences, or at least in the presence of actors who represent the interests being discussed.

II – MDGs: patterns of global governance for the third Millennium

Almost exactly five years ago, in September 2000, amid the euphoria at the start of the third Millennium, the UN brought together the world’s Heads of State and Government for the Millennium Conference, from which eight objectives or goals arose setting objectives to be reached by 2015. They are: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day; (2) Achieve universal primary education – ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability and reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; (8) Develop a global partnership for development and an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.
This impressive shopping list includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally, and to address the least developed countries’ special needs.

In these last years there have of course been many success stories: education has improved in Guinea and Malawi; the number of HIV/AIDS cases has been reduced in Senegal, Thailand and Uganda; infant mortality has decreased in Bangladesh and Gambia; nutrition has improved in Indonesia, Mexico and Tunisia; and poverty of those who have an income lower than a dollar a day in China has been drastically reduced.

However, for every region of the world where there has been an improvement, there have also been reversals: the mortality rate among children under five has increased in Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia, reversing the tendency of the downward trend of past decades; enrollment in elementary schools has diminished in Cameroon, Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania; and malnutrition has increased in Burkina Faso and Yemen. At the same time, the spread of HIV in many countries has doubled, tripled, or even quadrupled, bearing heavily on the prospect of development not only of individuals but of an entire generation.

In fact, it would be fair to say that there is, in general, a noticeable malaise in the world. Things are not getting better and an effective remedy is urgently required. The UN has identified this malaise and has sought to contribute its own analysis of the situation, identifying problems, and searching for solutions: all this in light of the reform of the United Nations to make it more in tune with the times and more able to respond to problems, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary which was celebrated last October 24th this year.

**III – Challenges to global governance**

From the debates and negotiations that have taken up the first eight months of this year, there has emerged a fairly precise picture of the challenges facing global governance. I would first of all like to identify them and then outline the solutions proposed in the UN, before saying something about the position of the Holy See.

Collective responsibility to protect is the new name given to the most pressing challenge facing global governance at this time. It has emerged from recent debates as a new term to describe international cooperation on development coupled with multilateralism in the field of security, human rights and democracy.

Since the events of 9/11, global security has risen to the top of the international agenda and has become the focus of increasing concern among the general population. It is now understood that the biggest security threats of our times go far beyond States simply waging war and other kinds of military aggression. They extend to poverty, environmental degradation, diseases and pandemics, war and aggressions within States; the threat of proliferation and of the possible use of nuclear weapons; terrorism and transnational organized crime. The threats now come from
States and from non-State actors alike, and they are directed to State security, to human security and even to entire populations. The primary responsibility to protect a populace from any man-made crime or disaster, like genocide, forced starvation, or human rights violations, rests of course with the individual sovereign States; but we see more and more, that no State, no matter how powerful, can face such threats by itself. We need only consider the cases of terrorism, the Tsunami in Asia, the effect of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma on this country, the earthquake in Pakistan, or the bird flu which is now threatening Asia and Europe. So we need collective strategies and a clear sense of collective responsibility.

The world today is globally integrated through commerce, financial flows and the digital revolution of communications; but at the same time it is culturally fragmented due to different perceptions of what constitutes international security, the way to achieve development, and how to shape the relationship between human rights and the State. This cultural fragmentation can be seen at the heart of the United Nations where its members differ culturally. In reality, among the member countries of the United Nations, there is no “one size fits all” cultural understanding of international security which is always going to be appropriate or acceptable. For some, international security is a matter of military strategy; for others it is about socio-economic components; and for others it is about a new concept of human security.

Views also differ on development. On the one hand, there are those who insist on the necessity of giving priority to international aid that allows developing countries to kick-start their economies and become masters of their own development. Others insist on the principle that each country is responsible for its own development, and that fixed targets for international aid do not reflect individual developing countries’ needs or their ability to absorb and use aid effectively. Still others consider that development can be best achieved through commerce rather than through aid, or through technological and scientific revolution.

Then there is the notable divergence among the UN’s member states regarding their cultural approach to human rights, democracy and the State. Some of them put a strong emphasis on personal, civic and political human rights; others prefer to emphasize economic, social and cultural rights. For many countries, the State is the supreme value; for others, the State is only a servant of the citizen. Furthermore, some countries believe that religion and the state should be totally separated, while others find such a separation inconceivable.

The common opinion that has gradually emerged from these debates is that the real sickness in human society today is inequality, and inequality at all levels, within and between countries and between the world’s regions. For example, experts tell us that the year 2004 was an exceptional one in terms of global economic growth; at the same time there was increased recognition that the benefits of greater economic growth have not trickled down to the poor. The overall gains at the global level can largely be explained by the exceptional growth in China and India; but most other developing countries have not benefited from economic growth on anything like that kind of scale. In the same period, the number of extreme poor in sub-Saharan Africa has increased by almost 90 million and in Latin America economic recession and stagnation have had a
devastating impact on poverty levels. Inequality has worsened, even for a large group of
developed countries.

Non-economic factors have contributed to the persistence and deepening of various forms of
inequalities. It is true that almost all of the world’s regions have made progress towards
achieving education for all. However, large disparities are still evident in access to primary and
high school levels, and the quality of education remains uneven within and between countries.
The HIV/AIDS epidemic has exacerbated both economic and non-economic inequalities. Again,
the situation is particularly alarming in sub-Saharan Africa. In the context of development, the
quantity of economic growth has remained the primary focus. It is becoming increasingly
apparent, however, that one of the most important challenges facing the world in this new
Millennium is enhancing the quality of growth and reducing inequalities.

The fourth challenge to global governance can be expressed with Archimedes’ famous phrase,
which many of us remember being used by our Math professors: “Give me a lever long enough
and a place to stand and I can move the Earth.” While global governance has a logic of its own, it
lacks its own ethics. It lacks a “lever long enough” to give the world a jolt, something the
world’s nations, governments and civil society together, must find and employ if they wish to
overcome the sense of uneasiness among their people that things are not going in the right
direction. The reform of the United Nations is thus not simply aimed at realizing a few short-
term goals, but at granting the institution the necessary authority, in terms of credibility and
moral legitimacy, to act for the good of the global community and to stimulate political good will
at all levels. In this context, much has been said during this past year at the UN Headquarters,
and also in operative terms, of the contribution that religions can and should offer to promote a
climate of understanding and cooperation between cultures and civilizations.

IV – We have to incarnate the change we wish to see happen in the world

The reform of the UN should be seen within the context of global governance, and we have to
keep in mind that fixing the UN reform is hardly a panacea. We cannot realistically expect
things from the UN that it was not created to do - because the real problem resides in global
governance itself.

Firstly, global governance is in transition: it still has to find its proper criteria and proper modi
operandi. Secondly, in the UN’s 60-year history, this year’s discussions were not the first time
that the UN debated its own reform. By its very organizational nature, the UN always prefers to
reach broad consensus in order to gain some forward momentum. Thus, to translate its
resolutions into binding juridical instruments or plans of action, the UN has been going through a
process of reform, of almost constant change in fact. But it is difficult to think of a drastic reform
that will completely change the face of an organization such as the UN. Rather, the UN will
probably end up integrating each new variable of history into what already exists, meaning that,
although there is constant change, there are almost never drastic or sudden reforms. This also
means that, in the UN system, it is not dramatic reform that triggers change, but rather long and
at times uneven processes of constant modification eventually produce reform. I believe that an organic approach, like the one in progress at this time, is probably best.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: “You have to incarnate the change you wish to see happen in the world”.

The UN would do well to learn from this wise comment. In any case, during the Millennium plus five Summit in September 2005, the Heads of State and Government of some 170 countries came to the following important agreements: there should be a significant increase in development efforts –an additional $50 billion a year by 2010 for fighting poverty, and a commitment to achieve the MDGs by 2015; the strengthening of the UN’s human rights capacity with a new Human Rights Council; a coordinated strategy to prevent terrorism; an acceptance by States of the collective international responsibility to protect; and the establishment of a new Peacebuilding Commission.

How were these proposals and commitments received by the Holy See?

Firstly, on the MDGs: these goals address poverty, hunger, education, health, and the environment which are expected to be reached by 2015 within the framework of increased international cooperation. These commitments happen to coincide very well with the traditional social doctrine of the Church; indeed, they go back to basics, to the works of mercy found in the Gospel itself. Therefore, the Holy See has naturally given its support to those commitments. It is of course a support that goes hand in hand with a careful discernment of the differing and diverging ways of interpreting and implementing the MDGs. At the Summit, the Cardinal Secretary of State, and I myself in the subsequent general debate, voiced one concern in particular. In a world already exposed to pandemics – with others at risk of breaking out – and to the millions without access to basic healthcare, medicine or drinking water, we cannot offer ambiguous, simplistic or ideological visions of health. Instead, the Holy See affirms a holistic approach to health that tackles real problems, rather than leaving the impression – as unfortunately the Outcome document seems to do - that the only solution to every problem is to promote “reproductive” health. I should explain that, for an increasing number of countries, this term includes abortion or access to abortive practices.

Another of our concerns is the silence of the Outcome document on the subject of disarmament. The use of arms must not create evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. Nuclear weapons assault life on the planet, they assault the planet itself, and in so doing they assault the process of the continuing development of the planet. So it is urgent and extremely important that we deal seriously not only with non-proliferation but also with nuclear disarmament.

A direct result of over-spending on arms is that governments have much less money for long-term commitments to education, healthcare and housing. The UN has pioneered studies which again and again show the integral relationship between disarmament, development and security. Security for all is enhanced when steps in disarmament and development complement one
another. Thus, the Holy See intends to continue to point up the economic benefits of disarmament measures.

On the subject of strengthening the UN human rights machinery, there is no doubt that international law and its institutions are vital for the application and enforcement of human rights. Likewise, we should not lose sight of the importance that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights attaches to the incorporation of its principles into national law and to education in fostering a rights-respecting culture. Promotion and enforcement of human rights at a national level and constant attention to education will remain indispensable if they are to prosper in the new system. Even the success of the new Human Rights Council will continue to depend directly on the quality of education and implementation in each individual state. As the corpus of international law keeps expanding, it also imposes obligations on member States. However, in spite of good intentions, not all States, in particular developing ones, have the technical capacity to cope with all their international obligations. Therefore, technical assistance to developing countries in the field of implementation will be a key to the creation of a broad international respect and promotion of human rights.

The Holy See is supportive of the emerging concept of “collective responsibility to protect”, something which was extensively debated in these last months at the UN. Every state has the primary responsibility to protect its own population from any man-made crime or disaster, like genocide, forced starvation, or human rights violations. But it is now becoming clear that, when a given country cannot or does not want to intervene to protect a population, the international community, represented by the UN, has not only the right but the duty to intervene. The means of intervention are entrusted to the Security Council that meets and assesses the situation and puts forward resolutions.

Finally, the Holy See supports the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. The moral and material devastation of conflicts waged since World War Two has given this debate renewed urgency. In addition to the “jus ad bellum” (the criteria that deal with the precise and strict use of force on the part of a legitimate authority) and the “jus in bello” (the parameters dealing with conduct in war), we need to develop and expand the concept of “jus post bellum,” that is, the rapid and effective construction of a just and lasting peace, that is the only reason for the use of force in the first place.

V - A qualitative leap in international life

Speaking ten years ago to Representatives of UN Member States in New York about the specific role of the United Nations, Pope John Paul II made the following statement: “The idea of ‘family’ immediately evokes something more than simple functional relations or a mere convergence of interests. The family is by nature a community based on mutual trust, mutual support and sincere respect. In an authentic family the strong do not dominate; instead, the weaker members, because of their very weakness, are all the more welcomed and served. Raised to the level of the ‘family of nations,’ these sentiments ought to be, even before law itself, the
very fabric of relations between peoples. The United Nations has the historic, even momentous, task of promoting this qualitative leap in international life” (n.14).

Even before law, therefore, or at least not separated from it, quality relations among the diversity of peoples must be cultivated and ripened.

The point of departure for building a family of nations seems to be that of a universal fraternity. Fraternity is in some way the missing link made famous by the French revolution more than two hundred years ago, in the phrase “liberty, equality, fraternity”. Liberty and equality have been translated into various juridical, political and social principles, and made the basis of State constitutions - even if not yet fully - throughout the globe. To insist on liberty is fundamental for peaceful human coexistence. But it is not enough: an overbearing or exclusive concept of liberty, as can be seen in daily life, does not shelter us from the abuse of the more powerful. Furthermore, recent history has taught us that to privilege or impose certain patterns of equality can bring about a dangerous and suffocating collectivism of the masses. Indeed, many populations simply do not have true liberty and equality as yet.

Innovation, freshness and effectiveness in international relations appear possible by means of fraternity, for it is capable of “raising the level of relations between nations from the ‘organizational’ to a more ‘organic’ level, from simple ‘existence with’ others to ‘existence for’ others, in a fruitful exchange of gifts, primarily for the good of the weaker nations but even so, a clear harbinger of greater good for everyone” (n. 14).

Universal fraternity must be translated into political and social categories which can in their turn inform the juridical categories linked to international relations.

This is where, I think, we all can join on a daily basis the movement for the reform of global governance. We are perhaps tempted to think that all we need are a few clever techniques in order to construct this new culture. But if it is true that war begins in peoples’ hearts before it occurs on the battlefield, then it is also in people’s hearts that we will find the point of departure for this project. The reform and the humanization of global governance will only be achieved and upheld by those who make an effort to inform their consciences, who know how to read history intelligently, and who are prepared to take risks and enter the fray.