

Text of the motion on religious liberty presented by the delegations of Paraguay
and the Dominican Republic

Introduction

"We do not want to offend anybody, on the contrary we want to forgive everybody and ask God for His forgiveness, but the awareness of our holy duty compels us to defend, according to our possibilities, the rights of those brothers and sons and we pray instantly that the legitimate liberty which is to be given to all be given in the same way to the Church of God. Only those who really serve public or private interests do not deny freedom, do not suppress it, and do not attempt to use means to do so. Furthermore it is certain that through violence and coercion of consciences the rightful prosperity of citizens will never be attained." (Pope John XXIII, Ad Petri Cathedram).

Motion on Religious Freedom

Considering -

that the Christian message gives us a vision of the whole human being, as a person endowed with interior life and a sense of openness to the world, to other persons and to God, a vision which has been confirmed by Pope John XXIII in precisising the duties and rights of the human person,

that the right to pray to God as he wills and according to the dictates of his conscience and to profess his religion publicly and privately, which profession is so essential to the dignity of the human person and for that reason has always been defended by all Christians,

that religious freedom is not only suppressed in those countries where it is practically systematic according to the dominant political philosophy (such as communism), by groups or individuals in power, but also in those countries where slavery is caused by hunger and illiteracy preventing the religious development of man,

that our ecumenical spirit must make us meditate on the situation of our brothers who do not think or believe as we do, especially in those countries where Catholics are in the majority.