

Vatican to issue document on global financial reform



The Vatican has prepared a document on reform of the global financial system and the potential role of a public regulatory authority.

The document, prepared by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, was to be released Oct. 24 in four languages, and presented the same day at a Vatican news conference by Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the council.

The Vatican said the document would address "reform of the international financial system with a view toward a general public authority."

The wording refers to a section of the 1963 encyclical "Peace on Earth" ("Pacem in Terris"), which stated:

"Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are worldwide in their dimensions; problems, therefore, which cannot be solved except by a public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with these problems, and with a worldwide sphere of activity."

In recent months, the Vatican's justice and peace council has convened experts for discussions of the ethical dimension of the global financial crisis. At one conference sponsored by the council last May, participants said Catholics were looking for guidance from the Vatican on ethical principles for the world of finance and the environment.

In his 2009 encyclical "Charity in Truth" ("Caritas in Veritate"), Pope Benedict XVI addressed the worsening effects of the global crisis and said there was "an urgent need of a true world political authority" that could give poorer nations a bigger voice in financial decision-making, help manage the global economy, guarantee food security, better protect the environment and regulate migration.

"Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good, and to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth," the pope said.

