

Homily leads to headlines about 'truth and taxes'

RIMINI, Italy – While Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, set out to preach about truth, his appearance at a major conference sponsored by Communion and Liberation led to headlines about “truth and taxes.”

The cardinal presided at the opening Mass for the lay movement's Aug. 19-25 meeting in Rimini, focusing his homily on the Gospel's depiction of the struggle between good and evil.

But after Mass, reporters asked for his opinion about the call by Umberto Bossi, head of Italy's Northern League party, for Italians to stop paying their taxes to protest tax hikes.

Cardinal Bertone told the journalists, “We are with the Gospel, which says, ‘Give to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's,’ and with St. Paul, who told people to pay their taxes.”

Of course, he said, the tax rate must be just and revenues must be spent appropriately.

The cardinal said “the platform of the Christian politician” should be Psalm 72, a prayer for those who govern. Cardinal Bertone said the psalm said, “The politician must pay attention to the weak and poor and make sure that there are no injustices in distributing the resources of the state.”

In his homily, Cardinal Bertone encouraged Communion and Liberation members to hold fast to the moral truths of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Too often today, he said, the term “truth” is equated with “opinion,” leading people to think there are many truths and different truths for different people and different situations.

Such an attitude leads to confusion and, finally, a sense of being lost in the world, the cardinal said.

“Life, deprived of certainties, becomes opaque, without meaning and ultimately exposed to every possible form of violence and abuse,” he said.

Not compromising one's relationship with God means not compromising when it comes to moral truths, he said.

The battle between God and the devil, the cardinal said, is a battle over peace, love,

truth and goodness.

Satan wants to annihilate God in order to “establish his reign of chaos, hatred and unhappiness. His aim is to attract people to himself and subjugate them,” he said.

The “fire” that Jesus said he would bring to the earth is not a force of destruction, but of clarification, one that “clearly distinguishes good from evil, truth from error,” Cardinal Bertone said.