

Pope appeals to UN for more guarantees of economic justice

VATICAN CITY – In a message to the United Nations, Pope Benedict XVI called for stronger efforts to guarantee economic justice around the globe.

Renewing an appeal made during his visit to the United Nations last April, he encouraged the international community to return to “the lofty moral vision and the transcendent principles of justice embodied in the United Nations’ founding documents.”

His comments came in a message to a prayer service Sept. 15, the eve of the 63rd session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York. The papal text was released at the Vatican.

The prayer service took place at the Church of the Holy Family, located close to U.N. headquarters in New York. Attending were diplomats, U.N. officials and religious leaders, including Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York and Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations.

The pope said such moments of reflection and prayer were an important way to strengthen the diplomats in their commitment to “upholding the dignity of each human person and building a world of ever greater solidarity, freedom and peace.”

The pope offered his own prayer that U.N. representatives would receive from God the guidance and strength to carry out urgent tasks “aimed at ensuring that the whole human family shared in the benefits of globalization.”

Specifically, he called for implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and progress on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, commonly known as NEPAD.

Pope Benedict has repeatedly encouraged countries to implement the Millennium Development Goals, a plan that aims to cut global poverty in half by 2015. To accomplish this, richer countries have been asked to increase development aid to 0.7

percent of their gross national product.

The Vatican also has strongly supported NEPAD, a program instituted by the African Union. It aims to develop a socio-economic framework for Africa while encouraging African governments to take greater responsibility for the development of their own societies.