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Welcome Address

Esteemed Speakers and Participants,

It is my pleasure as president of SEDOS to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to the SEDOS Spring Session 2024! It is an honour to gather here today at the UISG (Union of International Superiors General) in the beautiful city of Rome to share on our theme: “Mission of Hope: Mission Gifts from Each Continent.”

As we embark on this journey of exploration and inspiration, we recognize that hope, and especially Christian Hope, is the beacon that guides us through the complexities of our world. It is hope that fuels our commitment to mission, and it is hope that propels us to share our gifts with one another across continents.

Today, we come together as representatives from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and traditions. Each of us carries unique gifts—gifts of faith, compassion, knowledge, and service. These gifts, like precious treasures, have been entrusted to us by our communities, our congregations, and our continents.

Mission gifts from each continent—what a powerful concept! It reminds us that our mission is not confined to geographical boundaries. It transcends oceans, mountains, and deserts. It reaches into the hearts of people, binding us in a common purpose—to bring hope, healing, and transformation to a world in need.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the richness of these gifts:

From Africa: The rhythm of the African drum echoes resilience, community, and the spirit of Ubuntu — “I am because we are.” Our African brothers and sisters gift us with their unwavering faith and vibrant cultures.

From Asia: The delicate brushstrokes of Asian calligraphy tell stories of ancient wisdom, mindfulness, and interconnectedness. Asian spirituality invites us to seek harmony within ourselves and with all creation.

From Europe: The soaring cathedrals, the Gregorian chants, and the works of great theologians remind us of our shared Christian heritage. European theologians have gifted us with profound insights into our faith.

From the Americas: The passionate rhythms of Latin American music, the prophetic voices of liberation theology, and the commitment to social justice inspire us to be agents of change. Our American sisters and brothers challenge us to live the Gospel boldly.

From Oceania: The vastness of the Pacific Ocean mirrors the expansiveness of Oceania’s spirituality. Indigenous wisdom, ecological stewardship, and a deep connection to land and sea are their precious gifts.

As we engage in dialogue, prayer, and reflection during this session, let us recognize that our mission gifts are not meant to be hoarded but shared. Let us learn from one another, celebrate our diversity, and collaborate in hope.

In the morning session, our first distinguished speaker, Msgr. Graham Bell, will guide us further in understanding how these gifts intersect with the fundamental questions of evangelization in our world. Fr. Stan Lubungo will then contextualize this a little from the African context.

The afternoon session will be a wonderful mix of testimonies from four other geographical locations...

Once again, welcome to this sacred space of learning, sharing, and hope. May our time together be fruitful, and may our mission gifts continue to ripple across continents, bringing light to the darkest corners of our global family.

Thank you, and let us begin this Spring Session with hearts open to hope and hands ready to serve.