



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE PERSONNEL
OF THE LABOUR OFFICE OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE**

Friday, 19 December 2008

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I am pleased to welcome all of you who are taking part in this meeting a few days before the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Labour Office of the Apostolic See (ULSA) by my venerable Predecessor John Paul II, with the *Motu Proprio* "*Nel primo anniversario*" of 1 January 1989. I greet Cardinal Francesco Marchisano, President of the ULSA; I thank him for his cordial words and take the opportunity to express to him my deep gratitude for his long service to the Holy See. I thank Bishop Franco Croci, Vice President, Dr Massimo Bufacchi, Director, and the members of the Executive Board, the Council and the Conciliation and Arbitration Board, together with all of your collaborators.

In the *Motu Proprio* for the institution of the ULSA, the Servant of God John Paul II as your President recalled expressed the hope that "the dignity of each collaborator will be effectively honoured; the economic and social rights of each member will be recognized, protected, harmonized and promoted; the respective duties will also be more faithfully fulfilled; a real sense of responsibility will be stimulated; an ever better service will be provided" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 5 June 1989, p. 12). In the subsequent *Motu Proprio* of 1994 entitled "*La sollecitudine*" and with which he approved the definitive Statutes of the Office John Paul II wrote: "I would now like to reaffirm the role attributed to the Labour Office of the Apostolic See, a body of this See which has a specific institutional identity and oversees the protection of the legitimate interests of the members of the working community of the Holy See to assure harmony and equalization in the plurality, diversity and specificity of offices, favouring a correct application of the principles of social justice, to guarantee the unity of this community and its growth in the

interpersonal relations within it".

These are very clear guidelines which I am pleased to reaffirm, shedding light on the distinctive task that the Labour Office of the Apostolic See is called to carry out in the formation of the personnel in order to make the activity of the working community of the Holy See increasingly efficient and supportive. Another important service of your Office is to prevent any possible disagreement concerning the workers employed by the Apostolic See and to seek, if necessary, the prompt settlement of it by means of a sincere and objective dialogue, with recourse to the procedures foreseen for conciliation and arbitration. All this is for the purpose of consolidating the working community, executing the appropriate interventions for the complete fulfilment of the norms established for its protection and settling any possible administrative or socio-economic problems that may arise in the various bodies of the Holy See. In this very way, cooperating for the best possible organization of the working community of the Apostolic See, your Office succeeds in achieving the aims for which it was established.

On this occasion, I would like to emphasize that the work community constituted by those who are employed in the various offices and bodies of the Holy See forms a single "family", whose members are united, not only by the ties of their work but by their common role which is to help the successor of Peter in his ministry at the service of the universal Church. The professional activity they carry out thus constitutes a "vocation" to be fostered with care and an evangelical spirit, seeing within this a concrete path to holiness. This requires that love for Christ and for one's brothers and sisters, together with a shared sense of Church, motivate and enliven skill and dedication, professionalism, honest and correct commitment and attentive and mature responsibility, thereby making work itself, whatever it may be, a prayer. We could describe all this as an ongoing formative and spiritual task to which everyone may make their contribution: Cardinals, Bishops, priests, men and women religious and lay people. Indeed, if respect for the principles of justice and solidarity, well clarified in the social doctrine of the Church, is important, what is indispensable above all is the common effort supported by convinced adherence to Christ and sincere love for his Church.

Thus, very willingly, as I take the opportunity today to thank all who work in the various Dicasteries and Offices, I express the wish that in each and every one the search for what is right and the constant aspiration to holiness will never be lacking. At the same time, I hope that the Labour Office of the Apostolic See, to the extent that it is able, may contribute to achieving this aim. Furthermore, the approach of Holy Christmas naturally prompts me to think of the employment crisis that distresses the whole of humanity today. May those who are able to work be grateful to the Lord and open their hearts generously to those who instead have employment and financial difficulties. May the Child Jesus, who on the Holy Night of Bethlehem became man to share in our difficulties, look kindly upon those who are harshly tried by this world crisis and inspire sentiments of authentic solidarity in everyone. In my [Message for the upcoming World Day of Peace](#) I recall that "what the fight against poverty really needs are men and women who live in a profoundly

fraternal way and are able to accompany individuals, families and communities on journeys of authentic human development" (n. 13).

I willingly express this hope, which I place in the hands of Our Lady and St Joseph, for your Office and for the employees of the Apostolic See, extending it to the whole of the working world, and as I wish everyone a holy and peaceful Christmas, I warmly bless you, together with your families and your loved ones. Happy Christmas!

© Copyright 2008 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana