



The Holy See

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE FESTIVAL
OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
(Verona, 20-23 November 2014)**

[Multimedia]

Beloved,

A cordial greeting to all of you who are attending the fourth Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which has as its theme this year: “Beyond Places in Time”. This title brings several thoughts to mind.

The first is about going further on. The situation of the social and economic crisis we are in can frighten and confuse us or lead us to think that the situation is so burdensome that we conclude we cannot do anything about it. The great temptation is to stop to tend our own wounds and, in so doing, to find an excuse for not hearing the cry of the poor and the suffering of those who have lost the dignity of bringing bread home because they have lost their job. And those who seek only to heal their own wounds end up only concealing them. This is the trap. The risk is the indifference that renders us blind, deaf and dumb, present only to ourselves, with a mirror in front of us, such that all that happens is irrelevant. Men and women closed within themselves. There was someone like this who was called Narcissus.... Do not take that path.

We are called to go further on and to respond to real needs. It is crucial to abandon platitudes, which are held to be safe and secure, in order to free the many hidden or unknown energies that are present and that work very concretely. The Christian ethic is not an impediment to the plurality of expressions with which people manifest concern and care of one’s neighbour. To go beyond means to expand and not to restrict, to create spaces and not limit oneself to controlling them. It would be so beautiful if the many streams of goodness would merge to create a great river whose water would overcome the dryness and bring new fruitfulness, making this life and time shine with beauty and friendship. To cross over means to free goodness and enjoy its fruit.

To go beyond it is necessary to take the initiative. I know that the Festival has dedicated ample space to the economy, to entrepreneurs, to businesses and to cooperation. Today in the economic sphere too, it is crucial to take the initiative, because the system tends to homogenize everything and money dominates everything because it leads you to this globalization which is not good and homogenizes everything. What is the dominant factor of this homogenization? It is money. Taking the initiative in these areas means having the courage not to let oneself be imprisoned by money or to become slaves to short-term results. It is necessary to adopt a new outlook! I'll give you an example. Today it is said that many things cannot be done because there is not enough money. Yet there is always money to do some things and not enough to do others. For example, money is found to buy arms, to wage war, for unscrupulous financial transactions. This is usually kept quiet, what is frequently highlighted is that there is not enough money to create jobs, to invest in awareness, in talents, to plan new welfare, to safeguard the environment. The real problem is not money but people: we cannot ask of money what only people can do or create. Money alone does not create development, creating development takes people who have the courage to take the initiative.

Taking the initiative means developing a business capable not only of technical innovation; it is also necessary to renew labour relations, experimenting with new forms of participation and of workers' responsibility, inventing new formulas for entering the world of labour, creating a solid relationship between the business and the territory. Taking the initiative means overcoming excessive aid. To live intensely in this period leads to betting on a different future and on a different way of solving problems. Here too I would like to give you an example. They told me about a father who had a son with Down's Syndrome. The father did everything for this son and had availed himself of all the services that were offered by the public entities for education, treatment, social life. But he was not satisfied. He wanted to think of something that would give his son more dignity and more autonomy. He created a cooperative of kids with Down's: he studied work suitable to them, he made a contract with a retail business to sell their work.... In other words, he created the working conditions on which his son could build his future and his healthy autonomy. This is an example of going beyond. Stopping means ever and again requesting the State or some entity for assistance; acting means creating new procedures. And this is the secret: to create new procedures without asking that they give us new spaces. These new procedures are not the result of technical interventions, they are the result of a love which, enlisted by the circumstances, is not satisfied until it has created something and has become the response.

Taking the initiative also means to consider love as the true force of change. To love one's work, to be present in difficulties, to feel involved and to respond responsibly and to arouse that love that each one of us has in our heart, because the Spirit has given it to us. Taking the initiative is the reaction to this summons which is typical of love. If we exist in time with this effluence, this extra love, something new will surely happen to foster the growth of goodness. With this vision of reality it becomes almost natural to foster and develop talents. To facilitate the expression and growth of talents is what we are called to do, and to do so it is necessary to open spaces. Not to control

spaces, to open them. It is about letting the capacities, the intelligence, the abilities that people are endowed with to circulate. Freeing talents is the beginning of the change; this action will enable one to overcome envy, jealousy, rivalry, conflict, closure, that preconceived closure will be overcome, and to open to joy, the joy of the new. Clearly, speaking about talents implies that the discourse is about young people in particular. If we want to go beyond we must decisively invest in them and give them much trust. But I wonder: what is the percentage of young people, today, who are unemployed and without work? Does this mean going beyond, or going backward?

To change it is necessary to go forward together and in the same direction. One might ask oneself: "To go beyond, take the initiative, free spaces, take the initiative, might this not result in confusion?". We find the answer in the idea of time which the Bible passes on to us. Time is grace and fullness. To go beyond places is not haphazard but the result of a common goal: history is a journey toward fulfillment. If we move as a people, if we go forward together, our existence will show this meaning and this fulfillment.

In conclusion I address a heartfelt greeting to each one. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Bishop of Verona who is hosting this fine initiative, and I express my sincere thanks to Fr Vincenzi for having organized the Festival of the Social Doctrine this year too, and I hope this commitment to form a new social consciousness will continue. I ask you to please pray for me. I bless you from my heart.