



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AI PARTECIPANTI ALLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE
SULLE RELAZIONI UMANE NELL'INDUSTRIA****

Sabato, 4 febbraio 1956

In response to your request for this audience, We are happy to welcome in you, Gentlemen, the representatives of companies and unions, who have been studying together, with the cooperation of many specialists, the subject of human relations in industry. It is a timely subject, and We are the first to take pleasure in it, to the extent that it represents an advance towards the union of the two great forces which collaborate in production, namely, employers and employees.

Your aim was to study, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, the factors that can contribute to the improvement of human relations in industry and to examine the contributions of scientific research in that field. Indeed it is of first importance to know exactly from both sides the given facts of the problem. They are truly very complex and the norms established by the human sciences of Sociology, Psychology or Psychotechnique, encounter enormous resistance . . .

We are happy to ascertain, nevertheless, that pure technique has vividly brought out the importance, so long ignored, of human relations in labor. After calling to mind the contempt in which the workers' higher interests were too often held, did not Our venerated predecessor, Pius XI, exclaim: «Contrary to the plans of Providence, labor, which was intended, even after original sin, for man's material and moral perfecting, under these conditions tends to become a means of perversion: for dead matter emerges from the factory enobled, while men are there corrupted and degraded». (*Quadragesimo anno*, Acta Ap. Sedis, Vol. 23, 1931, pp. 221-222.) We wish We could say that this no longer takes place anywhere in the world. Alas ! Everyone knows that progress is slow, much too slow on this essential point, in many countries, and on whole continents.

Your desire, Gentlemen, in soliciting this audience which We grant you, was certainly to hear the voice of the Church on the subject you are studying. What the Church wishes in this matter

obviously depends on the concept she has of the human being. For the Church all men are equal in dignity before God; therefore they should also be equal in the free or necessary relations which unite them.

...it is not simply a matter of a worker hired and paid for his labor, it is a matter of a man, a member of human society, who comes to cooperate for the welfare of that same society in the given industry.... A business does not monopolize initiatives which are outside its particular scope of activity and belong personally to the workers. Besides, a modern business firm does not disintegrate into a game of technical functions coordinated in an anonymous manner. It unites, through contracts, associates whose responsibilities are different and hierarchical; but to whom work should give the means of fulfilling better and better their moral, personal, familial and social obligations. They must loyally render to each other a mutual service and if the concern of employers is to treat the workers as men, they should not be satisfied with utilitarian considerations: productiveness is not an end in itself.

On the contrary every man represents a transcendent and absolute value: the Author of human nature has given him an immortal soul. Moreover He became Man and identified Himself morally with everyone who looks to others for the needs of life that he lacks: «As long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me». (*Matt.* 25, 40) He Himself did not come in order to be served but to serve (cf. *Matt.* 20, 28) and He did not hesitate to give His life to save mankind. There is the origin of the high dignity of every human being and the responsibility of whoever takes a man into his service.

That is why we eagerly hope that what you have accomplished during these days of study has brought not only enlightenment but also a deeper understanding of the difficulties of others, a mutual and more sincere benevolence and the will to seek the necessary agreement on both sides with mutual respect and with constant solicitude for the general welfare...

**The Pope Speaks*, vol.3 n°1, p.52-53.