



The Holy See

JUBILEE OF WORKERS

GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II AFTER MASS

1 May 2000

1. At the close of this Jubilee gathering, I once again extend cordial greetings to you all. I thank those who have organized this important event in this place, which will host other meetings in the course of the Jubilee, especially on the occasion of World Youth Day.

My thanks go in a special way to Mr Juan Somavia, Director General of the International Labour Organization, and to Dr Paola Bignardi, National President of Italian Catholic Action, for their kind and thoughtful words to me on your behalf. I greet all the Authorities present, especially the President of the Italian Council of Ministers, Professor Giuliano Amato.

Through all of you here present, my thoughts turn in a heartfelt way to the entire world of work.

2. The festival of work brings to mind the industriousness of men and women who, in accordance with the command of the Lord of life, desire to work for a future of hope, justice and solidarity for all humanity. Today on this path of civilization, thanks to new technologies and global computerized communications, fresh possibilities of progress are emerging. However, there is no shortage of new problems, which combine with already existing ones and give rise to legitimate preoccupation. Realities such as unemployment, exploitation of minors and low wages persist, and are even getting worse in some parts of the world. It must be recognized that the organization of labour does not always respect the dignity of the human person, and the universal destination of resources is not always given due consideration.

The commitment to resolve these problems in all parts of the world involves everyone. It concerns you, owners and management, you, financiers, and you, craftsmen, tradespeople and workers. All

must work so that the economic system in which we live does not upset the fundamental order of the priority of work over capital, of the common good over private interest. It is ever more necessary, as Mr Juan Somavia said a short while ago, to establish a global coalition in favour of “decent work”.

Globalization is a reality present today in every area of human life, but it is a reality which must be managed wisely. *Solidarity too must become globalized.*

3. The Jubilee offers a suitable opportunity to open our eyes to the poverty and marginalization, not only of individuals but also of groups and peoples. In the Bull of Indication of the Jubilee I recalled that “some nations, especially the poorer ones, are oppressed by a debt so huge that repayment is practically impossible” (*Incarnationis Mysterium*, 12). *To reduce or indeed to remit this debt*: here is a Jubilee gesture which would be so desirable!

This appeal is addressed to the rich and developed nations, but also to people of great wealth and to those who are in a position to foster solidarity among peoples.

May it ring out at this historic encounter, at which Christian workers and non-confessional labour organizations have united in a common effort.

Workers, employers, collaborators, financiers, tradespeople, join your arms, your minds, your hearts to contribute to the building of a society which respects man and his work. *Man is more valuable for what he is than for what he has.* Whatever is done for the sake of greater justice, wider fraternity and a more human ordering of social relationships counts for more than any progress in the technical field.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Pope is well aware of your problems, your concerns, your expectations and hopes. He appreciates your toil, your attachment to your families, your professional commitment. He is close to you in your efforts to build a more just and sharing society, he encourages and blesses you.

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