



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE PILGRIMAGE
FROM THE DIOCESE OF TERNI-NARNI-AMELIA
ON THE 30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VISIT
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD JOHN PAUL II
TO THE STEEL FOUNDRIES IN TERNI***

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 26 March 2011*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am very glad to welcome you this morning and to address my cordial greeting to the authorities present, to the men and women workers and to all of you who have come on pilgrimage to the See of Peter. I offer a particular greeting to your Bishop Vincenzo Paglia, whom I thank for the words he has addressed to me also on your behalf. Many of you have come to this gathering — I am sorry that some of you were unable to enter — on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of John Paul II's Visit to Terni. Today, we are remembering him in a special way for the love he showed for the working world; we almost seem to hear him repeating the first words he spoke on his arrival in Terni: "The principal purpose of this visit, which takes place on St Joseph's day... is to bring a word of encouragement to all workers" and to "express to them my solidarity, my friendship and my affection" (*Speech to the civil authorities*, Terni, 19 March 1981). I make these sentiments my own and warmly embrace you all and your families. On the day of my election, I too presented myself with conviction as "a humble worker in the Lord's vineyard", and today, together with you, I want to remember all workers and entrust them to the protection of St Joseph the worker.

Terni is marked by the presence of one of the largest steel foundries which has contributed to the growth of employment. A path that brought light, but also difficult moments, like the one that we are experiencing today. The crisis in the industrial world is harshly trying the life of the city that must rethink its future. All this also involves your lives as workers and the lives of your families. In

your Bishop's words I heard the echo of the anxieties you bear in your hearts. I know that the diocesan Church makes them her own and feels the responsibility to be close to you and to communicate the hope of the Gospel and the strength to build a society that is more just and more worthy of humanity. And it does this from the source, from the Eucharist.

In his first Pastoral Letter, *The Eucharist Saves the World*, your Bishop pointed out to you the source from which to draw and to which to return in order to live the joy of faith and the passion to improve the world. The Sunday Eucharist has thus become the fulcrum of pastoral action in the diocese. It is a choice that has borne fruit; participation in the Sunday Eucharist has grown, which is what your diocese is committed to for the good of the earth. Indeed, from the Eucharist in which Christ makes himself present in his supreme act of love for us all, we learn how live as Christians in society, to make it more welcoming, more supportive, more attentive to the needs of all, especially the neediest, and richer in love.

St Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr, defined Christians as those who "live according to Sundays" (*iuxta dominicum viventes*), or "according to the Eucharist". Living in a "Eucharistic" way means living as a single Body, a single family, a society built around love. The exhortation to be "Eucharistic" is not a simple moral invitation addressed to single individuals, it is much more: it is the exhortation to participate in the dynamism itself of Jesus who offered his life for others, for us all to be one.

On this horizon there is also the subject of work, which worries you with its problems today, especially that of unemployment. It is important always to remember that work is one of the fundamental elements both of the human person and of society. The difficult or precarious conditions of work make the conditions of society itself difficult and precarious, the conditions of living a life ordered by the common good. As Bishop Paglia reminded us, in the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, I urged the faithful to "continue to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone" (n. 32).

I would also like to mention the serious problem of safety in the work-place. I know that you have frequently had to face this dramatic reality. Every effort should be made to break the chain of deaths and accidents. And what can be said about the precariousness of jobs, especially for the young? This is an aspect that creates anxiety in so many families! The Bishop also mentioned the difficult situation of the chemical industry in your city, as well as the problems in the steel sector. I am particularly close to you, placing in God's hands all your anxieties and concerns, and I hope that in the logic of giving freely and of solidarity these moments may be overcome so that safe, dignified and stable employment may be assured.

Work, dear friends, helps one to be closer to God and to others. Jesus himself was a worker, indeed he spent a large part of his life on earth in Nazareth, in Joseph's workshop. The Evangelist Matthew reminds us that people spoke of Jesus as "the carpenter's son" (Mt 13:55) and John Paul

He spoke in Terni of the “Gospel of work”, saying that it was “written particularly by the fact that the Son of God, of the same substance as the Father, on becoming man, worked with his hands. In fact, his work, which was real physical work, occupied most of his life on this earth, and in this way entered the work of redemption of man and of the world” (*Address to workers*, Terni, 19 March 1981). This already speaks of the dignity of work, indeed of the specific dignity of human work that is integrated into the mystery of redemption itself.

It is important to understand this in the Christian perspective. Instead it is often perceived as a mere means of earning, if not, in different situations in the world, even as a means of exploitation and therefore an offence to the dignity of the person. I would also like to mention the problem of work on Sundays. Unfortunately, in our societies the rhythm of consumerism can even rob us of the sense of festivity and of Sunday as the Day of the Lord and of the community.

Dear men and women workers, dear friends, I would like to end these brief words by saying that the Church supports, comforts and encourages every effort to guarantee safe, dignified and permanent work for all. The Pope is close to you, to your families, your children, your young people and your elderly and bears you in her heart before God. May the Lord bless you, your work and your future. Thank you.