



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKSHOP
ON CHANGING RELATIONS AMONG MARKET, STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 20 October 2017*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially greet the Members of the [Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences](#) and the distinguished participants in this workshop, as well as the representatives of the institutions supporting it. Your meeting draws attention to the urgent need to develop new models of cooperation between market, state and civil society with regard to present-day challenges. Here I would like to dwell briefly on two specific causes leading to exclusion and existential peripheries.

The first is *the endemic and systemic increase in inequalities and in the exploitation of our planet*; this is greater than the increase in income and wealth. Yet inequality and exploitation are neither inevitable nor a historical constant. They are not inevitable because, apart from the conduct of individuals, they also depend on the economic rules that a society chooses to adopt. We can think of energy production, the labour market, the banking system, welfare, the tax system, and the area of education. Depending on how these sectors are designed, there are different consequences for how income and wealth are distributed among those who helped to produce them. If profit becomes the chief aim, democracy tends to become a plutocracy in which inequalities and the exploitation of the planet increase. I repeat that this is not inevitable; there are times when, in some countries, inequalities diminish and the environment is better protected.

The other cause of exclusion is *employment that fails to respect the dignity of the human person*. In the past, at the time of [Rerum Novarum](#) (1891), one spoke of “the right to a just wage” on the part of workers. Today, in addition to this indisputable need, we can ask why it has not yet been

possible to put into practice the teaching of the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* that “the entire process of productive work must be adapted to the needs of the person and to his way of life” (No. 67). Following the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, we can add: while at the same time respecting creation, our common home.

Nowadays especially, creating new jobs requires open and enterprising individuals, fraternal relationships, research and investment in developing clean energy in order to meet the challenges of climate change. Today, this is concretely possible. There is a need to disengage from public and private lobbies that defend sectional interests, but also to overcome forms of spiritual laziness. Political activity must be set at the service of the human person, the common good, and respect for nature.

The challenge before you, then, is to strive courageously to move beyond today’s dominant model of social order, transforming it from within. We must demand that the market not only be efficient in generating wealth and ensuring sustainable growth, but also stand at the service of integral human development. Fundamental values such as democracy, justice, freedom, family and creation, cannot be sacrificed on the altar of efficiency, the “golden calf” of our times. In a word, we must aim at “civilizing the market” as part of an ethical approach friendly to human beings and their environment.

Something similar can be said about the need to rethink the nature and role of the nation-state in a new context of globalization, which has profoundly altered the earlier international order. The state cannot consider itself the sole and exclusive proprietor of the common good, preventing intermediate bodies of civil society from freely expressing their full potential. This would violate the principle of subsidiarity which, combined with that of solidarity, is a pillar of the Church’s social doctrine. Here, the challenge is to align individual rights with the common good.

In this respect, the specific role of civil society can be compared to Charles Péguy’s description of the virtue of hope: a younger sister standing between two other virtues – faith and charity – taking them by the hand and pulling them forward. This is how I would see the role of civil society: “pulling” the state and the market forward, so that they can rethink their *raison d’être* and their *modus operandi*.

Dear friends, I thank you for your consideration of these reflections. Upon you, your loved ones and your work, I willingly invoke God’s blessing.