



The Holy See

Tuesday, 14 January 1992

*Signori Cardinali,
Illustri Signori,
Cari Fratelli e Sorelle,*

1. Sono lieto di poter compiere oggi la visita a questa mostra dedicata a «Il lavoro dell'uomo nella pittura da Goya a Kandiskij» la quale vuole essere come un coronamento e una meditazione ispirata dall'arte sui grandi temi del lavoro umano che hanno attirato la riflessione della Chiesa durante l'anno da poco trascorso.

Saluto di cuore tutti voi che prendete parte a questo incontro. Esprimo il mio grato pensiero e il mio vivo apprezzamento ai responsabili della Biblioteca Apostolica e alla Società Muse di Bologna che hanno sostenuto e curato la realizzazione di questa interessante iniziativa.

In pari tempo saluto i partecipanti al «Colloquium» organizzato in Vaticano sotto gli auspici del Pontificio Consiglio della Giustizia e della Pace.

Li ringrazio per la presenza, mentre rivolgo un particolare saluto al Signor Mario Conde per l'appoggio offerto.

2. Dear Friends, you are meeting following the publication of the Encyclical "[Centesimus Annus](#)" in order to discuss the theme: "After 1991: Capitalism and Ethics". 1991 was, in fact, a year filled with enormous challenges, and it has left in its wake extraordinary expectations. Significantly, it was also the year which marked the centenary of the Encyclical "[Rerum Novarum](#)" of Pope Leo XIII.

The present exhibition seeks to illustrate both the artistic context and the social milieu of that time. I trust that both dates, 1891 and 1991, will be sure points of reference for your reflection and your discussions.

Furthermore, the theme of your Colloquium is closely related to various aspects of your own personal and professional

lives. All of you have important responsibilities, whether it be in political or academic life or in the world of business and finance.

To view this exhibition is to feel ourselves invited to consider the effects on the daily life of millions of people of two extreme responses to society's need for economic and social organization, two far-reaching aspects of the problem of "Capitalism and Ethics": on the one hand, an unbridled capitalism which puts the quest for power and profit and the cult of an often soulless efficiency above all other considerations; and, on the other hand, the dangerous - and eventually disastrous - illusion that there can be a materialistic, and essentially atheistic, ideological solution to social problems.

I am confident that the lectures and discussions in which you are taking part, with the help of distinguished experts on the Church's social teaching, will enable you to appreciate more fully the firm foundations of this teaching, its profound human dimension and the evangelical spirit which inspires it.

May this exchange of views, taking place at such a high level, prove helpful to all of you as you carry out your responsibilities for the common good.

Once again I offer you a cordial welcome. Upon you and your work I invoke the blessings of Almighty God.

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