



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION OF LAZIO**

Saturday 31 January 1998

*Mr President of the Regional Board,
Mr President of the Regional Council,
Distinguished Members of the Board and of the Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is a happy custom that at the beginning of every year I have the pleasure of receiving the representatives of the Regional Administration of Lazio, for an exchange of good wishes in keeping with the profound link that exists between the region and the Bishop of Rome. To each of you and your families I extend my best wishes for peace and prosperity, and for the successful fulfilment of the institutional task that has been entrusted to you. I greet in particular the President of the Regional Council, the Honourable Luca Borgomeo. I also express my gratitude to the President of the Board, the Honourable Piero Badaloni, for the kind words that he spoke to me in your name and I thank you all for your presence.

2. It is only two years now until the *Great Jubilee of the Year 2000*. With deep appreciation I listened to what was said about your efforts to prepare for this historic occasion, and I thank you for what you are achieving in the various sectors for which you are responsible. As a result of your commitment, you are making it possible for the pilgrims and visitors, but first and foremost for the inhabitants of the region, to experience this extraordinary event as an occasion of spiritual and social renewal.

The Holy Year is in fact a providential occasion, also at the civil level, for promoting a more equitable society, which never loses sight of the human person with his rights and duties, as I

recalled in my [Message for the World Day of Peace](#) this year, which marks the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The person must be at the centre of every social project (cf. n. 3). The great challenges at the global level are also found, in due proportion, within the area of your responsibility. I am thinking, for example, of the challenges of ensuring the globalization of solidarity (cf. *ibid.*), of working for the equitable application of the law and combating corruption (cf. n. 5), of preventing and fighting usury (cf. n. 6).

"Individuals, families, communities and nations, all are called to live in justice and to work in peace. No one can claim exemption from this responsibility" (n. 1). Those who are in key roles have a special opportunity for making their own contribution to the achievement of these important objectives and, therefore, to the development of an *authentic democracy*. This, in fact, "is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the 'subjectivity' of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility" (Encyclical [Centesimus annus](#), n. 46).

3. At our annual meetings it has become almost obligatory to touch on the *question of work*, which is the priority item on the agenda of the governments of European nations and also absorbs a large part of your energy.

Public authorities must work both directly and indirectly for the achievement of full and dignified employment. Indirectly and according to the principle of subsidiarity, by creating favourable conditions for the free exercise of economic activity, leading to abundant employment opportunities and sources of wealth. Directly and according to the principle of solidarity, the weakest must be defended by putting limits on the autonomy of the parties who decide on working conditions, and by always ensuring the basic essentials for the unemployed worker.

"Young people whom society marginalizes, including the very large number of immigrants and those who are enslaved by dangerous delinquencies, must be directed towards the path of work so that the value of their humanity may be fostered and respected" (Speech to the Convention "Professional Training and Social Solidarity on the Centenary of *Rerum novarum*", 1 December 1990; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 10 December 1990, p. 3). I hope that the commitment of the centres for professional formation of Christian inspiration, which continually exercise a very important function for the education of youth, is always given due attention both by private enterprise and public institutions.

4. Another delicate area to which I wish to draw your attention is that of *health* and, particularly, that of *co-operation between the public authorities and Catholic institutions*.

The Church, faithful to the example and command of Christ, has always shown a special concern

for the sick. In every age the ecclesial community has established numerous convalescent institutions and has provided a skilled presence in public hospitals. It is very important that in Rome and Lazio this effective collaboration should continue and indeed that it should increase. It is the duty of the Regional Administration to support these worthy institutions, which offer a noble service for the benefit of society, allocating the necessary funds and allowing them to continue working calmly in accordance with their ideals.

5. I also take the occasion of this meeting with you to make a new appeal for the *family*. You are aware of how much I care about this primary cell of society, the foundation of civilization and of a nation's life. Every good public administrator, all the more so if he is guided by Christian ethics, cannot fail to regard the family as the 'prism', so to speak, for viewing all social problems.

I stress that "it is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principal object, policies which assist the family by providing adequate resources and efficient means of support, both for bringing up children and for looking after the elderly, so as to avoid distancing the latter from the family unit and in order to strengthen relations between generations" (Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, n. 49).

This appeal for the family naturally extends to an appeal for the school, which families have a right to choose for their children. The Church will never tire of recalling this right of parents and the duty, therefore, of public authorities to make this right effective by encouraging and supporting authentic scholastic parity.

6. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope that in every field there may always be extensive collaboration between the Regional Administration and the ecclesiastical authorities at every level. I also hope that every believer may generously make his contribution to building a future on a truly human scale.

With all my heart I renew my best wishes to you and ask you to convey them to your families and fellow workers. On everyone I gladly invoke the blessing of the Lord.