



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE KNIGHTS OF INDUSTRY**

Saturday, 22 February 2003

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to welcome you at this special Audience which gives me the pleasant opportunity of meeting some qualified representatives of the Italian world of industry and business. I offer you all a cordial greeting, with a special thought for the President of the National Federation of the Knights of Industry, Mr Mario Federici, whom I thank for his courteous words on behalf of those present. Likewise, I greet Dr Biagio Agnes, President of the Commission for Communications and Images.

The Order of Merit for Industry is commonly recognized as one of the most prestigious decorations. It confers the title of "Knight of Industry" on people like you, distinguished for their business skills and above all for their impeccable moral standing in the various fields of production.

2. Thus, you represent not only a choice group of Italian businessmen, but also those who promote an integral and balanced growth of the national economy.

In this regard, allow me to suggest that you do your best to foster ethical and moral principles in your work.

In the Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, I recalled that "*collaboration in the development of the whole person and of every human being is in fact a duty of all towards all*" (n. 32). Precisely in your capacity as "Knights of Industry", you are the supporters and prime witnesses of this universal "duty". This has become a particularly urgent task because of the current evolution of society,

marked by the process of globalization, within which must be safeguarded the value of solidarity, the guarantee of access to resources, and the fair redistribution of profits.

3. Often in contemporary society the rules that production and the market impose seem to penalize the family. Therefore, one of your endeavours should be to ensure effective support for the family so that it will be increasingly respected as an active subject, also in the sector of production and the economy.

Furthermore, your Federation has taken care to train young people for years. I am thinking, in this regard, of the Lamaro-Pozzani University Residence for students doing degree courses in Rome. Continue to invest in the young, helping them to bridge the existing gap between academic education and the actual demands of production firms. In this way, by being firmly anchored to the heritage of human and Christian values, you will enable new generations to help make the working world more and more worthy of the human being.

I repeat to you my cordial thanks for today's visit, and I wish each of you success in your respective professional fields. Upon you, upon your families and upon your loved ones, I invoke the intercession of St Benedict of Norcia, Patron of the Knights of Industry, as I cordially bless you all.