



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL AND HEALTH COMMISSION
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT***

Thursday, 16 avril 1970

Mr. President, dear Sirs,

Is it necessary to tell you the joy We experience in welcoming the members of the Social and Health Commission of the European Parliament and the qualified representatives of the State Parliaments, members of the Council of Europe? You know the value We attach to this harmonious construction of our old Europe, for whose benefit you have been working persistently for more than twenty years. And the vast programme of your Commission is particularly dear to Us, since it concerns the ensemble of problems posed by the development of economics, social advancement, the right to work, the safeguard of health, in a word, the search for more humane conditions of life for our society.

We realize that the present situation requires the increasing vigilance of your services, at a time when the transition period of applying the Treaty of Rome is giving way to a more decisive phase of mutual exchanges and relations. The building up, of such a vast community is inscribed in a progress that arouses many hopes. We wish to share these hopes with confidence. This building up also entails very complex economic and social upheavals. It is important to control these upheavals, so that, eventually, this process of change remain, as We unceasingly repeat: "in the service of man, of every man and of all man" (Address to the I.L.O. in Geneva, June 10, 1969, no. 2)

Responsibilities are indeed many and shared, beginning with the most modest undertaking (for which difficult reconversions may have to be made with courage), to the great private or national partnerships, while passing through commercial and financial phases. But who better than you could see to it that the less favoured regions or sectors, the categories of persons both young and

old who are already in a difficult situation, and the workers themselves may not be victims of an unbalanced development? It seems to Us that it pertains to you to pursue the study of these questions, to alert public opinion and those responsible, but also to provide this effective protection of rights which you have so nobly proclaimed in the European Convention of the rights of man, and inscribed in the sphere of real possibility for all men to attain those conditions of life worthy of men and their families.

We have noticed with satisfaction that your objectives include full employment, the free circulation of manpower, a higher standard of life. The security of employment and the safeguard of health require constant effort. You must also strive without respite to satisfy these demands of prime importance, respect of persons, their integration in society, their responsible participation in the life of human communities, the support given to moral values, the help provided for this fundamental cell of social life which is the family unit, the effective protection against plagues which are becoming more menacing for our youth today – such as the dangerous traffic of drugs which must be checked at all costs and without delay – and finally, the possibility assured to all human groups to satisfy their most profound spiritual desires. If one of these elements is lacking, then man himself is to blame for failing in his vocation, and failing civilization which gradually disintegrates, corroded from within.

We also wish to tell you that We are especially concerned with the crucial problem of migrant people seeking work in the European Community. We know that they are legion and we can expect, without any doubt, to see this phenomenon become more accentuated. Can we say that these migrant people really find the help they need, and that the community to which they give their labour provides them in justice with the appropriate counterpart? Alarming reports reach Us on this subject that is so distressing. We Ourselves have tried to foster pastoral activity better adapted to the situation of these persons and their families. The social Charter of Europe contains provisions in article 19 of which We heartily approve. May these provisions be effectively applied, thanks to the collaboration of everyone, persons, communities and governments! What a pity it would be for a civilization that prides itself on progress to allow such a situation to worsen, one so iniquitous and dangerous for social peace! And what a stigma for a society penetrated with Christianity and initiated for so many centuries in Christian Justice and charity'

Yes, we have still much to do in order to assure the complete development of man. We cannot fail to repeat untiringly: "There can be no progress of man without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of solidarity" (*Populorum progressio*, no. 43). The Third World has its eyes fixed upon us. It struggles in the midst of innumerable difficulties to assure this development to which it also has a right for its conditions of life that are often very precarious. We ask you, Gentlemen, to heed Our cry of anguish (see *Populorum progressio*, no. 87): shall we know how to avoid the selfish inward withdrawal upon ourselves and, it must be said, on privileges and talents God has given us to be placed at the service of all our Brothers? Will the community we are building up be a motive of hope, a hand held out fraternally to the world of hunger and to the racial

or ideological antagonisms?

These questions are serious. But so much good will is at work, so much generosity is being shown, so many calls of the Holy Spirit are being heard, that We look to the future with confidence.

For your part, you expect to participate generously in the construction of the community, and We encourage you with all Our heart in this effort. This is the intention for which We invoke upon you, your families, your countries, and your work, the blessing of the Risen Christ.

* ORa n.18 p.3.