

THE DIGNITY OF WORK

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ENTREPRENEURS, AND
PROFESSIONALS

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Rome

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1.

THE ENTREPRENEUR AND MANAGER HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROMOTE NON-ECONOMIC VALUES¹

Common Good, Community of Persons, Dialogue and Cooperation, Economic Laws and Profits, Entrepreneurship, Human Development/Progress, Human Rights/Dignity, Humanization/ Dehumanization, Professional Training and Responsibility, Universal Destination of Goods, Work and the Worker.

My first thought for you today cannot but be one of esteem, approval, and encouragement for the significant presence that you, avoiding all ostentation, really make felt in society. Yours is a task in which I see the outlines of a real and proper civil and social “service”: a service for all those employed in the various fields of entrepreneurial activity. Of course, I am not able to go into the specifically technical characteristics of this activity; nor do you, I think, expect this of me, to whom the Lord has entrusted the pastoral office of indicating in all active forms of human life the supreme norm to reach eternal salvation.

Service of the Entrepreneur to Society

You consider it your duty also to try to meet the legitimate claims that come from the workers in your firms. The entrepreneur and managerial staff must do everything in their power to give a hearing, a due hearing, to the voice of the worker in their employment and to understand his legitimate demands for justice and fairness, overcoming all selfish temptations to make the economic factor a law unto itself. You know and wish to remind everyone that any lack of attention in this sector is culpable, any delay fatal. So many conflicts and antagonisms between workers and employers often have their roots in the unproductive soil of the refusal to listen, rejection of dialogue or undue postponement of it. Time spent meeting your employees personally, making your relations with them more human, and giving your firms a dimension more fit for man is not time wasted.

¹ This material was delivered as an address on November 24, 1979 in Rome, to the Christian Union of Entrepreneurs and Managers. The translation was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 24, 1979, p. 3.

Dehumanization Caused by “Production”

You are not unaware of the situation of so many factory workers who, if obliged to live fenced off, as it were, in an artificial structure, run the risk of feeling atrophied in their interior spontaneity. Machines, with their rigid automatism, are unrewarding and offer little satisfaction. The very relations between fellow workers, when they become depersonalized, cannot give the necessary comfort or support; and the machinery of production, distribution, and consumption often forces workers to live in a “standardized” way, without initiatives, without choices.

This level of dehumanization is reached when the scale of values is reversed and “productivism” becomes the only parameter of the industrial phenomenon, when the interior dimension of values is neglected, when the aim pursued is rather the perfection of the work than the perfection of the one who carries it out, giving preference in this way to the work as compared with the worker, the object as compared with the subject.

Respect for Human Rights

Here the discourse, which moreover is familiar to you, would tend to widen and would lead to speaking of the more general and universal question of human rights. But it would take us far away; so I will merely recall a short passage from my first Encyclical in which I affirmed that violation of fundamental human rights “can in no way be reconciled with any program that describes itself as ‘humanistic.’ And what social, economic, political, or cultural program could renounce this description?”²

Discovery of Superior Values

You are quite certain that it is only in this perspective that man—every man, whether he is an entrepreneur or executive, or a collaborator in the various sectors of the clerical class and workers—can find again his own deep meaning, thus being enabled to express his talents, collaborate, participate, and cooperate in the smooth operation of the enterprise, of which all are together collaborators and architects.

In this way the time allotted for work also recovers its important meaning, no less than that reserved for rest. They both allow man to discover himself again and at the same time those superior values of love and solidarity which allow him to reach complete development, freeing him of possible and ever imminent frustrations.

² *Redemptor hominis*, n. 17.

Created Goods Destined for All

Here are some indications, dear brothers, which may be useful to you in carrying out your not easy and responsible activity as entrepreneurs and executives. In conclusion, I am happy to make my own the wish that my great predecessor, Paul VI, addressed to you in his last discourse, left to you as a testament: “May your Christian testimony really contribute to spreading in the environment of enterprise the conviction that created goods are destined for all men so that they ‘would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.’³ May your example stimulate to a use of the income available that is not arbitrary or selfish; above all, may the approach you have taken to activity in the enterprise make the latter a community of persons, in which each one will feel appreciated in his own dignity, through responsible participation in the common work.”⁴

2.

PROFESSIONALS HAVE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THEIR SOCIETY AND THEIR CHURCH

Christian Witness/Mission, Common Good, Human Rights/Dignity, Professional Training/Responsibility, Service, Work and Prayer, Work and Society.

It is a joy for me to be able to greet the representatives of various professions from different parts of the Philippines: lawyers, doctors, nurses, engineers, educators, and members of other professions as well. Many of you are in positions of leadership or community service in the world, or lay leaders in the Church—you are people who have had the benefit of education and training. Permit me to go immediately to the heart of my message. It is this: Jesus Christ needs you for the building up of his Kingdom on earth. And the Church needs your special gifts, individually and collectively, to fulfill her mission of communicating Christ. Moreover, millions of

³ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 69.

⁴ Address to UCID, 12 February 1977.

your fellow men and women count on your services in order to live worthy lives in accordance with their human and Christian dignity.

You can see then that this meeting emphasizes the Church's great interest in you, and her desire to consult, to listen to, and to bring together all those who play a responsible part in the different fields of culture, and who exercise this responsibility in a Christian spirit of service. As representatives of professions that require greater educational attainment, and as creators and spreaders of culture, you share the Church's life and mission in a specific way.

This present meeting also emphasizes the need to go beyond an individualistic way of life. It is up to you to create ever more effective forms of association and collaboration between Catholics belonging to the professions in general and within each profession in particular, so that you can reflect upon your responsibilities as Christians in the light of faith and the Church's social teaching.

Personal and Social Effort

You are people who have reached your present positions as a result of hard and serious efforts, both personal and collective. Personal efforts, in the sense that the studies which you undertook in order to obtain your professional qualifications certainly demanded of you sacrifice, self-discipline, and intellectual rigor. It is only after you have reached the goal that you can properly appreciate the path that has led to it. One only reaps the fruits of what was well sown in the first place. But you are also the result of a great effort on the collective level. For your families and your nation have had to invest great material and spiritual resources in order to train and perfect ever more numerous builders of society, with a solid intellectual and technical education.

Calling to Serve Family and Society

You have a twofold calling. In the first place, you have to meet your personal needs and those of your families, through the exercise of your professions. In this you have sometimes experienced difficulties and frustrations and perhaps even discouragement. And yet you must not give up, knowing as you do that you are also called upon to make your contribution to the service of the common good. When things are going well, never shut yourselves off from society for the sake of making money, gaining power, or acquiring more knowledge, do not retreat into a position of privilege. May you put your talents to good use by serving ever more generously the needs and the aspirations of all your brothers and sisters in the Philippines. I am thinking in particular of that great number of people who, as a result of different circumstances—injustice, poverty, the need to make a bare living, the lack of cultural

stimulus—have been unable to attain the levels of university training and education that you have enjoyed.

Thus there is a close link between your demanding professional activities and the hard toil of the factory worker, the life of the worker on the land, the self-denial of the housewife in her home. This is why your sensitivity to human and Christian values will be the source of a creative energy that will help you to place your skills and your activity really and effectively at the service of your people, in response to their needs.

Social Goals

The complete development of the people of your country and the satisfaction of their spiritual and material needs call for much effort on your part; health-care for everyone; the defense of the sacred nature of human life and its promotion; the affirmation of the role of law in social and political relations if true order and real freedom are to be ensured; the building of worthy housing, properly adapted to every family and every individual; the education of youth by teaching directed towards the search for truth and its affirmation; the balanced and fruitful management of natural resources in order to ensure that everyone has a fair share of their benefits: all these are matters that concern you directly.

Apostolate of Professional Witness

It is often the case that the great percentage of the lay people who are zealously endeavoring as organized groups to permeate temporal affairs with the spirit of the Gospel and to build genuine Christian communities come mostly from non-professional groups. Thus an unfortunate impression is created that the leader/professional groups are not deeply interested in religious activities. In a country where the vast majority of people look up to the leaders and are easily encouraged by example, this apostolate of witness and example has great effectiveness and should be increasingly adopted. I sincerely hope that you can offer more and more of your talent and time in the service of the Church, in the lay apostolate of building up an authentic Christian community. Those, for example, who are recognized leaders in the field of health can do much to promote the Catholic principles regarding the intrinsic value of life in all its stages. Similarly, in the other professions, true Christian leadership is most effective.

Integrity, Love, and Personal Piety

May your efforts in this direction always be sustained by inflexible integrity of conduct, in the midst of the professional problems that you meet. But even more, may they be inspired by a desire to help those who are most in need, so that your service will be ruled by the criteria of justice and truth, of freedom and integrity, and be

crowned with love. Remember always that as Christians you are called to love in accordance with the principles that you have learned from Christ and his Church. You are called to live upright lives consistent with your Gospel principles.

Everyone is aware that the disciplines that you exercise call for constant renewal, in order that you may keep up with the rapid pace of new discoveries. Your capacity to adapt yourselves and to keep abreast of these developments will depend on your constant study of the basic principles underlying these disciplines. And may your Catholic faith also be constantly renewed; may it grow deeper and develop, though the radical dynamism of constant conversion to Christ, a conversion animated by a life lived according to the Gospel and in harmony with the Magisterium, nourished by a life of personal piety based upon prayer and the reception of the sacraments. May the testimony of your faith shine brightly in your professional lives, as well as in your personal and family lives.

Specialization versus Culture

You are aware of the present day risks involved in shutting oneself up within the narrow limits of a “specialization.” Such specializations can narrow one’s horizons, fragment one’s personal life and obscure the right nature of life in general. It is very clear that professional specialization must be considered within the wider setting of what is called general culture. It is in this context that I urge you to take as your fundamental points of reference the religious and ethical values that are the powerful promoters of culture, by shedding their light on man’s different problems and deepest aspirations, and by transforming his whole life and all his knowledge. Your professional experience will thus gain in depth, perspective and fruitfulness.

Life-Giving Wisdom

As Catholics with greater educational attainment and as representatives of the professions, you are called upon to show how your knowledge and the professional work blend with the wealth and resources of the culture of the people of the Philippines. That culture is rooted in the Christian tradition, and is therefore imbued with liberating and life-giving wisdom concerning the being and dignity of the human person, concerning the meaning of his life, his death and his final destiny.

You are not unaware of the situation of so many factory workers who, if obliged to live fenced off, as it were, in an artificial structure, run the risk of feeling atrophied in their interior spontaneity. Machines, with their rigid automatism, are unrewarding and offer little satisfaction. The very relations between fellow workers, when they become depersonalized, cannot give the necessary comfort or support; and the

machinery of production, distribution, and consumption often forces workers to live in a “standardized” way, without initiatives, without choices.

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3.

WORKERS POSSESS SPECIAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE LIFE OF THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

Christian Witness/Mission, Collaboration with God, Community of Persons, Dialogue and Cooperation, Human Development/Progress, Human Rights/Dignity, Meaning of Work, Professional Training/Responsibility, Service, Solidarity, Unemployment, Work and Society.

I would now like to direct my words to those members of the Church in Nigeria who are industrialists and workers, employers and employees. You are playing a vital role in the life of your nation, and people expect much of you. The Church too looks to you with great hope. She knows that you are able to give a powerful witness to the Gospel in the places where you work and among all those people associated with you in the service of humanity.

Human Work Shares in God’s Creative Activity

People who work enjoy a God-given dignity. God could have created everything on earth in its final form, but he decided differently. For God wants us to be associated with him in the improvement of the things he has made. By our work we share in God’s own creative activity. It was the same with Christ himself in his human nature. As I stated in my last encyclical: “The eloquence of the life of Christ is unequivocal: he belongs to the ‘working world,’ he has appreciation and respect for human work. It can indeed be said that he looks with love upon

human work and the different forms that it takes, seeing in each one of these forms a particular facet of man's likeness with God, the Creator and Father."⁵

Work and Society

Work is also man's way of helping his neighbor. One person's work affects another person, and together workers help to build up the whole of society. Those who work can say: when we work conscientiously, we make a real contribution towards a better world. Our work is an act of solidarity with our brothers and sisters.

The Rights and Responsibilities of Workers

All who work, whether they are single or married, well-skilled or not, have important rights and responsibilities. For example, each one has the right to proper pay and to reasonable working hours, including time for holidays. And work should never hinder the exercise of one's religious freedom. Work is for man, not man for work. So, work must not be allowed to dehumanize the person who does the work.

Between employers and employees there can sometimes arise cases of misunderstanding. These are to be resolved, not by violence, harsh words and antagonisms, but by mutual respect, willingness to listen and patient dialogue. Workers have the right to form unions and to ask for proper working conditions. But they also have the obligation to render loyal service, and employers have the right to receive the services for which they pay. Workers should not too readily have recourse to strikes, which generally cause much suffering to many; strikes remain extraordinary measures for the defense of human rights.

Resources for the Benefit of All

As employers and employees, as industrialists and workers, you can and must serve your country by vigorous efforts at economic development. Your country is richly gifted by God with agricultural and mineral resources. Use them to the best advantage of all, especially the poor, the orphans, the sick, the handicapped, the old, and those who are overtaken in the struggle for economic betterment. Do nothing to sabotage the economy of your own country. Nothing can replace diligent, efficient, and honest hard work on your part.

⁵ *Laborem exercens*, n. 26.

Unemployment

Some people are unemployed because they rush to the big cities and do not want to cultivate the land. Help is needed therefore to modernize agricultural methods and to install such facilities as water, electricity, and telephones in the rural areas, so that the young can be persuaded to stay on the land.

Some people are unemployed because they were not adequately trained or because their expectations of the type of work they want are not fulfilled. Competent and dedicated economists, government planners, and sociologists are needed to help solve these problems.

A Vital Task for Each

My words today are especially for you, industrialists and workers, employers and employees, all brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ. Each of you has a vital task to carry out in the mission of the Church, a task which you carry out in the toll and labor of your ordinary working lives. Side by side with your fellow workers, you share in the creative activity of God, you forge bonds of fraternity and friendship and, like the yeast of the Gospel, in quiet but effective ways you further the Kingdom of God.

Christian Mission

Through your work and through the holiness of life that comes from doing God's will, you are able to make a big contribution to the Church's mission of proclaiming the Good News to the whole world.

Where do you find the strength for this mission? What is the source of your inspiration? It is always Christ. Remember the words of the Gospel: "I am with you always."⁶ Yes, Christ is with us, especially in the Eucharist. And this morning, in his Sacrifice, Christ offers us and all our work to his Father in heaven. In this way he gives an even deeper value to all work. He gives a whole new meaning to our lives. In Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord and in his Eucharist we find the source of our strength and the cause of our joy.

⁶ Mt 28:20.

4.

THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE ENTAILS SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS FOR ITS WORKERS

Community of Persons, Fair Wage, Gospel of Work, Service, Work and the Worker.

In the exercise of its mission the Apostolic See has recourse to the valuable and precious work of the particular community made up of all those—men and women, priests, religious, and laity—who spend themselves in its departments and offices at the service of the universal Church.

To the members of this community there are assigned tasks and duties, each one of which has its own purpose and dignity either because of its subjective content and the value of the work itself, or because of the person who carries it out.

This concept of community applied to those who help the Bishop of Rome in his ministry as Pastor of the universal Church permits us first of all to indicate the unified character of the tasks, however different. All the persons, in fact, who are called to perform them participate really in the unique and unceasing activity of the Apostolic See, and therefore in that “anxiety for all the Churches”⁷ which from the earliest times inspired the service of the Apostles, and which today in large measure is the prerogative of St. Peter’s successors in the Roman See. It is very important that all those who are associated, in whatever way, with the activities of the Apostolic See should be aware of this specific character of their duties: an awareness indeed which has always been tradition and boast of those who wish to dedicate themselves to the noble service.

This consideration applies both to ecclesiasts and religious as well as the laity; it applies to those who occupy posts of high responsibility as well as office workers and those who carry out manual labor, to whom are assigned subsidiary functions. It regards both those assigned directly to the service of the Apostolic See, inasmuch as they work for those organisms which in their ensemble come under the name of the “Holy See,” and also those in the service of the Vatican City State, which is so closely linked with the Apostolic See.

In the recent encyclical *Laborem exercens* I recalled the principal truths of the “Gospel of Work”, and of the Catholic doctrine on human labor, always very much alive in the tradition of the Church. It is necessary that the life of the unique community which works under the shadow of Peter, in such immediate contact with the Apostolic See, should be in conformity with these truths. . . .

⁷ 2 Cor 11:28.

Responsibility and Loyalty

In the face of those who by their help express a solidarity with the Holy See and share to some extent in its pastoral care, responsibility and loyalty are manifested by scrupulous fidelity to all tasks and duties assigned as also by the zeal, industry and professionalism which should distinguish those who participate in the activities of the same Apostolic See. Besides, it is necessary to have always the right intention so as to administer prudently, by reason of their purpose, both the material goods which are offered, as well as what is acquired or preserved by means of such goods, including the safeguarding and improvement of the precious inheritance of the See of Peter.

In the use of the means destined for these purposes, the Apostolic See and those who directly collaborate with it should be distinguished not only by a spirit of thrift, but also by a readiness to bear always in mind the actual, limited financial resources of the Holy See and their origin. Obviously such interior attitudes will be quite connatural, by formation, in the minds of the religious and ecclesiastics: but they should not be wanting in those lay people who by free choice undertake to work for and with the Apostolic See.

Moreover, all those who have particular responsibilities in directing departments, office, and services of the Apostolic See, as well as those assigned to definite functions, will be able to unite this spirit of thrift with a constant commitment to render ever more effective the different activities, by means of labor organization based, on the one hand, on full respect for persons and for the valuable contribution that each one makes according to his own proper competence and function; and, on the other hand, on the use of appropriate structures and technical instruments so that the activity carried out may correspond in an ever better way to the needs of the service of the universal Church. Having recourse to everything learned from experience, science and technology, one will do one's best so that human and financial resources will be used with greater efficiency, by avoiding waste, the seeking of particular interests or of unjustified privileges, and by promoting at the same time good human relationships in every sector, and the true and just interests of the Apostolic See. . . .

Just Wage

Among those who work for the Apostolic See there are many ecclesiastics who, living in celibacy, have not the responsibilities of a family. They are due a remuneration proportionate to the tasks carried out and such as to ensure a fitting sustenance and to permit them to carry out the duties of their state, including also those responsibilities which they may have in certain cases to come to the help of their parents or other members of the family dependent upon them. Nor should there be overlooked the demands of their regular social relationships, in particular and above all, the obligation which, because of their evangelical vocation, is more binding for ecclesiastics and religious than for the laity.

Moreover, the remuneration of the lay workers of the Holy See should correspond to the

work done, at the same time bearing in mind the responsibility they have to support their families. In a spirit of deep concern and of justice one must then take into consideration what are their objective material needs and those of their families, including those pertaining to the education of the children and to suitable insurance for their old age, for the purpose of making due provision for them. The basic directives in this sector are to be found in the Catholic teaching of remuneration for work. These directives are immediately available in the examination of the experiences and programs of society and especially in those of Italian society to which, in fact, nearly all of the lay employees of the Apostolic See belong.

Associations for Workers

To promote such a spirit of concern and justice, on behalf of those who work for the Apostolic See, an important contribution can be made by associations of workers, such as the Association of the Vatican Lay Employees recently established. Similar organizations which assume a specific character within the Apostolic See constitute an initiative in conformity with the social doctrine of the Church, which sees in them one of the apt instruments to guarantee in a better way social justice in relations between worker and employer. However, it is not in accord with the social doctrine of the Church if this type of organization should become an instrument of out and out conflict or of class struggle; nor should they have a political character or serve, openly or secretly, the interests of a party or of others aiming at objectives of a very different nature.

I am confident that associations such as that already existing and above mentioned—inspired by the principles of the Church’s social teaching—will discharge a fruitful function in the community of workers in solidarity and harmony with the Apostolic See. I am also certain that in approaching the problems of work and in the development of constructive and continuous dialogue with the competent organs they will never fail to bear in mind in every case the special character of the Apostolic See as indicated in the first part of this letter.

In regard to all that has been herein set out your Eminence shall prepare the requisite executive documents to ensure, by means of suitable norms and structures, the promotion of a work community in accordance with the principles stated.

Personal Involvement in Work

In the encyclical *Laborem exercens* I mentioned that the worker’s personal dignity requires to be expressed in a particular relationship with the work entrusted to him.

This relationship—which can be objectively realized in different ways according to the kind of work undertaken—will be subjectively achieved when the worker, even though performing a work for which he is paid, nevertheless carries it out as if he were working “on his own.” Since we are speaking here of a work carried out in the context of the Apostolic See, and

therefore characterized by the fundamental specific nature above referred to, this relationship demands a deeply felt participation in that “anxiety for all the Churches” proper to the See of Peter.

The employees of the Holy See should, therefore, have a profound conviction that their work involves, above all, an ecclesial responsibility to live in a spirit of authentic faith and that the juridical-administrative aspects of the relationship with the Apostolic See are to be viewed in a special light.

The Second Vatican Council has offered us copious teachings on the way in which all Christians, ecclesiastical, religious and lay, can—and should—make this ecclesial concern their own.

It therefore seems necessary, especially for those who work for the Apostolic See, to review in depth, first of all, their personal awareness of the universal apostolic commitment of Christians and of that resulting from the specific vocation of each one: of the bishop, the priest, the religious, and the layman. Indeed, the answers to the present day difficulties in the field of human labor are to be sought in the sphere of social justice; but they are to be sought also in the area of the interior relationship with the work which each one is called upon to do. It seems evident that work—whatever it may be—which is carried out for the Holy See requires this in a very special way.

Mutual Respect

Over and above a deepened interior relationship, this work, in order to be advantageous and peaceful, requires mutual respect based upon human and Christian brotherhood, on the part of all and for all those who are awaiting it. Only when it is joined to such a brotherhood (that is, with the love of man in truth), can justice be manifested as real justice. We must seek to know “of what spirit we are.”⁸

These final questions, briefly referred to, cannot be adequately formulated in administrative-judicial terms. However, that does not exempt one from the search and effort necessary to render operative—within the ambit of the Apostolic See—that spirit of human work which comes from our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁸ Lk 9:55 (Vulgate).

5. ECONOMICS MUST ALWAYS BE DIRECTED TO THE GOOD OF THE PERSON

Community of Persons, Dialogue and Cooperation, Economic Laws and Profits, Human Development/Progress, Meaning of Work, Work and Society, Worker Participation, World Community.

To all I address my greetings, which are not only for this occasion, but come from sincere sentiments of deep consideration, since I well know of how great a part of the economic and social life of beloved Italy you are promoters and leaders. The degree of well-being which society enjoys today would be unthinkable without the dynamic figure of the business man, whose function consists of organizing human labor and the means of production so as to give rise to the goods and services necessary for the prosperity and progress of the community.

Dynamic Role of Business People

My affectionate thought is intended to embrace also the tradesmen and artisans, whose profession bears genuine human values, and who I know are represented here.

During my visits in Italy I have often met the workers, but this is the first time I have had the occasion to address my words to economic managers....

The occasion invites me to express to you several considerations on the specific activity which commits you in the various sectors of economic life and on the ethical values connected with enterprise.

Worker Participation

The starting point is offered to me by a particularly rich text of the Second Vatican Council. It is a part drawn from the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*: "In economic enterprises it is persons who work together, that is, free and independent human beings created to the image of God. Therefore the active participation of everyone in the running of an enterprise should be promoted. This participation should be exercised in appropriately determined ways. It should take into account each person's function, whether it be one of ownership, hiring, management, or labor. It should provide for the necessary unity of operations."⁹ Reflecting on this conciliar text, it appears immediately evident that there are two

⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 68.

fundamental ethical principles in which the Church's social thought regarding enterprise and its inner life is summarized: enterprise unites and associates human persons, who are treated as such; the work of the person requires his initiative and responsibility in the life of the same enterprise.

Community of Persons

In the encyclical *Mater et magistra* my predecessor of venerated memory, John XXIII, gave expression to this profound social and human ideal of enterprise: "One must aim," he wrote "that enterprise become a community of persons in the relationships, the functions, and the position of all its subjects."¹⁰

This concept of enterprise as a community of persons constitutes the source of the exacting ethical requirements of all those who, directly or indirectly, have to do with the social and economic life of the community. As you well know, in a truly human economy, enterprise cannot be identified only with the holders of capital, since it is fundamentally a community of persons characterized by the unity of labor, in which personal services and capital serve for the production of goods.

In my encyclical *Laborem exercens* I spoke of the conflict between capital and labor, which is experienced in industrialized countries which have already entered into the phase of post-industrial society through the development of high technologies. In several sectors, these technologies reduce the need for manual labor, accentuating, together with other factors, the serious phenomenon of unemployment, with the danger of subtracting from enterprise that profound ethical and social element of a community of persons which ought to be proper to it.

In this meeting with you, business men of various sectors of the economy and production in an industrialized country like Italy, a meeting which takes place during a difficult moment for the economy, I want to refer to several phenomena and problems which particularly affect the strengthening or the loss of the true ethical significance of enterprise.

Labor and Capital

In the context of production and its organization there meet, on the one hand, the business men or employers, both direct and indirect, and on the other, the workers with their talents, the possibilities to utilize them in the commitment of their services, and with their rights.

The Church faces the conflict between capital and labor by trying to defend man in his rights, denounce injustices, and contribute positively to the solution of problems.¹¹ The social

¹⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 78.

¹¹ *Laborem exercens*, n. 1.

doctrine which she proposes always orients itself more towards an organization of labor and the process of industrial production which responds fully to the true dignity of the human person, the principal and irreplaceable ethical value in economic activity, since the economy and production are for the good of man and not man for the accumulation of capital. An economy oriented solely to profit would not create a community of persons, nor would it generate a true social culture of responsible participation of all the subjects of enterprise.

In the encyclical *Laborem exercens*¹² I offered a means of solution to this risk, which is inspired by the ethical value of enterprise as a community of persons: “by associating labor with the ownership of capital, as far as possible, and by producing a wide range of intermediate bodies with economic, social, and cultural purposes”. This ethical response to the conflict does not permit that absolute autonomy and independence of capital precisely from which arise the alienation and violation of the dignity of the human person in enterprise.

Economics for the Sake of the Human Person

In order to be able to look confidently to the future of the world of work, it is necessary that the focal point of economic activity always be the interest for every human being: man and his values must always be the principle and aim of economics.

Even in moments of major crisis, the over-evaluation of profit can never be the criterion which governs enterprise’s choices. If one really wants to create a community of persons at work, it is necessary to keep in mind man in the concrete, and the tragedies, not only for the individual but also for the family, to which the recourse of dismissal would inexorably lead. Certainly this praxis, as much as it might be suggested by circumstances, does not favor the dignity of individuals and of the labor community as a whole.

To you illustrious representatives of private and public industry, agriculture, commerce, services, or artisan activity, I address my heartfelt appeal that the efforts in the positions of work be united and increased. These will allow young people to find work and will allow everyone to count on a secure means of support for themselves and their dear ones. The general situation of economic inflation and recession must never hinder seeking with every effort and with tenacious perseverance how to prevent both the causes which provoke the situation and the distressing human situations which result from it.

What are the ways which the Church proposes to create some enterprises that would be true communities of work in order to unite labor and capital? In the aforementioned encyclical I wrote that “the means of production cannot be possessed against labor, they cannot even be possessed for possession’s sake, because the only legitimate title to their possession—whether in the form of private ownership or in the form of public or collective ownership—is that they should serve labor.”¹³

¹² *Laborem exercens*, n. 14.

¹³ *Laborem exercens*, n. 14.

Joint Ownership of the Means of Labor

The proposals of the social teaching of the Church refer to the joint ownership of the means of labor, to the workers' participation in the management and in the profits of enterprises, to the so-called "share-holding" of labor, and other similar forms of participation. All the subjects of enterprise, just as all the living forces of society, must together seek the forms and the concrete structures to realize this primordial objective of collaboration between capital and labor in the just hierarchy of values. To this end, the Church does not propose uniform technical solutions, but encourages the search for solutions based on the dignity and capabilities of the workers and which at the same time respect the economic and social function of enterprise.

In this context the trade union also enters as a dynamic factor in the social organization. In an industrial society like the Italian one, not to mention Milan's, a city so vivacious and pulsating with activity, these organizations are indispensable and irreplaceable elements of social life and of the enterprise community, notwithstanding the influences which try to distort their true ethical value in the promotion of social justice or to obstruct the relations within the enterprise which conform most to the principle of the priority of the person over capital.

True Independence

Between the opposed philosophies—the one of sole economic competition and that of participation—the community enterprise demands that in the process of production and in the social relations one opts for the application of the second, participation, creating among all the members of enterprise a true and effective interdependence. Such a personal correlation between the direct and indirect leaders of enterprise and labor, sustained by the social policies of the state, is a necessary condition for bringing into harmony with one another members of the working world in enterprise, to promote the personal and community dynamism of the life of enterprise and to overcome conflicts.

International Social Justice

In saying this, my thought also extends to the field on international relations, where it is also necessary to be committed so that social justice can be affirmed. Last year, speaking at the inaugural session of the International Symposium on *Laborem exercens*, I observed: "New possibilities are sighted on the horizon, which can now no longer be conceived in restricted, uniquely national terms. If the problems which modern man must face cannot be understood except by realizing their world dimension, it will also be on the international scale, in many cases, that solutions will have to be sought. Rightly, therefore, a new international economic order is ever more frequently hoped for today. This order, overcoming the insufficient and

inadequate models of the past, will assure making a just sharing in the goods of creation, with particular sensitivity for peoples in the process of development.”¹⁴

The putting forth of this gigantic effort, as it is proposed by the Church’s social teaching, requires a high dose of availability to sincere dialogue and generosity in facing sacrifice, in every sector, in a way that the result is not so much the safeguarding of the interests of one or the other party, but rather a situation in which the worker is always more “man” in his work, and enterprise is the dynamic expression of the participation of all.

The Church’s dialogue with the modern world about ethico-community values is its way of being present, under the action of the Holy Spirit, in temporal realities. The Church recognizes the development of these values in the individual conscience and in interpersonal relationships of the man of today. Wherever there is dependence on complex economic factors and on technological development, true progress consists in the “interpersonal” community.

Overcoming an Individualistic Ethic

The action of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Eucharist, this divine Reality to which today’s Solemnity of Pentecost and the conclusion of the National Eucharistic Congress recall us, push us ahead toward overcoming every individualistic ethic; toward the constant return to the primary value of the human person, widening the horizons of love; toward the achievement of social justice in respect for the equality of all men; toward the development of the sense of responsibility, of common commitment and of participation.¹⁵

6. THE GOSPEL IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE MEANING OF WORK

Christian Witness/Mission, Dominion over the Earth, Gospel of Work, Human Rights/Dignity, Meaning of Work, Solidarity, Technology, Work and Family.

¹⁴ *Insegnamenti*, 1982, 1, p. 1096.

¹⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 25-29.

The experience of human work—the whole experience, past and present, of human work—has its beginning in the words uttered by the Creator to the first man and woman: “Be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth.”¹⁶ Even though the term “work” does not appear in these words, there is a clear reference in them to the reality of work. The Creator’s words establish work as the constant coefficient of human life in the prospect of earthly existence.

Subduing the Earth through Work

Work binds man with the earth, the world, its various resources. Work serves for the exploitation of these resources and for the transformation of the world from the point of view of man’s needs. This concept includes every sort of human work, whether physical or intellectual. It can be said that, beginning from the words contained in the Book of Genesis, humanity has begun its historical pilgrimage which links it with the earth and passes through the stages of the various civilizations and the successes achieved by man through work.

But at the same time, it is precisely to this man, bound through work to the earth and the visible world, that there are addressed, in the person of Abraham, the words: “Go from your country!” These are the words of the living God, which unveil before man’s eyes the prospect of the Kingdom of Heaven as the “promised land,” the symbol of man’s definitive destiny, which is God himself. These words can be accepted only through faith. And it is thus that they were received by Abraham and the whole of his spiritual offspring.

The dimension of work in man’s earthly vocation is linked with the dimension of the Kingdom of God by means of faith.

The Gospel of Work

Into both these dimensions enters Jesus of Nazareth: Jesus Christ, he in whom there culminates the promise made to Abraham. Christ proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, and at the same time he devotes to work at the side of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, the greater part of the years of his life.

Precisely tomorrow—19 March—is the annual Solemnity of Saint Joseph. This occasion impels us to read carefully this Gospel of work which Jesus proclaimed with the whole of his life, and especially with his hidden life at Nazareth, when he worked physically at the side of Joseph and Mary.

By this choice of his he made work an integral part of the work of the Redemption. Jesus

¹⁶ Gen 1:28.

Christ redeemed the world and humanity, definitively through the Cross and the Resurrection. But this does not take away from the fact that the whole of his earthly life from the moment of his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mother—and in particular his work—forms part of the whole of the redeeming mission for which he came into the world. Christ redeemed the world also through work.

In this light, human work is presented to us as redeemed, that is to say offered to us anew by God, the Creator and Father, in Jesus Christ. And at the same time the Gospel of work proclaims that every person who works in union with Christ shares in the Redemption which he accomplished. Work thus takes on a new value for man: it becomes something sacred.

The Church down the centuries has constantly proclaimed the Gospel of work. She has emphasized all its values: social, economic, cultural. In particular she has stressed the personal dignity of human work, and has taught her sons and daughters to share through work in the work of the Redemption of the world.

In this Jubilee Year of the Redemption, we are called to this in a particular way.

Work and Transfiguration

The Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, which the reading of the Gospel of Saint Matthew reminds us of in the liturgy of this Sunday of Lent, constitutes as it were a special day of that light which Jesus Christ casts upon man's life and immortality.

This is the summit towards which whole generations of the People of God are going on pilgrimage in faith. They are the generations of the people of work. And the three Apostles Peter, James, and John, who were permitted to share in what happened on Mount Tabor, were also men of work.

Through the Gospel of the Transfiguration Christ casts a special light upon life and upon the immortality in which man is to take part in the Kingdom of heaven. This Gospel speaks of the spiritual raising up of man in Jesus Christ. And at the same time, consider how we are to link this dimension of faith—the dimension of the Kingdom of God, in which the Gospel unfolds before us the prospect of immortality—with the dimension of work, which from the beginning is man's earthly vocation. This vocation links us to the world and closes with the prospect of death.

Work and Redemption

How are we to link these two dimensions: work and the Redemption, temporality and immortality?

Let us listen to the words of the Apostle Paul in the Letter to Timothy: “take your share of suffering for the Gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling . . . in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus.”¹⁷

Take part in the toil of the Gospel!

Precisely this is the call of the Holy Year of the Redemption, which responds to our pilgrimage of faith. It responds in a particular way to your pilgrimage of the extraordinary Jubilee today.

“Take your share of suffering for the Gospel.”

These two dimensions, the dimension of work and the dimension of faith, are not two separate things, any more than the dimension of the world and the dimension of the Kingdom of God.

They have been joined together in the eternal thought and will of the Creator. From the beginning, the path of faith passes through work, and the path of work through faith.

Jesus Christ—that beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased—has confirmed this with all his Gospel of work.

Faith and Work

So it is not true that the life of faith and hope in the Kingdom of God draw man away from work. The opposite is true: it is precisely this faith and hope that shed full light on human work, it is they that completely reveal its meaning and true value. It is the Gospel of work which fully restores his work to man. It alone enables man to realize himself as man, while with the work of his hands he transforms nature. It alone gives work its dignity. And, at the same time, the Gospel leads up to the summit of a “transfiguration” through which work shares in man’s immortality, becoming the path to his salvation.

Only when it is completely given back to man in Jesus Christ does work become a gift of God to the creature who must “subdue the earth.”¹⁸ And at the same time man’s very work is to become a dimension of that land promised to man in God, towards which are traveling the generations of the People of God sprung from Abraham’s faith.

¹⁷ 2 Tim 1:8-9.

¹⁸ Gen 1:28.

7.

GENESIS REVEALS THE MEANING OF WORK¹⁹

Christian Witness/Mission, Collaboration with God, Dignity of Work, Dominion over the Earth, Humanization/Dehumanization, Gospel of Work, Meaning of Work, St. Joseph, Technology, Universal Destination of Goods, Work and Family.

I greet in a special way all the world of labor, come not only from Venezuela but also from other countries of Latin America, because of the development of the industry of iron and steel, of aluminum and the hydroelectric industry, which has made this city one of the most important industrial nuclei of Venezuela. For this reason, the problem of work, of human work, occupies the center of this Eucharistic liturgy.

The Meaning of Work from Genesis

To speak of this problem obliges us to go back to the origin of the creation of man, as we have heard it in the book of Genesis. God is the creator of all things, and of man. This is the basis that lets us call man a person: because he is the image and likeness of God, created with intelligence, will and the power to dominate the earth. This distinguishes him from the rest of creation, because he is called further to communion with God through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Man works because he is like God. Among all the creatures of the world, only man works consciously. The animals are very active, but none works in the sense of human work. In fact, to work means to make the earth subject or dominate it, as we have read in the book of Genesis. Every work, independent of its particular characteristics, has this end. We may say that in God's plan, work is a domination using power and authority received from God, even when it has the most servile character in its human aspect. Work, every work, even when man administers and directs the work of others, in a word, every activity of man has this prerogative: physical work like your work in industry, in the countryside and in the ancillary services, intellectual work, artistic work, the work of pure and applied research, etc.

The book of Genesis says that the Creator has given all the earth, in a certain sense all the visible world, to man and has put it under his domination. As the image and likeness of God, man domesticates the earth, makes it his own by humanizing it in a responsible manner. At the

¹⁹ This material was delivered as a homily on January 29, 1985 in Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela to South American managers, professionals and workers. The translation was taken from *The Pope Speaks*, Summer 1984, pp. 130-135.

same time, God has given this world to man as a task for his work. The lower creatures have been put under man, and at the same time he has been given the resources contained in the created world, beginning from the visible riches which are found, so to speak, on the surface, and going as far as the riches hidden deeply in the structure of matter, which man's genius gradually discovers.

The book of Genesis speaks of dominion over all the earth, i.e., of its visible riches and of those it hides: "And God said, 'Let us make man according to our image, in our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, over the cattle, and over all the earth.'²⁰

Ethics Must Guide Technology

Man makes the earth subject, or dominates it, by means of work, the vocation which God has given him to collaborate in the work of creation. For this, to obtain personal fulfillment in work, man makes use of technology. We are witnesses today of the transformations caused by the sciences and technologies put into effect by man's intelligence. Nevertheless, although the technical instrument has a positive value, since it helps in the intelligent and responsible exercise of man's dominion over the earth, serious doubts and questions arise too: for technology in fact can become—and has become—alienating and manipulative; and finally we must reject, morally speaking, a certain ideology of technology, because it has imposed the primacy of matter over spirit, of things over the person, of technology over morality.

This dehumanizing and depersonalizing tendency explains why the Church does not tire of calling for a radical revision of the notions of progress and development: Pope Paul VI did this in his encyclical *Populorum progressio* almost twenty years ago now; and I have done this from the See of Peter and on my pastoral pilgrimages.

How long must man—and the men of the Third World—unjustly support the primacy of the economic processes over the inviolable human rights and, in particular, over the rights of the workers and of their families? It is here, in the inviolable and sacred human values and rights of the person, that it is necessary to think and define anew the notions of development and of progress.

The book of Genesis says that the Creator has united human work to the necessity of rest and of festival: "Then God, on the seventh day, brought to its close the work that he had done . . . and God blessed the seventh day and consecrated it."²¹ We see clearly in God's intention that work is for man, and not man for work; that work is for the realization of his humanity, of his vocation as person and son of God.

²⁰ Gen 2:26.

²¹ Gen 2:2-3.

Dignity of the Worker Guides the Economy and Organizational Structures

It is this principle of the dignity of the person of the worker that must determine the possible structures of the industrial systems and of every economic, political, and social process, unless we wish to continue with the terrifying imbalance of a minimal percentage that enjoys the wealth, alongside a high percentage that has nothing—especially in the countries of the Third World. The great differences of social position and of the privilege of income between the one group and the other are disproportionate. Work is a good for man, but a good that belongs to all, despite the effort it involves, and not just for a few.

This becomes clearer when we consider the fact that “God created man . . . male and female he created them,”²² thus beginning the family. “Be fruitful and multiply.”²³ Work is subordinate to the ends proper to man and to humanity, with the family always in a primary position as the interpersonal community of a man and a woman, called to transmit life to their children: to the new persons, created like them in the image and likeness of God. This is why the Church tirelessly affirms that work is for the family, and not the family for work.

I desire that this fundamental and eternal image of human work be imprinted in the conscience of all those who form or create a new, growing and prosperous milieu of work in this region of Venezuela.

The Doctrine of Creation Gives Us the Priority of Labor

The key idea of the whole encyclical *Laborem exercens* is the “basic problems of work,”²⁴ which leads to the affirmation that “at the very origin of human work lies the mystery of creation.”²⁵ In this perspective, and bearing in mind the “diverse experiences of history,” the problem of work appears as “a great reality . . . closely bound to man as to its proper subject and to his rational activity.”

Despite the effort and the endeavor that it demands, “work does not cease to be a good.” “This characteristic of human work, totally positive and creative, educative and meritorious, must be the basis of the evaluations and the decisions made today concerning work, including those that refer to the subjective rights of man.” And thus it is necessary to give first place constantly to “the principle of the priority of labor over capital.”²⁶

²² Gen 1:27.

²³ Gen 1:28.

²⁴ *Laborem exercens*, n. 11.

²⁵ *Laborem exercens*, n. 12.

²⁶ *Laborem exercens*, n. 12.

In the light of this principle it is necessary to study the “great conflict” which has been manifest, and continues to manifest itself, for two centuries now, between the “world of capital” and the “world of labor.”²⁷ Admitting that labor and capital are inseparable components of the process of production, it is absolutely necessary to bring the legitimate interests and aspirations into a permanent harmony in order to overcome the antagonism between the one and the other—a harmony between those who control the means of production and the workers. But “the just endeavors to assure the rights of the workers must always take into account the limits imposed by the general economic situation of the country. The demands of the trade unions may not turn into a kind of ‘egoism’ of the group or class, but must rather aim to correct—looking to the common good of the society as a whole—whatever is defective in the system of ownership of the means of production or in the manner of administering or controlling them.”²⁸

In the age of mechanized labor, like the work done here in Ciudad Guayana, man may not lose his privileged position given by the Creator: he is the subject of the work, not the slave of the machine, of technology. Technology, understood “as a whole set of instruments which man uses in his work, is undoubtedly man’s ally. It facilitates his work, perfects, accelerates and augments it. . . . However . . . technology can cease to be man’s ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work ‘supplants’ him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave.”²⁹

The Gospel of Work: The Redemption of Work

This is why the “gospel of work” must be brought into the concrete work of everyday, living the message of Jesus in work and knowing that Christ is close to the worker in his everyday life, that He belongs to the world of labor and that work too bears that sign of His Cross: suffering, effort, frustration, and pain. This too is the Church’s path: to be very close to the world of labor today.

This image of work, which the social teaching of the Church inherits in the Word of the living God, taking account always of the living experiences of the world of human work, has yet another central point of reference. In today’s Gospel, we have heard the words about “the son of the carpenter.”³⁰ Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, of the same Living God, of the same substance as the Father, became man as the Eternal Word. And as man, for the many years of

²⁷ *Laborem exercens*, n. 11.

²⁸ *Laborem exercens*, n. 20.

²⁹ *Laborem exercens*, n. 5.

³⁰ Mt 13:55.

His hidden life at Nazareth, He worked beside St. Joseph, whom men took to be His father. For this reason He was called “the son of the carpenter,” because Joseph was an artisan, a carpenter. Jesus of Nazareth, whose whole life was the messianic mission, spent many years in manual labor.

In this way He united human work to the work of the Redemption of the world, and also confirmed the dignity of man’s work which has its beginning in God. Workers, therefore, and especially manual workers, rightly look to St. Joseph and to the “son of the carpenter,” seeking in them the confirmation of the essential values of work and of this dignity which belongs to the man who works.

8. TOURISM FOSTERS SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, AND RELIGIOUS VALUES³¹

Human Rights/Dignity, Service, Solidarity, World Community, Work and Leisure.

There are many authentic human values which are encouraged and enhanced by tourism, and I wish to speak of some of these today. Yet, as I begin, I cannot overlook certain negative factors also connected with this phenomenon. I refer to those practices which demean the tourists themselves or serve to exploit the countries visited. What is important is that the basic dignity of every person be respected, both the dignity of the visitors and that of the people being visited.

Unifying the World

In considering the positive developments that have taken place during the last several decades, we can see in many cases how tourism has strengthened unity and fraternal solidarity between individuals and between nations. The world is becoming a global village in which people from different continents are made to feel like next-door neighbors. Modern transportation has removed many of the obstacles formerly imposed by geographical distances. It has enabled people to appreciate each other better and to engage in fruitful dialogue and mutual

³¹ This material was delivered as an address on November 14, 1985 in Rome, to members of the World Travel Congress of the American Society of Travel Agents. The text was taken from *The Pope Speaks*, Spring 1986, pp. 45-47.

exchange. In facilitating more authentic social relationships between individuals, tourism can help overcome many real prejudices, and foster new bonds of fraternity. In this sense, tourism can be a real force for world peace.

Spiritual and Religious Values

Through the recreation and leisure made possible by travel, people are restored and renewed, body and spirit. They return home to family and work with a new perspective and enthusiasm for life. The Church also attaches importance to the phenomenon of tourism because of the cultural enrichment that it offers. This corresponds to the deep longings of the human heart and can counterbalance certain dehumanizing tendencies in our highly technological society. The spirit is uplifted and refreshed in the contemplation of what is beautiful, whether it is embodied in the wonders of creation or expressed in works of art.

When tourism truly fosters this contemplation of beauty, it elevates and invigorates, and favors a dialogue with the Creator, for God is the source of all that is truly beautiful in nature as well as in the arts. Not only for Christians but for all who believe in God, the contemplation of beauty is a way to inner harmony and joy.

The Church likewise appreciates the complex reality of tourism as a means of furthering certain religious values. A clear example of this is the common practice of making a pilgrimage; that is, a journey to a sacred place or sanctuary for a religious motive. This practice is not restricted to any one people or religion. The spiritual value of going on pilgrimage has long been present in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and it is found to penetrate all the aspects of the pilgrim's life.

Christians and Service

The Christian message has always emphasized service of others. As travel agents and tour operators, you indeed are people who serve. You are so often in a position to offer counsel and assistance to others. You help those who routinely make business trips. You assist individuals and families during their vacations and holidays. Some of you are in a position to offer a helping hand to the aged and the handicapped. You may, at times, be able to give particular attention to young people, helping them to appreciate the wonderful opportunity of discovering different cultures and broadening their horizons. As you give assistance to travelers in their journeys, may you know that special joy that God grants to those who place themselves at the disposal of others. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude for all that your colleagues throughout the world have done for me during my various apostolic journeys.

By way of conclusion I wish you to know that I very much appreciate your efforts to cultivate human understanding and cultural enrichment through tourism. As people of good will strive to eliminate injustice and discrimination and seek to transform the world into a civilization of love, the encounters engendered among peoples through travel are not only a condition for the realization of peace but a positive contribution toward peace.

9. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ENTREPRENEURS IS TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY OF WORK³²

Collaboration with God, Entrepreneurship, Meaning of Work, Participation, Technology, Universal Destination of Goods.

The UCID [Union of Christian Executive Entrepreneurs] was born following the sad experience of the Second World War, at a singularly critical and delicate moment, not only for Italy but for all of Europe. It was a moment and a time of reconstruction and lively recovery, in which the new economic and political structures appeared and put down their roots. You recall how, on the social scene of the country at that time, models of life and ideologies which were to leave a very deep mark upon subsequent years presented and rapidly affirmed themselves.

At the center of that social dynamism and as a basic structure of economic rebirth, the business firm was proposed, and with it the determining role of the leaders of this form of work organization: your role as entrepreneurs and executives, assisted by the necessary collaborators; the technicians, administrators, researchers, study, and programming teams. In this way there was being realized the peaceful and organic—so to speak—socio-economic revolution of our times, still rapidly developing.

The Influence of the Gospel in the Business Enterprise

However, within that lively context there very quickly appeared the risk that the world of business enterprise might be reduced to a complex of structures resting exclusively on technical and economic values, thus losing contact not only with that higher sphere of values which is proper to human beings elevated to the dignity of children of God, but also with those values that belong to man by the simple fact of being man. It was then that, with an idea that was new and daring for those years but right, some of you—first in the major industrial centers of Genoa and Milan, then in other parts of Italy—asked yourselves what light could be shed upon the complex world of business enterprise by the teachings of the Gospel, and what might be, as a consequence, the ethical commitment which would impose itself upon the Christian conscience of the entrepreneurs and executives faced with the appeal of the day. They understood that with regard to these questions it was necessary to reflect and search not in an isolated but in a communitarian way, and from a specifically Christian point of view.

³² This material was delivered as an address on December 14, 1985 in Rome, to members of the Union of Christian Executive Entrepreneurs. The translation was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, January 13, 1986, p. 10.

Thus began the UCID, and with it a long journey of commitment and responsibility that was able constantly to nourish itself with a suitable catechesis, to which particularly prepared ecclesiastics made their contribution. . . . Those were not easy years; in a time of contrasts, in which opposing ideologies sought to take hold of the working world, the members of the UCID assumed the burden of overcoming forms of fatalism and rigidity by accepting a social discourse inspired by the teachings of the Gospel. Forty years later it is possible to comprehend the usefulness of such an effort, carried out in the heart of a society profoundly marked by the industrial phenomenon, and in which Catholic entrepreneurs and executives have occupied such an eminent position of orientation and formation in the light of Christian principles.

New Developments for Promoting Dignity of Workers

I wish to acknowledge this and congratulate you on the mission carried out by UCID; but I desire just as much to encourage you for the future. The future, as you know, is full of questions and acute problems for your world of business enterprise.

The fortieth anniversary of your association occurs, in fact, at a time of prelude to a new industrial phase, full of changes and innovations for the entire working world.

Yesterday's economic theories are showing their limitations in various respects. New proposals are being advanced in an attempt to formulate better relations between capital and labor, giving greater attention to the personal dignity of all who participate in the process of production. One notes the need to involve workers, too, in the process of the formation of capital and in the decisions which regard the firm, according to a "participatory" conception of the economy which opens upon exceptionally stimulating prospects for those who are interested in overcoming the various ills suffered by the world in which you find yourselves working.

Furthermore, the development of so-called "informatics," while it progressively lightens the load of manual labor, offers to each individual even greater possibilities for providing his own responsible contribution to the formation process of the firm's plan and to the working out of the choices through which the firm's life is expressed.

The Vocation of the Executive

Along with this growing importance of the individual component of that complex world which is the firm, a renewed appreciation of the role of the entrepreneur and of the executive is being affirmed very significantly. After years of open or subtle controversy, ever greater segments of the population are rediscovering the indispensable contribution that enterprising risk and executive professionalism are called to make to social progress. People are becoming aware of the fact that without you, entrepreneurs and executives, a modern organization of the business firm is unthinkable, nor is it possible to realize that constant adjustment among market needs,

worker expectations and the demands of correct business management upon which the health of the economic social system depends.

This situation has restored space and credibility to you in public opinion, entrepreneurs and executives, favoring attitudes of greater willingness to dialogue on the part of other social components. It is your task to correspond to the changed climate with a renewed sense of personal and communitarian responsibility, working in your respective areas with that spirit of service that has been inculcated in the members of the Union from the beginning.

Facing New Challenges

This will allow you, even at this time of profound structural changes, to assume that “active and forward-looking position in ordering the social aspect of the firms according to the requirements of Christian thought,” which is one of the institutional goals established in the Union’s statutes.³³

That the present moment in history marks a sort of epochal transition as far as the organization of work is concerned is a reality that is apparent to everyone. Automation is producing instruments capable of substituting for man in vast sectors hitherto covered by the direct activity of laborers, technicians, employees. On the other hand, this process—which tends to extend itself—while it offers tremendous experiences for the growth of the firm, also produces situations and problems which have not yet been resolved. In fact, the phenomenon which today disturbs the progress of the most thriving complexes is precisely that of growing unemployment. When it reaches certain proportions, it can become a true social calamity; but also, where it begins to swell, it shows itself to be a phenomenon that demands enormous expenditures, and it risks turning against the productive structures themselves, rendering vain the advantage realized with the new technologies. We must say sincerely that with regard to this point there is still a long road ahead of us, analogous to what took place when the birth of industry transformed the productive system.

The Fundamental Principle of Human Dignity

Once again the Church asks you to keep before you, in this context, the great principle of social justice, without which the entire economic system is exposed to the risk of dangerous degeneration. This principle, as you know, affirms that man is the subject of work, and the end of the whole economy is not profit, but the promotion of the person. In this regard, here is what Vatican Council II says: “Human work which is exercised in the production and exchange of goods or in the provision of economic services, surpasses all other elements of economic life,” because it “proceeds from the human person, who as it were impresses his seal on the things of

³³ Art. 5, b.

nature. Since economic activity is, for the most part, the fruit of the collaboration of many men, it is unjust and inhuman to organize and direct it in such a way that some of the workers are exploited.”³⁴ It is necessary, then, to provide for man, to guarantee the good of the person, of every person, even in the midst of the new technological revolution. As I affirmed in the encyclical *Laborem exercens*, “it is respect for the objective rights of the worker—every kind of worker: manual or intellectual, industrial or agricultural, etc.—that must constitute the adequate and fundamental criterion for shaping the whole economy, both on the level of the individual society and state and within the whole of the world economic policy and of the systems of international relationships that derive from it.”³⁵

Certainly, the Church does not claim to dictate the appropriate techniques for resolving these problems. Yet she feels that she cannot neglect the duty of recalling to your consciences—and to the consciences of all who have responsibility in these fields—the moral principles which must oversee every decision in such matters.

The Universal Destination of Material Goods

Fundamental among these is the principle that the goods of the universe have been created for all men in order that, through work, they might serve toward the complete development of all. From this universal destination of goods, private property receives its functions, its contents, and its limits. It is thus necessary that each individual, without letting himself be dominated by the craving to win greater power, open himself to dialogue and collaboration, with the competent participation of the organs of the political community as well.

Collaboration versus Exploitation

This theme of collaboration, which your statutes want “effective and equitable between the subjects of production,”³⁶ is one which today broadens out upon international horizons. In production, as in all work activities, interdependence among states becomes more multiform and intense from one day to the next. Often, these dependencies have been seen or interpreted as forms and occasions for exploitation, especially at the expense of the poorer populations. We must ask ourselves today if this reciprocal possibility and requirement of relations at the world level might not become instead, with the good will of all, a positive occasion for finding ways toward a greater use of human work forces, in a context not of competition but of collaboration between peoples. The task of entrepreneurs and executives in this regard will have to include the study of ways of illuminating, explaining, and inventing the strategies of action that may save

³⁴ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 67.

³⁵ *Laborem exercens*, n. 17.

³⁶ Art. 5, c.

man, orient choices, and find remedies for the possible negative aspects, in order to ensure that human beings always be the privileged users and conscious architects of development.

Free Response of Christian Lay People

Just as the rapid evolution of technology demands urgent changes and new projects for business firms, so the attention toward man requires just as much wisdom, inventiveness, and diligent generosity, so that the profound values upon which rests the moral order of the work culture are not inverted. The Church must put her trust in the conscientious responsibility of committed lay persons like yourselves in order to see her message realized, knowing well that you are not conditioned by almost mechanistic or fatalistic conceptions of economic development. Indeed, you are convinced that in the last analysis it is always the human person who directs the fortunes of development and measures their consequences. Economic and social questions always depend on choices and on the qualities of the persons who operate within them; on their good will as well as their ability and skill in dealing with problems—in a word, on their “responsibility.” The Church, therefore, is near to you; she is firmly convinced that you, like laborers and technicians, are a necessary component of the work structure, and she particularly trusts in you for the development and the improvement that you can contribute to the civilization of work.

I hope that you will be able to be true protagonists of hope for new times, the workers of positive, peaceful, and encouraging signs in the world of business enterprise, under the guidance of the fundamental inspiration of a lively and generous Christianity.

10. RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY SHOULD GOVERN ALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Common Good, Human Rights/Dignity, World Community.

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the Vatican today as members of the President’s Commission on Executive Exchange. I wish to congratulate you, for in being designated to this position you represent America’s most important business corporations and federal government agencies. You have a wealth of experience in both the private and public sectors of your nation’s life, and your mutual exchange provides a basis for more effective cooperation between business and the agencies of government.

I am happy that you have come to Rome in the course of this year's International Seminar, which is enabling you to meet business executives throughout Europe. It is my hope that your talks will be fruitful and provide you with a better understanding of the economic and social issues of the day.

Concern for the Welfare of All

I would encourage you always to look beyond the immediate concerns of your own country, and to make the welfare of the people of all nations a primary concern. The true dignity of every human person should be the basic ethical principle governing economic activity, since the economy and production are for the good of the human person and not vice versa.

May God grant you wisdom in your decisions, prudence in your words and actions, and concern for the dignity and equality of every individual, so that you will always render true service to humanity.

11. DIRECT YOUR ENERGIES TO THE WEALTH OF LOVE, NOT THE LOVE OF WEALTH³⁷

Christian Witness/Mission, Common Good, Economic Laws and Profits, Human Rights/Dignity, Humanization/Dehumanization, Private Property/Co-ownership, Service, Solidarity, Universal Destination of Goods.

In the course of my pastoral visit to your country, I am pleased to be able to meet you today, who are here as representatives of the world of enterprise, finance, economics, industry, and commerce. I am aware that you are a group of specially qualified persons, on whose important activity depends a considerable part of the economic life and, consequently, the welfare of many families.

³⁷ This material was delivered as an address on April 11, 1987 in Buenos Aires, to Argentinean entrepreneurs. The translation was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 18, 1987, p. 12.

Abundance Carries Special Duties and Gratitude

During these days in which I have traveled the length and breadth of your country, I have been able to see for myself how much God has blessed the Argentinean people. Hence, I would like to point out, before anything else, your first and foremost duty as persons on whom a good part of the abundant resources of this country depends, your duty to be grateful to God for the gifts he has placed in your hands.

It is important that you give thanks to God for the fertility of your fields, for the abundance of your livestock and many other natural resources and products of labor; above all, give thanks for the enterprising spirit and the capacity for work with which he has endowed you, so that, together with the many men and women who help in the realization of your enterprises and projects, you may serve in the vast and complex area of the production of goods and services. If you did not fulfill this first obligation of justice to God, the Father of all, neither would you be just with people, who are your brothers, nor could you bring to completion with a human and Christian spirit the great tasks in which you are daily engaged.

Economic Problems

I am also aware that, together with this abundance of resources, in recent years you have suffered economic and financial difficulties, which were sometimes critical. I am referring particularly to the serious problems concerning the foreign market for the products of your agricultural and livestock industries, as well as the repercussions of that situation on your economy. You have seen to what extent the progress of nations depends greatly on the international order, which demands the search for solutions expressive of true solidarity and cooperation among different peoples, and based on the consciousness of universal brotherhood.

It is in times of difficulty that your enterprising spirit is put to a test. At these times there is a need for greater effort and creativity, more sacrifice and determination not to abandon the search for ways to overcome such situations, but to use all the legitimate means at your disposal and make all the timely requests. As your activity always has a profound dimension of service to individuals and society and, in a special way, to your workers and their families, you can understand why I am encouraging you to be particularly magnanimous in those difficult circumstances. In fact, the survival and growth of your businesses or investments are of interest to the whole labor community which constitutes the enterprise, and to the whole society. For this reason, times of crisis suppose an economic, yet still more ethical challenge, which everyone must face, overcoming the selfish interests of individuals, groups or nations.

Respect for “Human Capital”

You know very well that the mission of the Church and of the Pope is not to give technical solutions to socio-economic problems. However, it is a part of their mission to enlighten the consciences of people so that their activities may be truly human; to help lead them to oppose any degradation of the person, so that he is not treated or does not see himself as a mere means of production. I understand that this message is particularly relevant for you under the present circumstances. In fact, it is intended to strengthen that human disposition which, as I said, is being put to the test among you today, as well as to evaluate the “human capital,” which is the most important source of the country’s riches.

In this same context, when I was speaking once to men and women who are engaged in business, enterprises, banking and commerce, I pointed out to them that “the degree of well-being that society enjoys today would have been impossible without the dynamic figure of the entrepreneur, whose function consists in organizing human labor and the means of production in order to produce goods and services.”³⁸ Without any doubt, your task is of the first order of society.

That reality is based on your having received the “inheritance” of a twofold patrimony, that is, the natural resources of the country and the fruits of the work of those who have preceded you.³⁹ Independently of who the present title-holders may be, this refers to the heritage of all the Argentines, which nobody should squander or misuse. These resources should be administered not only with technical competence and the capacity of initiative, but above all, with a well-formed Christian conscience, in all the demands of justice and charity inherent in your mission.

Entrepreneurship as Steward

The work of the entrepreneur can very well be compared to that of the steward, whom the Gospel speaks of, and from whom his Master asks an accounting of his work. These words are also addressed to you: “Draw me up an account of your stewardship” (Lk 16:2). Together with the Lord, people, your brothers, also ask you; they have also been called to have a share in the inheritance that God has placed, above all, in your hands. Therefore, feel the great moral responsibility that belongs to you. Consider that all those goods are jobs for so many men and women; they are the future of many families; they are the talents that you have to make productive for the good of the community.

The resources of capital, the goods which constitute the heritage of the country, regardless of who their title-holders may be, are a source of livelihood for the people; they “cannot be possessed against labor, they cannot even be possessed for possession’s sake, because

³⁸ Speech to the entrepreneurs of Milan, May 22, 1983.

³⁹ *Laborem exercens*, n. 13.

the only legitimate title to their possession . . . is that they should serve labor, and thus, by serving labor, that they should make possible the achievement of the first principle of this order, namely, the universal destination of goods and the right to common use of them.”⁴⁰ In this sense, you are to contribute to the increase of productive investments and jobs, the promotion of adequate forms of workers’ participation in the administration and uses of the enterprise, and the opening of opportunities that will allow more people to own property, as the basis of a just and solidary society.

You have in your hands an inheritance that should bear fruit for the good of all, and with the collaboration of all. You need much daring, which is also a consequence of true Christian prudence, to pass on to the next generations the heritage you have received, but improved both in quality and in quantity. Have the healthy pride of bequeathing a better future to your children, to the children of all Argentineans! However, it should be a future that will also include the example of your generous dedication to work.

Workers in a Common Task

In assuming that responsibility you have a strong element at your disposal, business. In it the owners, managers, employees, and workers work together in a common task. They are not enemies, but brothers and sisters. As the Second Vatican Council has said: “In business enterprises it is persons who associate together, that is, men who are free and autonomous, created in the image of God. Therefore, while taking into account the role of every person concerned, owners, employers, management, and employees, and without weakening the necessary executive unity, the active participation of everybody in administration is to be encouraged.”⁴¹

Business: A Human Vocation

Thus understood, businesses are legitimate expressions of freedom. They belong to the vocation of man, to his creative initiative, to the needs of the community and to the possibilities which the riches of creation entrusted to the human being offer.

To the solitary understanding of the business community is certainly joined the subsidiary function of the State, which should always see in it a faithful and necessary cooperation directed to the common good.

⁴⁰ *Laborem exercens*, n. 14.

⁴¹ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 68.

Promotion of the Common Good

In my meeting with the businessmen and laborers of Spain in Barcelona, I told them that “business is called to fulfill, under your influence, a social function, which is profoundly ethical: that of contributing to the perfection of man without discrimination, by creating conditions that will make it possible for work not only to develop the capacities of the person, but also at the same time to achieve an effective and reasonable production of goods and services, and will make the worker aware of working on something that is really his own.”⁴²

In this way, business is not only increasing material wealth and the great promoter of socio-economic development, but also the cause of personal progress which allows the creation of more humane living conditions. Its activity is inserted within the framework of the common good, which embraces “the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment.”⁴³

In synthesis, the fundamental law of all economic activities is the service of man, of all men and of the whole man, in his complete totality—material, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and religious. Consequently, profit should not only be used to increase capital, but it should also be destined, with a social sense, to the raising of the wages, providing social services and opportunities for technical training, research, and cultural promotion along the path of distributive justice.

A business that respects these social goals evidently requires a model of a deeply human entrepreneur, who is aware of his duties, honest, competent, and imbued with a profound social sense that makes him capable of rejecting the inclination to selfishness, of preferring the wealth of love to the love of wealth. We can speak of certain biblical similarity between the businessman and the Shepherd. It is an analogy.

Spiritual Problems Take Priority over Economic Ones

Beloved businessmen and women, we have already spoken about the highly complex and delicate environment in which you exercise your professional activity. Likewise, I also know the various kinds of difficulties that hinder your work, problems that are related to trade cycles, the sometimes difficult relations with your collaborators and workers, misunderstandings and accusations that sometimes make you their favorite target, economic concerns.

I insist that I am aware of the existence of these problems, which are often objectively most serious. However, permit me to remind you that the great concern, the great business affair that you must conduct in your life, is to conquer heaven, eternal life. The Lord says to

⁴² Discourse of November 7, 1982.

⁴³ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 74.

you: “What gain is it for a man to have won the whole world and to have lost or ruined his very self?”⁴⁴ This reference has to be made. This has to be made at least when the one who speaks to you is a Bishop a Pope, a Pastor, one who is responsible for a higher economy, the divine economy.

Never forget that the real dangers are the temptations that can lead your consciences and activity astray, namely, the insatiable thirst for profit, easy and immoral gains, waste, the temptation of power and pleasure, limitless ambitions, uncontrolled selfishness, dishonesty in business affairs, and injustice towards your workers.

Carefully watch yourselves for these snares. Never kneel before the golden calf! Never abandon the narrow path of business integrity, which alone, together with a worthily earned material well-being, can offer peace and serenity to you and your families.

Association with God as Co-Workers

Businessmen and women who are by majority Christians, you should be the architects of a more just, peaceful and fraternal society. Be men and women of dynamic ideas, creative initiatives, generous sacrifices, and a firm and sure hope. Remember, with the force of Christian love you will achieve important goals. Be encouraged to follow the example of the pioneers, who with nothing but their determination and faith in God, began what have developed into many of your big enterprises today; the people who, working alone, even with their bare hands and with practically no technical knowledge, laid the foundations of the future economic development of the country.

Observe solidarity among yourselves, as well as with the other sectors of the community, which share in your problems, your sacrifices and your hopes; and do this for the welfare of your beloved country.

Should there be anyone who has lost all hope in the construction of that more just society which we all desire, let us tell him forcefully yet lovingly that there is a system for the solution for the difficult problems that affect man. It is to return to God the Creator who through his Providence continues working in the great enterprise of the world; he has chosen you to be associated with his Providence as his co-workers.

Thus, no matter how great the difficulties, no matter how fruitless your efforts may seem, always go forward, accepting the challenge of the times; and beyond the confidence you have in your ability and efforts, remember the saying of the Lord: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these other things will be given you as well.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Lk 9:25.

⁴⁵ Mt 6:33.

God's Love Experienced in One's Work

Yes, even in the midst of difficulties, if you know how to give generously of yourselves for the common welfare through the exercise of your profession, if you show love for God and your brothers in the administration of your businesses, you will certainly experience God's love for you. As St. Paul writes, he "will provide you with all the seed you want and make the harvest of your good deeds a larger one."⁴⁶ God accepts human activity and rewards it with new blessings, with fruits that will be revealed not only in heaven, but also in your land.

I conclude by offering for your consideration other words of St. Paul in his first Letter to the Christians of Corinth, an important commercial port of his time; "Neither the planter nor the waterer matters; only God, who makes things grow."⁴⁷ Before the panorama of your extensive and fertile fields, it is easy to raise the heart to God in thanksgiving with the help of the Pauline text, recognizing that is he who makes things grow. The words of the Apostle also help us understand that you will not be able to attain the true progress of this great country of Argentina without God. He alone can give the true dimension to your work and your initiatives, the dimension which fosters authentic growth, expressed not only in economic terms, but above all in fruits of peace, concord, and human and Christian solidarity.

12.

THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA MUST BE DIRECTED TOWARDS THE COMMON GOOD⁴⁸

Christian Witness/Mission, Collaboration with God, Common Good, Human Rights/Dignity, Justice, Environment, Fair Wage, Materialism and Consumerism, Meaning of Work, Service, Solidarity.

⁴⁶ 2 Cor 9:10.

⁴⁷ 1 Cor 3:7.

⁴⁸ This material was delivered as an address on September 9, 1987 in Los Angeles, to executive leaders of the communications industry. The text was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 28, 1987, p. 1.

I am very pleased to be here with you. I would like to be able to greet each one of you personally and to express my regard for you individually. Although this is not possible, I wish to express my sincere respect for all the categories of the media that you represent—the film industry, the music and recording industry, radio, electronic news, television, and all those who inform the world through the written word—and for the diverse functions that you perform as workers, writers, editors, managers, and executives. I greet you in the full range of your activities, from the very visible to the relatively hidden.

My visit to Los Angeles, and indeed to the United States, would seem incomplete without this meeting, since you represent one of the most important American influences on the world today. You do this in every area of social communications and contribute thereby to the development of a mass popular culture. Humanity is profoundly influenced by what you do. Your activities affect communication itself: supplying information, influencing public opinion, offering entertainment. The consequences of these activities are numerous and diverse. You help your fellow citizens to enjoy leisure, to appreciate art, and to profit from culture. You often provide the stories they tell and the songs they sing. You give them news of current events, a vision of humanity and motives for hope. Yours is indeed a profound influence on society. Hundreds of millions of people see your films and television programs, listen to your voices, sing your songs and reflect your opinions. It is a fact that your smallest decisions can have global impact.

A Force for Great Good or Ill

Your work can be a force for great good or great evil. You yourselves know the dangers, as well as the splendid opportunities open to you. Communication products can be works of great beauty, revealing what is noble and uplifting in humanity and promoting what is just and fair and true. On the other hand communications can appeal to and promote what is debased in people: dehumanized sex through pornography or through a casual attitude towards sex and human life; greed through materialism and consumerism or irresponsible individualism; anger and vengefulness through violence or self-righteousness. All the media of popular culture which you represent can build or destroy, uplift or cast down. You have untold possibilities for good, ominous possibilities for destruction. It is the difference between death and life—the death or life of the spirit. And it is a matter of choice. The challenge of Moses to the people of Israel is applicable to all of us today: “I set before you life and death. Choose life.”⁴⁹

Responsibility to Communicate the Truth

There is something of great interest for all of us in the Constitution of the United States. The same amendment that guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press also

⁴⁹ Dt 30:19.

guarantees freedom of religious practice. The link between the art of human expression and the exercise of religion is profound. Social communications in fact provide an important first step in uniting human beings in mutual love, and this first step is also a step to God, “for God is love.”⁵⁰

Religious practice, for its part, fosters communication with God. It also fosters human communication, since human communication is part of that relationship of love for neighbor that is mandated in both the Old and New Testaments.

It is easy to see why the Church has recognized and taught that people have a right to communicate. Linked to this right is the right to information about which the Second Vatican Council speaks in these words: “Because of the progress of modern society and the increasing interdependence of its members, it is clear that information has become very useful and generally necessary . . . There exists therefore in human society a right to information on the subjects that are of concern to people.”⁵¹

In this way, then, the Church recognizes the need for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, just as does your constitution. But she goes further. Rights imply corresponding duties. The proper exercise of the right to information demands that the content of what is communicated be true and—within the limits set by justice and charity—complete.⁵² Your very profession invites you to reflect on this obligation to truth and its completeness. Included here is the obligation to avoid any manipulation of truth for any reason. This manipulation in fact takes place when certain issues are deliberately passed over in silence, in order that others may be unduly emphasized. It also occurs when information is altered or withheld so that society will be less able to resist the imposition of given ideology.

The obligation to truth and its completeness applies not only to the coverage of news, but to all your work. Truth and completeness should characterize the content of artistic expression and entertainment. You find a real meaning in your work when you exercise your role as collaborators of truth—collaborators of truth in the service of justice, fairness, and love.

Mass Communication Can Bring Solidarity

Your industry not only speaks to people and for people: it makes communication possible among them. In this we see how your activities transcend the categories of both rights and duties and confer upon you inestimable privileges. Just before joining you this afternoon, I met young people in several cities by using satellite links. For me this is just one example of how your industry can help foster communication and unite people in fraternal love. It is within your

⁵⁰ 1 Jn 4:8.

⁵¹ *Inter mirifica*, n. 5.

⁵² *Inter mirifica*, n. 5.

power to use technology to promote what is deeply human and to direct it to the work of peace. You have marvelous tools which others lack. They must be employed in the service of people's right to communicate.

In today's modern world there is always the danger of communication becoming exclusively one-way, depriving audiences of the opportunity to participate in the communication process. Should that happen with you, you would no longer be communicators in the full, human sense. The people themselves, the general public whom you serve, should not be excluded from having the opportunity for public dialogue.

In order to foster such a dialogue, you yourselves, as communicators, must listen as well as speak. You must seek to communicate with people, and not just speak to them. This involves learning about people's needs, being aware of their struggles, and presenting all forms of communications with the sensitivity that human dignity requires—your human dignity and theirs. This applies especially to all audio-visual programs.

Human Dignity in the Image of God

At the basis of all human rights is the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God.⁵³ A recognition of this human dignity is also a part of your civil tradition in the United States, and is expressed in the declaration of your nation's independence: all people are created equal in their human dignity and are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. All other rights too are rooted in human dignity, including the right to maintain one's privacy and not to be exploited in the intimacy of one's family.

The fundamental dignity of the human person is still more strongly proclaimed by the Church. She raises her voice on behalf of people everywhere, declaring the dignity of every human being, every man, woman, and child. None is excluded because all bear the image of God. Physical and mental handicaps, spiritual weaknesses, and human aberrations cannot obliterate the dignity of man. You will understand why the Church attaches such importance to this principle found on the first page of the Bible: it will later become the basis of the teaching of Jesus Christ as he says: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you."⁵⁴

Respect What is Human and Recognize What is Good

In particular, social communications must support human dignity because the world is constantly tempted to forget it. Whether in news or in drama, whether in song or in story, you

⁵³ Gen 1:27.

⁵⁴ Mt 7:12.

are challenged to respect what is human and to recognize what is good. Human beings must never be despised because of limitations, flaws, disorders, or even sins.

Twenty years ago, my predecessor Pope Paul VI, speaking to a gathering much like this one, told that creative community in Rome: “It is a fact that when, as writers and artists, you are able to reveal in the human condition, however lowly or sad it may be, a spark of goodness, at that very instant a glow of beauty pervades your whole work. We are not asking that you should play the part of moralists, but we are expressing confidence in your mysterious power of opening up the glorious regions of light that lie behind the mystery of human life.”⁵⁵

The World is at Your Mercy

As you do precisely this—open up the glorious regions of light that lie behind the mystery of human life—you must ask yourselves if what you communicate is consistent with the full measure of human dignity. How do the weakest and the most defenseless in society appear in your words and images: the most severely handicapped, the very old, foreigners and the undocumented, the unattractive and the lonely, the sick and the infirm? Whom do you depict as having—or not having—human worth?

Certainly your profession subjects you to a great measure of accountability—accountability to God, to the community and before the witness of history. And yet at times it seems that everything is left in your hands. Precisely because your responsibility is so great and your accountability to the community is not easily rendered juridically, society relies so much on your good will. In a sense the world is at your mercy. Errors in judgment, mistakes in evaluating the propriety and justice of what is transmitted, and wrong criteria in art can offend and wound consciences and human dignity. They can encroach on sacred fundamental rights. The confidence that the community has in you honors you deeply and challenges you mightily.

Respect Your Own Dignity

I would encourage you in yet another way; to respect also your own dignity. All that I have said about the dignity of human beings applies to you.

Daily cares oppress you in ways different from those arising in other kinds of work. Your industry reflects the fast pace of the news and changing tastes. It deals with vast amounts of money that bring with them their own problems. It places you under extreme pressure to be successful without telling you what “success” really is. Working constantly with images, you face the temptation of seeing them as reality. Seeking to satisfy the dreams of millions, you can become lost in a world of fantasy.

⁵⁵ Allocution of May 6, 1967.

At this point, you must cultivate the integrity consistent with your own human dignity. You are more important than success, more valuable than any budget. Do not let your work drive you blindly, for if your work enslaves you, you will soon enslave your art. Who you are and what you do are too important for that to happen. Do not let money be your sole concern, for it too is capable of enslaving art as well as souls. In your life there must also be room for your families and for leisure. You need time to rest and be recreated, for only in quiet can you absorb the peace of God.

You yourselves are called to what is noble and lofty in human living, and you must study the highest expressions of the human spirit. You have a great part in sharing the culture of this nation and the other nations. To you is entrusted an important portion of the vast heritage of the human race. In fulfilling your mission you must always be aware of how your activities affect the world community, how they serve the cause of universal solidarity.

Nobility of Communication

The Church wishes you to know that she is on your side. For a long time she has been a patron and defender of the arts; she has promoted the media and been in the forefront of the use of new technology. The first book for the printing press of Johannes Guttenberg, the inventor of movable type, was the inspired work of God, the Bible. Vatican Radio was established under the direction of the inventor of radio, Guglielmo Marconi.

Today, too, the Church stands ready to help you by her encouragement and to support you in all your worthy aims. She offers you her challenge and her praise. I pray that you will welcome that help and never be afraid to accept it.

Ladies and gentlemen of the communications industry; I have set before you the broad outlines of a choice for good within the framework of your profession. I ask you to choose the common good. It means honoring the dignity of every human being.

I am convinced that to a great extent we can share a common hope, rooted in a vision of the human race harmoniously united through communication. I am sure too that all of you, whether Christian or not, will permit me to allude to the great fascination that surrounds the mystery of the communicating word. For Christians, the communicating word is the explanation of all reality as expressed by Saint John: "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God."⁵⁶ And for all those who hold the Judeo-Christian tradition, the nobility of communication is linked to the wisdom of God and expressed in his loving revelation. Thus the Book of Deuteronomy records God's communication to Israel: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Jn 1:1.

⁵⁷ Dt 6:6.

Ladies and gentlemen, as communicators of the human word, you are the stewards and administrators of an immense spiritual power that belongs to the patrimony of mankind and is meant to enrich the whole of the human community. The challenge that opens up before you truly requires generosity, service, and love. I am sure that you will strive to meet it. And, as you do, I pray that you will experience in your own lives a deep satisfaction and joy. And may the peace of God dwell in your hearts.

13. THE VIRTUE OF SOLIDARITY IS IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESS LEADERS⁵⁸

Christian Witness/Mission, Collaboration with God, Common Good, Community of Persons, Dialogue and Cooperation, Humanization/Dehumanization, Solidarity.

It is a source of great joy and satisfaction for me to be able to share these moments of my visit in this beloved land of Bolivia with you, the men and women who in a very special way represent the culture and animating force behind so many of the activities that are such an important element in the development of your nation. These two sectors, so intimately related, are, I would say, complementary because the productive activity, which is a cultural expression, in itself—and for a Christian should be inspired by and for humanity—should create everything necessary to satisfy basic needs and to create the conditions that will promote all the human dimensions of every member of society.

In my travels I have always tried to give special emphasis to these encounters, since I am well aware of the important responsibilities that you bear in your society. I have not come here to speak with you about matters that are better left to you who are experts in the field. I come to you as pastor and as a brother, desirous of sharing with you our common patrimony of faith, to evaluate with you the enormous possibilities offered by the Christian message that is the inspiration for your work and for all your activities, and that is summed up as the Catholic social doctrine, which is simply a contemplation of humanity and the various ways people relate to one another in the world as seen in the light of revelation. This doctrine seeks to lead people to

⁵⁸ This material was delivered as an address on May 12, 1988 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to Bolivian intellectuals and business leaders. The translation was taken from *Origins*, May 26, 1988, p. 27.

respond, with the support also of rational reflection and of the human sciences, to their vocation as responsible builders of earthly society.⁵⁹

Responsible Leadership

Responsible builders! No one can doubt that this is a responsibility and task which faces each one of us; therefore, as we already know from experience, in a society activities and tasks should be distributed among all according to their individual abilities, with everyone without exception collaborating in the search for the common good. What is needed, then, is a functional division of labor that will not give rise to factions nor to discrimination of any kind, and which will lead to certain persons assuming leadership, not as an egotistical privilege, but in the full consciousness of the grave responsibility that coordinating human activity involves. These activities include: intelligent planning of the various phases of social development, investment programs, allocating sufficient funds—in other words, organizing the complex network of activities that indicates the existence of a society that is wise and efficiently organized in all its aspects.

Constructing a Just Society

The just society to which we all aspire is constructed day by day through the collaboration of all its members, fulfilling in this way the loving vocation with which God entrusted human beings when creating them. To construct a city, we might say, is to construct humanity; that is, taking the complete and integral human being as the measure and goal of all social activity, we create the necessary conditions so that each and every member of the human community can realize his full potential.

At this point we could ask ourselves, who truly builds humanity's dwelling place? The beautiful words of the psalmist come to my mind: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."⁶⁰ Yes, dear participants of this meeting, a true concern for the person, for his rights, respect for his inalienable and fundamental dignity, will never be completely expressed unless we open our hearts to this truth. Alone, we could never overcome the structures of injustice, the effects of sin, that constitute a real obstacle to growth and to the inspiration necessary to fulfill the most delicate task of guiding the destiny of your nation.

⁵⁹ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 1.

⁶⁰ Ps 127:1.

The Virtue of Solidarity

My latest encyclical, in which I wanted once again to emphasize the continued concern of the Church for social matters, is a call for solidarity on all levels. Being a political, cultural, or any kind of leader, far from excluding, demands the virtue of solidarity. The modern managerial concept is based on active participation while excluding every form of coercion or violation of human dignity. It requires a knowledge of what the real needs are as well as a burning desire to seek out the best paths leading to solutions of basic problems and to the establishment of a hierarchy in programming activities oriented toward the common good, without resorting to personal or corporate concessions and privileges or granting favors for selfish reasons. Solidarity requires the firm and persistent determination to work for the common good in such a way that we might all be truly responsible for everyone. This determination is based on the solid conviction that what is hindering full development is the desire for profit and the thirst for power, which are temptations that we must look out for and avoid, since many times they masquerade as worthy enterprises.⁶¹

The Bolivian people have a right to look to the future with hearts full of hope, because you are the repositories of right values that are a mixture of the indigenous traditions and new values that have shaped your identity as a nation throughout your history. The profoundly human nature of Bolivians, your well known hospitality, your firmness in overcoming a wild and often hostile natural environment, your great spirit of solidarity, your resistance in facing misfortune, your tenacious conservation of deep-rooted local customs, all enriched by the Christian values realized through the great work of evangelization whose fifth centenary we are getting ready to commemorate, form a foundation full of promise upon which to build the new society: a more stable Bolivia where all can live in security, strengthened by a more concrete hope for present and future generations. . . .

Faith Makes Ethical Demands

Those of you who are presently engaged in carrying out responsibilities . . . in the field of politics or economics, arts or letters, in this beloved Bolivia, must make every effort to integrate the values of your skills or of your assigned task with the truths of the faith that you inherited from your ancestors, and remain open without reservations or subterfuges, to dialogue and struggle, to participation in all those initiatives that might ennoble your people: in culture, in the development of its natural resources, in building a productive society in which everyone is united and everyone participates, where each person who works to improve it receives just compensation.

The common objective of the challenge facing you should be to serve the pressing needs of the Bolivian people and to prevent future deprivations from arising; to fight against poverty

⁶¹ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 38.

and hunger, unemployment, and ignorance; to convert potential natural resources with intelligence, application, responsibility, consistency, and honest leadership into valuable goods and services for Bolivians—for all Bolivians, without unjust differences offensive to their status as brothers and sisters, as children of the same Father and co-recipients of the gifts the Creator put into the hands of all people.

You must see that this is a service that faith imposes on you. You are called to this work by your fellow citizens, especially those who still suffer unjustly from neglect and poverty in the country, cities and suburbs, by the handicapped who are unable to work for a living, by those needing medical care, by the unemployed, by those not covered by adequate social and legal programs. And these brothers and sisters—even though it might be painful it must be said—make up the greater part of your population.

Raising the level of an entire society requires the infrastructures that make it possible; but it depends in a broad sense on the human qualities of educators and business leaders. Only by living and transmitting fully these moral and human values will you give Bolivia the binding element needed for a cohesive society and for the progress that will liberate it from the difficult socio-economic problems afflicting it and all the great Latin American family today. . . .

Community of Persons

What is needed is a cultural synthesis which is in perfect symbiosis with life, which invites participation in the dialogue between people and communities, and which uses all of its resources to harmonize the riches of its traditional cultures while remaining sensitive to modern needs; a culture which, using the roots of the land itself and its history as a starting point, seeks a common patriotic objective opening out toward new horizons and uniting all peoples in a fraternal embrace.

In this way we will be building a civilization of love, which calls for the virtue of solidarity that “helps us to see the ‘other’—whether a person, people or a nation—not just as some kind of instrument with a work capacity and physical strength at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our ‘neighbor,’ a ‘helper,’⁶² to be made a sharer on a par with ourselves in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.”⁶³

⁶² Gen 2:18-20.

⁶³ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 39.

14. BUSINESS AND CULTURE MUST COLLABORATE FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Christian Witness/Mission, Common Good, Economic Laws and Profits, Entrepreneurship, Human Development/Progress, Materialism and Consumerism, Solidarity, Spirituality, Worker Participation.

I would like my first words this evening to express my deep satisfaction in meeting you, the representatives of the business world and the world of culture. During my last visit to Peru you were present in my thoughts. Indeed, when in these lands I thanked God for the evangelization of the new world, I was thinking not only of the work of the missionaries but also of the men and women of culture who helped to shape the identity of these countries in the light of faith. Similarly, in talking about work, I was referring not only to the fundamental role of campesinos and workers, but also to the activities of business people who, through their commitment and dedication, organize production and foster development.

Both worlds are truly expressions of the same reality which can be understood as cultural development in the broadest terms.

Reflection on culture has a long history in the life and thinking of the Church. In fact, it has been a constant concern, which has been emphasized especially at crucial points in the history of humanity. Hence we are dealing with a central theme in the lives of people and of the Church.

Business, for its part, is an important aspect of the broad horizon of culture. All the more so in countries such as your own that are on the way to development, where economic differences are significant. As a result, there is a need for a great effort on the part of the community to reach an economic development sufficient to permit the building of a culture that is genuinely human and truly oriented towards God.

Culture and Christian Faith

The origins of the culture of your country are imbued with the Christian message. The history of Peru has been forged in the fire of faith which has both inspired and left its own mark on the life and customs of the country. In the light of this faith a new synthesis of a mixed culture developed, one which binds together the indigenous American heritage and the European contribution.

However, the endurance of structures which are the source of serious imbalances in society may give rise to a certain diffidence when the time comes to evaluate the underlying faith of the first evangelization, leading to the belief that either it had not penetrated with sufficient force in the criteria and decisions of the leaders of culture and society,⁶⁴ or it was weakened through the aggression of extraneous ideologies.

Individualist and Collectivist Ideologies

There are ideologies of an individualistic nature which do not remedy the unjust distribution of wealth, and regard the human person as a self-sufficient individual, inclined towards the satisfaction of his own interests in the enjoyment of earthly goods, without any consideration for the rights of others. On the other hand there are ideologies of collectivist persuasion, which deny the transcendent vocation of the human person and ascribe to him a destiny that is entirely of this world.⁶⁵

Faced by these concepts inconsistent with your traditional Christian culture, I would like to reiterate to you the invitation which I issued in Santo Domingo to all the peoples of Latin America. By being faithful to the values of human dignity and fraternal solidarity which the people of Peru have in their hearts, as a gospel imperative, resist the temptation of those who would have you forget your undeniable Christian vocation.⁶⁶

Culture Must Serve the Human Person

An interest in culture is first of all an interest in the human person and in the meaning of his existence. These were my words some years ago, addressed to UNESCO: "To create culture, it is necessary to consider, to its ultimate consequences and entirely, man as a particular and autonomous value, as the subject bearing the transcendency of the person. Man must be affirmed for himself, and not for any other motive or reason: solely for himself! What is more, man must be loved because he is man; love must be claimed for man by reason of the particular dignity he possesses."⁶⁷ Culture should be the space and means for making life ever more human,⁶⁸ and for allowing the person to live a life in conformity with the divine plan. Any culture which is not at the service of the human person is not a true culture.

⁶⁴ *Puebla*, n. 437.

⁶⁵ Instruction on Christian Freedom, n. 13.

⁶⁶ Address in Santo Domingo, October 12, 1984.

⁶⁷ Address to UNESCO, June 2, 1980.

⁶⁸ *Redemptor hominis*, n.14; *Gaudium et spes*, n. 38.

The Evangelization of Culture

The Church, therefore, makes a radical option for the person in proposing the evangelization of culture. This option, therefore, is for an integral and true humanism which raises the dignity of the person to the true and inalienable dimension of being a child of God. Christ reveals man to man himself.⁶⁹ He restores to him his proper grandeur and dignity, enabling him to rediscover the value of his humanity which had been obscured by sin. How great a value the person must possess in the eyes of God, to have merited so great a Redeemer!

Hence, the Church can never be at home with those “humanisms” which are limited to exclusively economic, biological or psychic viewpoints. The Christian understanding of life is always open to God’s love. In fidelity to this vocation, it tries to remain removed from the different ideologies in order to opt solely for the human person, starting from the liberating Christian message. “The Church”, as I pointed out in my recent encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, “does not propose economic and political systems or programs, nor does she show preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted, and provided she herself is allowed the room she needs to exercise her ministry in the world.”⁷⁰

The Truth about the Human Person

From the Christian point of view this humanistic option presupposes, like all options, the clear living out of a scale of values, since they are the mainstay of every society. Without values there is no real possibility of building a society that is truly human. They determine not only the meaning of personal life but also the policies and strategies of public life. A culture which has lost its foundation in the supreme values must necessarily turn against the person.

The great problems affecting culture today originate in the desire to separate public and private life from a true scale of values. No economic or political model will fully serve the common good if it is not based on the fundamental values which correspond to the truth about the human person, a “truth that is revealed to us in its fullness and depth in Christ.”⁷¹ Systems which raise economic concerns to the level of being the sole determining factor in society are destined, through their own internal dynamism, to turn against the human person.

What is certain is that only by looking to the moral and spiritual capacity of the human person will changes in culture, economy, and society occur that are truly at the service of the person. Indeed, sin which is at the root of unjust situations is, in its proper and primordial

⁶⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 22.

⁷⁰ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 41.

⁷¹ *Dives in misericordia*, n. I,2.

meaning, a voluntary act originating in the freedom of the person. For that reason, the rectitude of customs is a condition for the good health of the whole of society.⁷²

Evangelizing Culture Touches Every Aspect of the Person

Within the great mission of evangelization to which we are called as a Church, the evangelization of culture holds a special place.⁷³ It must reach every part of the person and his every manifestation, reaching even to the very root of his being, customs and traditions.⁷⁴

Evangelization demands the effort to move out to meet contemporary man, and searching with him for the ways of dialogue and closeness so that he may improve his condition. It means understanding the mentalities and attitudes of the modern world and bringing the light of the gospel to bear on them. It comes from a desire to reach every level of human life and to make it more worthy. Thus, added value is given to patterns of behavior, criteria of judgment, dominant values, the larger interests, habits, and customs which are characteristic of work, family, social, economic, and political life.

Faith Contributes to Authentic Culture

Evangelizing culture means fostering humanity in its deepest dimensions. In order to do that, it will sometimes be necessary to illuminate with the light of the gospel all that threatens the dignity of the human person. Moreover, faith helps to produce an authentic culture because it works towards a cultural synthesis within a balanced vision, which can be achieved only in terms of the clearer light which is found in faith. Faith gives the answer from the wisdom which is “ever old and ever new,” a wisdom which can help the person to adapt, on the basis of truth, the means to the end, projects to ideals, actions to moral guidelines. This will help to restore a balance of values in today’s world. To put it briefly, faith, far from being an obstacle, is an effective force in the creation of culture.

The evangelization of culture in Peru today and in the future must start from an historical premise: the first evangelization—which began almost five hundred years ago—shaped the historical and cultural identity of your people⁷⁵ and the Catholic cultural substrata, appealing particularly to heart and intuition, is expressed in the artistic heritage which is to be seen in your churches, your traditional paintings, your popular art. Frequently its expression in popular piety is very moving.

⁷² Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, n. 75.

⁷³ *Puebla*, n. 365ff.

⁷⁴ *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 20.

⁷⁵ *Puebla*, nn. 412, 445-446; Address to the bishops of CELAM in Santo Domingo, December 10, 1984.

Faith Becomes Culture

Even if it can be said that faith transcends culture because it finds its origin in God and not in the person, that does not mean that it is set apart from culture. There is an intimate bond between the gospel and human achievement: this bond helps to create culture.

In the same way that culture needs an integral and superior vision of the human person, faith needs to become culture, to be inculturated. “A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out.”⁷⁶

Christian Mission Should Not Be Reduced to a Political Program

Hence it is the mission of every Christian to be dedicated to the progressive inculturation of the Gospel message in the variety of cultural expressions that are so deeply rooted in your country. In all of these, faith has played a unifying role. In this way you too will contribute to this endeavor by strengthening the necessary cohesion and unity in your country.

It would not be out of place to draw your attention to the danger that may exist in the process of integrating faith and culture, namely the danger of temporalism as a reductionist criterion in relation to the Christian message. Among people who are earnestly looking for a greater practice of justice, where social and economic inequalities are great and living conditions for many are often subhuman, there is a frequent temptation to reduce the Church’s mission simply to the search for a temporal project or a political program. It is not hard to see where this would lead: the Christian message would be emptied of its essential content, the faith would be adulterated, and the Gospel would be betrayed.

Be Real Servants of the Common Good

This evening I would like to address in a special way all those who are involved in creating and promoting culture. Yours is a serious responsibility. Whether culture is fully at the service of mankind or turned against him will depend on the choices you make.

You, the thinkers, are the ones who, with a Christian understanding of life, will be able to show that science and faith are not opposed to one another. Indeed human intelligence, with the passage of the centuries, has uncovered more and more of the natural mysteries which have intrigued mankind and has taken the veil away from the logical interrelationship which exists

⁷⁶ Letter constituting the Pontifical Commission for Culture, May 20, 1982.

between theology and the temporal sciences. The grandeur of intellectual pursuit, as you well know, is seen in the search for the truth. That is how I spoke about it in my encyclical *Redemptor hominis*: “In this creative restlessness beats and pulsates what is most deeply human—the search for truth, the insatiable need for the good, the hunger for freedom, the nostalgia for the beautiful and the voice of conscience.”⁷⁷

What God asks of you is your service to the truth; it must be sought always in research institutes and taught at all times in centers of education; it must govern the work of the mass media, politics, economics, art in all its varied and rich expressions and it must resist all temptations to manipulate or be manipulated.

In this regard I would like to encourage the professionals in the area of information to be real servants of the common good, something that corresponds to their exalted occupation, one which I might even be so bold as to define as a mission of service to the community. This same society which you are called to serve begs you not to be carried away by vested interests or convenient arrangements in such a way that, by distorting the facts, the peace of the people is jeopardized and the essential values at the heart of democratic stability and constitutional order are undermined.

The Vocation of the Christian Manager is to Promote the Common Good

I would like to turn my attention to the role of the business person in the present-day world. The task before you, ladies and gentlemen, is to inject the world of work and economics with the ideals of the gospel, as is indicated in the Church’s social teaching. In carrying out that arduous task you need to remember that, in spite of the fundamental importance of the means, it is your attitudes which you must first of all examine in the light of faith, in order to change whatever needs to be changed, in accordance with the demands of that same faith.

On occasion your role has been badly interpreted or misunderstood, as if it were necessarily in opposition to workers or bound up with major foreign interests. It is sometimes forgotten that workers and managers together work for the achievement of a common objective. People often forget that you are people of initiative, who take risks, invent new methods, contribute to technological progress and contribute to your community with the fruits of your activities.

The business person who is a Christian cannot but see business as embracing the people who are to grow and be perfected through the work that they do. The ideal of the human and humanizing community must enlighten the concrete reality of business in the midst of a society that is open and pluralistic, by offering a more open and responsible creative force through which

⁷⁷ *Redemptor hominis*, n. 18.

effective and rational production of services and goods can be achieved.

Nonetheless, one cannot but lament the fact that there are a number of employers—in different areas of business—who do not respond to the gifts they have received and who appear to ignore their responsibility towards those who work in the company and towards the whole of society. Some seem to forget that they should indeed be the organizers of wealth, but always people who have the common good as their goal; they should not be carried away by the sole desire for what is useful to themselves alone.

Always remember that solidarity and subsidiarity are sure guides for the Christian development of business and society.⁷⁸ Business is not only a productive activity, but it is also intended to be a means in which the human person finds fulfillment through work.⁷⁹ Always remember that the worker has no capital but himself, and that for him, in the right understanding of business as ordered for the common good, work has priority.⁸⁰

The Problem of International Debt

In addressing employers I cannot avoid thinking of one of the most serious economic problems which plague so many nations in Latin America and particularly Peru.

As I said in my recent encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*: “the means intended for the development of peoples has turned instead into a brake upon development and indeed, in some cases, has even aggravated underdevelopment.”⁸¹

Indeed the flow of capital from one country to another, or the existence of public and private credit institutions for regions or nations who need it in order to set up infrastructures or to meet the basic necessities of the people, can be a sign of world solidarity. The criterion which will make this a reality is precisely the sense of solidarity with which it is done. On the part of the country which asks for credit, there must be a close examination of its real priorities, the cost of the loan in terms of finance and human resources, as well as the direct and indirect consequences of delays in payment or default of the debt. Otherwise, the mechanism of credit and loans may be an obstacle and a burden that is too heavy to bear.

As expressed in the document from the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax*, the problem of the international debt is not only a question of finances and economy, nor is it simply a

⁷⁸ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 32.

⁷⁹ *Laborem exercens*, n. 14.

⁸⁰ *Laborem exercens*, n. 2.

⁸¹ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 19.

political question. It is first of all an ethical and moral question. It must be considered and directed towards a solution in the light of the principle of solidarity among peoples and nations, rich and poor, developed and developing, so that no one drowns in the whirlpools of egoism, or profit at any price, or the narrow and strictly materialistic understanding of development.

The Responsibilities of Culture and Business

All of you, representatives of culture and business in this country, bear a great responsibility: to make Peru a place where people not only survive but where, most of all, the citizens are able to live in a way that respects their human dignity in both material and spiritual terms.

May your country continue to be in the future a place of welcome, where the fundamental rights of every person are respected, where selfishness and political antagonism are overcome, where exploitation, violence, and terrorism no longer leave a trail of oppression and death, where civil liberties and the creative power of Peruvians produce a greater cohesion in society as the pledge of a better future, when children and young people are no longer the innocent victims of vested interests, party enmities, destabilizing strategies. In short, a society in which Christian values reign supreme and where the noble ideal of solidarity is stronger than the fallen ideal of domination.⁸²

Mobilize the Living Resources of Your Nation

In order to carry out this difficult task, your country can count on a wealth of natural resources; but above all, it can count on the treasure of a people with profound Christian roots, whose qualities have to be re-enlivened and empowered to face the challenge of the present moment.

In that plan of solidarity we can all be hopeful about being able to mobilize the living resources of the nation. Both you and I are convinced that through the convergence of so many hearts in solidarity, it will be possible to produce a unified economic plan in which the public authority, without abdicating any of its responsibilities as leaders, may create the peace sufficient to allow private initiative to exercise its decisive influence on the economic development of the whole region.

Challenge to Business and Culture

As Christian employers your country expects much from you, especially in the present economic difficulties, which, even though they affect everybody, affect the poor most of all.

⁸² *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 46.

Work together with generous dedication and commitment to build an economy that is based on the proper hierarchy of values. Always be attentive to the demands of justice, mercy, and solidarity.

I wish to invite you to make an active contribution to the construction and defense of a more human culture. I urge you to become apostles and champions of a culture of life which will be realized in solidarity and development, will reconcile the various elements which appear to be divided, will be based on love and truth, and will show in its daily life the importance of goodness and beauty.

15. A JUST SOCIETY MUST BE FOUNDED UPON THE TRUTH

Christian Witness/Mission, Gospel of Work, Human Rights/Dignity, Professional Training/Responsibility, Solidarity, Work and Society.

Not only is the Church in communication with the world; faithful to the mission entrusted to her by the Founder, she is part of the world, of humanity, and thus walks side by side with humanity towards the final destiny which even now is beginning to take form. She is no enemy, as some might think, of authentic development at all levels of human life. On the contrary, she sees in the humanizing progress of the sciences, technology, and social organization manifestations of the original will of the Creator who gave to humanity the wonderful work of his hands for the happiness of all. We Christians are convinced that “the achievements of the human race are signs of God’s greatness.”⁸³ Even more, we recognize all that is good and noble in the workings of society. The Vatican Council teaches that “there is no question of the Christian message inhibiting men from building up the world or making them disinterested in the good of their fellows; on the contrary it is an incentive to do these very things.”⁸⁴ It encourages its members and all people of good will to take on their responsibilities and fulfill their tasks in society, keeping the common good always before their eyes. This presupposes the creation of the conditions necessary to allow all citizens, without exception, to develop fully as persons.

⁸³ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 34.

⁸⁴ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 34.

For this delicate task Christians find inspiration in the spirit of the gospel, lived out in the community of the Church under the guidance of the pastors.

The Role of Social Doctrine

The Church not only exhorts people to do good, but by her social doctrine she endeavors to enlighten people in order to direct them in their legitimate quest for happiness and in discovering the truth in the midst of the continuous proposals of dominant ideologies. The Christian message is marked by optimism and hope because it is based on man. Beginning from a healthy humanism it seeks to have its voice heard in the social, political, and economic institutions. The Church has confidence in people, and considers them to be the agents for the construction of society. However, we are talking here about people who are created in the image and likeness of the Creator and are called to give shape and form to that image in their personal and community lives; this is something which must always be kept in mind.

In all this we are talking about a realistic hope and not a utopian one; it is a hope conscious of the ever pernicious existence of sin, which is manifest also in structures which instead of serving the good of man, are turned against him. Precisely because of this we find an ambivalence which gives all reality the possibility of being an instrument to carry out God's plan or, on the contrary, to oppose it, as the result of selfishness and the presence of evil.

The Dignity of the Person

In the face of views which are individualistic or set in closed forms of materialism, this doctrine presents an ideal of a society that is united and built on the human person who is open to the transcendent.

The community is the place where man is fulfilled fully as a person in communion with others. The social nature of the human person, life in society, does not come from a "social agreement" as some might think, but rather from the very plan of God who at the beginning said: "It is not good that man should be alone."⁸⁵ For this reason we can state that "it should not be thought that reference to the truth about man and to the unconditioned requirement flowing from it has little impact on the solution of the daily and concrete problems raised by society. On the contrary every social relationship, in its ethical substance, consists precisely in the recognition of the dignity of every man, in recognizing that everyone is—really—a person. If the Christian, therefore, does not let himself be guided in this social activity by this view of man, although he will be able to work out partial and technical solutions of individual problems, he will not, in the last analysis, have made society more human, but only, at most, he will have made social organizations more efficient."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Gen 2:18.

⁸⁶ Address to meeting sponsored by the conference of Italian Bishops, October 31, 1981.

The Truth about Man is the Cornerstone of Society

The Pope wishes to set before you, the builders of society, the certainty that truth has to be the cornerstone, the solid foundation of the whole of society. Pope John XXIII in his great encyclical on peace has said to us: “A civic society is to be considered well-ordered, beneficial and in keeping with human dignity if it is grounded on truth. As the Apostle Paul exhorts us: ‘Away with falsehood then; let everyone speak out the truth to his neighbor; membership of the body binds us to one another.’⁸⁷ This will be accomplished when each one duly recognizes both his rights and his obligations towards others.”⁸⁸

Clearly, it is not a question of reflecting on the truth in a sterile fashion but of accepting it as the criterion which should influence people in their social relationships and everyday life. It falls to you, not exclusively but in great measure and with a particular responsibility, to make of the web of social, political and economic relations an area of truth in which all members of society may find the fullness of humanity in both its temporal and transcendent dimensions.

Public Morality

A society founded on truth is opposed to all forms of corruption. Hence your bishops, in carrying out their mission as pastors, have called for a “moral renewal of the nation”; indeed, when the public morality is in crisis it not only creates serious difficulties for the members of society, but it also puts their future salvation in jeopardy.

However, what is public morality but the principle which makes it possible in political society for the ideals of justice, peace, freedom, and participation to exist? On the contrary, where morality is absent, not only is the achievement of these ideals hindered but also confidence in the institutions is lost: thus passivism and the loss of social initiative are generated. In the Old Testament God called again and again for the practice of virtue, urging mankind to put all its effort into the achievement of the common good, in the knowledge that at the end it will be God himself who will bring the promise of the Kingdom to fulfillment. As we read in the Prophet Isaiah: “Observe what is right, do what is just; for my salvation is about to come, my justice about to be revealed.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Eph 4:25.

⁸⁸ *Pacem in terris*, n. 35.

⁸⁹ Is 56:1.

Conditions for True Democracy

Values such as peace, freedom, justice, and participation, practiced simultaneously and in solidarity, are essential requirements for an authentic democratic society, based on the free consent of all the citizens. Therefore it will not be possible to speak of true freedom, and much less of democracy, where there is no real participation of all citizens in the great decisions affecting the life and future of the nation. In an attitude of harmony and dialogue it is necessary to search for the forms of participation most suited to the expression of the deepest aspirations of all citizens. Order and peace imply a common endeavor; they demand effective respect for the inalienable rights of the human person. Peace is not compatible with the kind of society in which “a small group of individuals set up for their own exclusive advantage a principle of discrimination whereby the rights and even the lives of others are made dependent on the whim of those who are stronger.”⁹⁰

We can never lose sight, therefore, of the ethical impulse towards the absolute values, which do not depend on the juridical order or on popular consent. Hence, a true democracy can never in any way be opposed to the values which are seen as fundamental rights, “especially the right to life at every stage of its existence; the rights of the family, as the basic social community or cell of society; justice in employment relationships; the rights inherent in the life of the political community as such; the rights based on the transcendent vocation of the human being, beginning with the right of freedom to profess and practice one’s own religious belief.”⁹¹

Christians and Class Struggle

There is an opposition between the great good of living together in peace and those forces which try to sow violence and hatred as a dialectic solution of conflicts. Hence, the Christian lay person cannot forget that the struggle for justice must not be confused in any way with the program which sees in class struggle the only way to eliminate class injustices in society and to eliminate the classes themselves.”⁹²

Cultural Originality

Every society has the right to develop also those values which are the expression of the cultural originality of the people. Indeed, the people of Paraguay have enriched Christian culture with a particular way of living in solidarity, of showing hospitality, of displaying courage in the face of adversities. A singularly dramatic history has produced heroic virtues in difficult moments.

⁹⁰ Message for the World Day of Peace, 1982.

⁹¹ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 33.

⁹² *Laborem exercens*, n. 11.

Cultural Education

Therefore, education must follow a process of personalization, beginning from the subject himself; it should serve to introduce him to his own culture with all the values and traditions that are proper to it. It should help the person to be familiar with, and to understand, other cultures without in any way lessening his appreciation for what is his own and constitutes his identity.

Education means accompanying the person in his growth, in self-knowledge, in freedom and autonomy and in responsibility. Similarly, it will help him to be the agent of his own growth and to cooperate in the growth of the whole of society. There is a need to educate towards solidarity, by helping the person to overcome all forms of selfishness which generate poverty and take from the fabric of society and public morality.

Obligation to the Poor

Committing oneself to this solidarity presupposes that you will stand on the side of the most needy in your country, in order to defend their rights and hear their just claims. “Every individual is called upon to play his or her own part in this peaceful campaign, a campaign to be conducted by peaceful means in order to secure development in peace, in order to safeguard nature itself and the world about us.”⁹³ The situations of poverty which exist extensively in some countries, including your own, cry out to heaven; they are a hotbed of civil conflict. Therefore, as well as the call to dedicate all your energies and to use your position of leadership to foster integral development in your country for the benefit of all the citizens, I want to remind you of the call from your bishops for more constructive dialogue capable of building bridges of understanding out of mutual respect and freedom.

Christian Roots and Values

Let the words of the prophet ring once more in our ears: “cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan’s plea, defend the widow.”⁹⁴ In order to reach the desired objectives of justice and peace, freedom and integrity at all levels, you can count on the greatest wealth that a people may possess: the solid Christian values which have been part of your life and customs and which have given life to your nation on its passage through history.

⁹³ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 47.

⁹⁴ Is 1:16-17.

The Christian roots of your people, joined to the hope that comes from your human and spiritual resources, will make each one desire solidarity, generous commitment, mutual respect, ongoing dialogue. Thus Paraguay may advance more and more towards its objectives of progress through peace, concord and equality among its citizens, without any distinction of origin or social condition.

Trust In Mankind

The Church, in fidelity to the mission which she received from Christ, places her trust in mankind. Indeed, she believes that man can find the path. Even more, she believes that in Jesus we are already on the way to a new humanity, which will really be a community of brothers and sisters.

The Church, however, does not possess “technical solutions.” As I said in my last encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, she “does not propose economic and political systems or programs, nor does she show preference for one or the other, provided that human dignity is properly respected and promoted and provided that she herself is allowed the room she needs to exercise her ministry in the world.”⁹⁵

16.

FAITH GIVES A PERSPECTIVE TO ALL HUMAN ACTIVITY⁹⁶

Collaboration with God, Dominion over the Earth, Solidarity, World Community.

The Quaker Oats Company which you represent has a long tradition of growth, not only in corporate or economic terms, but also in regard to humanitarian efforts. During the Great depression of the 1930's, your Company showed genuine concern for those who were suffering hardship, and sought to provide for the financial stability of its many employees. In more recent years, the Quaker Oats Foundation has given generous support to various programs which seek to meet people's needs, including many which have been sponsored by Catholic institutions—churches, schools, hospitals and other agencies. I wish to express my appreciation of this clear sense of social solidarity.

⁹⁵ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 41.

⁹⁶ This material was delivered as an address on May 18, 1989 in Rome, to representatives of the Quaker Oats Company. The text was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 15, 1989, p. 4.

Faith and Business

This humanitarian service reminds us that business enterprises have an important role to play in society, and in fostering those spiritual and moral values which lie at its foundation. Those of you who are here today come from various Christian denominations and from Judaism. You are aware of the rich spiritual heritage which we have received from the Judeo-Christian tradition. That tradition calls us to reflect deeply upon the spiritual and moral aspects of all human activity. As men and women made in the image and likeness of God,⁹⁷ we have been called to a responsible stewardship over all creation. Our faith in God not only provides us with a source of personal strength and integrity, but also challenges us to cooperate with the Creator in the development of a better world. Faith forms our conscience, and makes us realize that any success, in business or elsewhere, is God's free gift. As the Psalmist once put it: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."⁹⁸

Faith thus gives us a perspective for all our activity. From our spiritual roots, too, come the strength and determination to confront the moral issues and crises of our time. Your work makes you sensitive to the tragic problem of world hunger, which in some places has reached catastrophic proportions. "In the modern world . . . starvation claims so many victims, especially among the very young."⁹⁹

The Interdependence of Individuals and Nations

The past record of the Quaker Oats Company in meeting many human needs is in itself a stimulus and a challenge to future efforts. The growing awareness of the interdependence that unites individuals and nations in our time requires "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is . . . to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."¹⁰⁰ None of us can close our eyes to the conditions of the poor. None of us can close our ears to the cry of those who are innocent victims of economic disasters.

Dear friends; for the blessings we have received from the hand of God, let us be thankful. And let us pray that we may continue to share all that we have received with those in need.

⁹⁷ Gen 1:26-27.

⁹⁸ Ps 127:1.

⁹⁹ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 44.

¹⁰⁰ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 38.

17.

BUSINESS PEOPLE SHOULD COLLABORATE IN TRANSFORMING SOCIETY ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN¹⁰¹

Collaboration with God, Common Good, Dialogue and Cooperation, Economic Laws and Profit, Environment, Fair Wage, Human Rights/Dignity, Justice, Materialism and Consumerism, Professional Training/Responsibility, Selfishness, Solidarity, Universal Destination of Goods, Work and Family, Work and Society.

On my apostolic journeys I have always been very interested in meeting men and women in the business world. For me these meetings are an occasion for communicating more directly and openly the spirit behind the papal magisterium in social questions, and for you it is an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding and acceptance of the church's social doctrine.

You truly occupy a most important place in the overall shape of society. Your decisions have a multiplier effect, and the impact especially on the fabric of society and the economy. That is why I place a great deal of hope in you.

From this beloved city of Durango we also feel united with those Mexican business people who have not been able to come to this meeting as they might have wished. Indeed, our gaze extends to all those responsible for economic activity in Latin America. The present circumstances, after the most recent events that took place at the close of last year, demand that we widen the framework of these considerations so as to encompass all the countries of Latin America, although with a variety of nuances.

Human Collaboration with the Divine Plan

The main thread of our reflection will get the figure of the businessperson and the role he or she is called to play in the present circumstances of your continent.

Beyond a technical consideration of this topic, we must contemplate human activity in the light of the collaboration with God that every human being is called to offer.¹⁰² Our world today, including Mexico and all of Latin America as well, must also become an echo of this divine design and collaborate with the Creator in the transformation of the world according to God's plan.

¹⁰¹ This material was delivered as an address on May 9, 1990 in Durango, Mexico, to members of the Durango business community. The translation was taken from *Origins*, May 24, 1990, p. 1.

¹⁰² *Laborem exercens*, n. 25.

Christ issues a call for the transformation of the world in every age. Christ makes his call from within the needs of each age. He calls out from the hungry and thirsty; out from those who have no house in which to dwell nor clothes to put on; out from the sick and those deprived of their legitimate freedom.¹⁰³ There he stands: in all of them can be recognized the voice and face of Christ.

Making itself an interpreter of this voice of the Lord, the Church continually awakens the conscience of its children and of all people of good will. It is precisely from this angle that I want to share with you some reflections of the figure and role of the Latin American businessperson. The voice of the Lord must reverberate powerfully in Latin America, for the existing deep social differences are there for all to see, and they constitute a huge challenge to those who bear notable responsibility in the socioeconomic sphere.

Need for a Critique of Liberal Capitalism

The events of recent history to which I referred earlier have been interpreted, sometimes superficially, as the triumph or failure of one system vis-à-vis another: namely, as the triumph of the liberal capitalist system. Particular interests would like to carry the analysis to the extreme of presenting the system they regard as the winner as the only path for our world on the basis of the experience of the setbacks suffered by contemporary socialism, and shunning the critical judgment required toward the effects liberal capitalism has produced in the countries of the so-called Third World, at least until the present.

It is not right to claim—as some seek to do—that the social doctrine of the church flatly condemns an economic theory. The truth is that, while respecting the proper autonomy of science, that teaching offers a judgment of the effects of such a theory's application in history, when the dignity of the person is in some fashion violated or jeopardized. In exercising its prophetic mission, the church wants to encourage critical reflection on social processes, always with a view toward overcoming situations that are not fully in accord with the goals traced by the Lord of creation. It would be wrong for the church to remain on the level of mere social critique. It is up to its members, who are experts in various fields of knowledge, to carry on the search for valid and lasting solutions that may guide human processes toward the ideals proposed by the revealed word.

Poverty's Causes Require Careful Analysis

In the specific case of Mexico, it must be acknowledged that despite the vast resources with which the Creator has endowed this country, the ideal of justice is still a long way off.

¹⁰³ Mt 25:31-46.

Alongside great wealth and lifestyles similar to those of the most prosperous countries—and sometimes even greater—stands the vast majority without even the most basic resources. In recent years the currency's buying power has declined more, and phenomena that reflect the way the economy is organized, like inflation, have produced painful effects on all levels. It must be repeated once more: it is always the weakest who suffer the worst consequences as they find themselves encased in a circle of increasing poverty. Why not cry out, with the Bible, that the misery of the weakest cries out to the Most High?¹⁰⁴

Foreign indebtedness has unquestionably worsened the situation, but it would be unjust to seek in it the only explanation, thereby casting the blame on factors weighing on the country from outside. The present situation is the result of systems and decisions that go back a long way; they are extremely complex and therefore require a careful analysis so as to try to detect the causes, understand the complicated mechanisms and creatively propose new strategies that can assure not only that there is bread on every table, but also that the conditions for the development of each and every one of the citizens are met.

Universal Destination of Goods

The search for real solutions assumes sacrifices on the part of all, but we must not forget that often it is the poor who are compelled to make sacrifices while the owners of great fortunes show no willingness to give up their privileges for the sake of others. The science of economics makes it clear that material goods are scarce and hence ought to be administered rationally. For his part, the Creator has destined the totality of the goods of creation for the benefit of all human beings, as revelation and Christian tradition marvelously instruct us. Hence it is that the excessive cornering of goods by some deprives the majority of those goods, and thus is accumulated a wealth that produces poverty. This principle is likewise applicable to the international community.

In its social teaching, the church has offered to humankind sufficient principles which a just economy would have to put into practice. The magisterium has fulfilled its mission, and now it is up to you, the experts, who are also members of the church, to make a serious effort to find real, courageous, practical solutions. New and complex situations inside and outside the cultural realms, demand with renewed vigor the activity of the lay faithful.¹⁰⁵ Your country, ladies and gentlemen, needs the collaboration of each and every one of you. Each one, in accordance with his or her specialty, is called to accept with humility and generosity the challenge posed by the present situation of injustice so as to dedicate the best of his or her experience and professional training in the service of a great, just and fraternal homeland, above and beyond any selfishness of class or party.

¹⁰⁴ Ex 22:22f.

¹⁰⁵ *Christifideles laici*, n. 3.

Solidarity

Work and economic activity constitute one of the most important burning issues in Latin America. And it is up to you to raise that issue deeply and seriously not by focusing only on the purely technical level, but keeping before you a much broader horizon, namely that of people. Latin America must move ahead with the work of its men and women, thanks to a current of real and effective solidarity.

Many efforts have been made on this continent so that it might be free and worthy of the human being. Do not allow that generosity of the past to be spoiled. Dire poverty causes slavery; it is itself a lack of freedom. Increasing impoverishment undermines human dignity and stability. Hence the future of the freedom and dignity of Latin America demands that a very special battle be waged starting now: not with weapons, but by means of the ingenuity and work of its peoples, and in that endeavor you occupy a prominent place.

Going Beyond Mere Humanitarianism

In view of these demands, there begins to take shape, as it were, a new characteristic profile of the business man or woman. I am referring especially to the attitude of service to the common good that ought to typify your activity. This is something that goes beyond mere humanitarianism, that is, a readiness to help out in occasional emergencies. Rather it consists of a constant readiness, of a way of conceiving one's function as a businessperson, of a style marking one's way of acting.

It is ultimately a matter of accepting responsibility for activities with all their consequences. Such responsibility revolves around three basic coordinates: the persons who make up business enterprises, society and the environment. You have in fact a grave responsibility toward the persons work in your companies.

Creation of Jobs and Fair Wages

Fortunately, there has been a growing awareness that human work cannot be viewed from the merely commercial perspective as a "commodity" that is bought and sold.¹⁰⁶ There is something inseparable from work of the utmost importance: the dignity of the person.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, do not forget that the only legitimate title for owning the means of production is that

¹⁰⁶ *Laborem exercens*, n. 7.

¹⁰⁷ *Laborem exercens*, n. 9.

they serve labor.¹⁰⁸ Hence, one of your greatest responsibilities must be that of creating jobs.

Closely connected with what has been said is the question of the just wage. As I have written in the encyclical *Laborem exercens*: “In the context of the present there is no more important way for securing a just relationship between the worker and the employer than that constituted by remuneration for work.”¹⁰⁹

Openness to Just Demands of the Common Good

A second aspect of the businessperson’s attitude of service is manifested in his or her responsibility toward society. It is well to recall that the progress of society ought to be oriented toward the common good of all citizens, that is, avoiding the temptation to turn the national community into something that is at the service of the particular interests of the company. In fact, it is not at all uncommon to observe that certain campaigns against birth or that promote consumer culture have their origin in the economic interests in the business or financial world. Unfortunately, examples of this sort of thing could be multiplied. On the contrary, what must characterize the businessperson is loyal openness to the just demands of the common good. That is a matter of wanting to make the company a factor of genuine growth in society.

In this same framework of considerations we must also highlight the economic solidarity that is so necessary in Latin America. The undeniable problems common to the whole continent can be confronted jointly.¹¹⁰ The isolation of the various economies serves none of the countries involved. Hence in economic projections the national perspective must be overcome so as to give life to a continental economic project capable of presenting itself as a valid interlocutor on the international and world scene. The scope of your vision discerns this demand, and there have been constant striving and the sense of responsibility crown these efforts with success.

Responsibility for the Environment

Even though it is mentioned last, responsibility toward the environment is not the least important. This issue affects humankind as a whole, and lately it has forced all to pay attention. In fact, the ecological deterioration of the environment has been increasing rapidly. Indeed, the way resources are exploited must change as soon as possible. In this respect we can observe forms of inertia that are dangerous today and are causing an understandable alarm.

¹⁰⁸ *Laborem exercens*, n. 14.

¹⁰⁹ *Laborem exercens*, n. 19.

¹¹⁰ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 45.

The preservation of environmental conditions for the sake of a better kind of development and human life in common is a moral duty and a new challenge to the creativity and responsibility of every businessperson.

The Danger of Consumerism in the Family

Before concluding I would like to briefly reflect on your responsibility toward yourselves and toward your families. It is true that many of you here present are motivated in your work by a sincere desire to serve. But it is equally true that a grave danger may be lying in wait for you: subjection to earthly goods, the all-consuming desire for profit—normally connected to the thirst for power—“at any price.”¹¹¹ When people succumb to this temptation, the result is a crass materialism and at the same time, the radical dissatisfaction that humans feel when they seek to quench their thirst for Infinite Good with material creatures.¹¹²

Moreover, it sometimes happens that this unchecked ambition also translates into a certain neglect of family life and the education of one’s children. If this is not recognized or is not resolved, there can be real crises in marriage and in the lives of children. Thus we have here a new call from Christ: Your family demands something more than the high living standard you may be able to provide; it demands your presence, your affection, your sincere interest as husband and father or as wife and mother.

Seek First the Kingdom of God

I want to conclude our meeting with the words of the Lord: “Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides.”¹¹³ The awareness of being builders of a more just, peaceful and fraternal society will more than repay your work and self-denial on behalf of those most in need.

I invoke over you, and over your families and co-workers, the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe, so that this great nation may advance toward a new stage of solidarity and justice, of honesty and welfare for all.

¹¹¹ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 37.

¹¹² *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 27.

¹¹³ Mt 6:33.

18. BUSINESS LEADERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROMOTE THE COMMON GOOD IN THE FACE OF SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES¹¹⁴

Common Good, Dignity of Work, Economic Laws and Profits, Entrepreneurship, Human Development/Progress, Human Rights/Dignity, Meaning of Work, Professional Training/Responsibility, Service, Solidarity, Unemployment.

Although it is one of Italy's largest industrial zones, Naples is among those in greatest crisis. The metropolitan area is largely in a fragile, disconnected and potentially worsening situation; its process of change is hindered by urban imbalances, lack of a transportation system and other essential public services. Unemployment tends to be concentrated within the least protected parts of the population: young people and women. Progress in the labor market is slowed down by the phenomenon of the workers who are technically employed, but in reality are stalled in the ranks of those who are laid off. In some cases people take recourse in "cottage industries" or in illegal employment or elements of the "shadow economy." I am also aware of the significant burden represented by child labor which stems from, among other reasons, the troublesome phenomenon of school truancy. To all these ills are added the spread of drugs and the renewed growth of organized violence.

Dare to be Creative

Ladies and Gentlemen, I feel personally involved in your concerns. I also know that these many social problems, including the worrisome growth of organized crime, certainly do not promote the growth of private enterprise. Be brave! Your task is precisely not to stop in the face of difficulties, but rather to dare, to be creative, for the sake of your legitimate profit and for the good of the entire society. Taking on the task of changing the current situation is the responsibility, first of all, of political leaders and administrators, who have the obligation to assure law and order in daily life, respect for rights and for the rules of society. Each person, however, must be ready to make his or her own contribution. I invite you, therefore, to mobilize your best resources to that purpose. Indeed, great responsibilities fall to you and they are all the more delicate to the extent that they affect the characteristics of the economic

¹¹⁴ This material was delivered as an address on November 11, 1990 in Naples, Italy, to Neapolitan business leaders. The translation was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 3, 1990, pp. 9-10.

development of Southern Italy and Naples. There can be no development without the involvement and the will of the local people. The development of Italy's south will take place when local energies are released. Your business leaders must be in the front lines in this effort.

I ask you, who possess an ancient industrial tradition, great intellect and professional skills, as can be seen by your many fellow citizens in other parts of Italy and the world, not to assume attitudes of resignation or discouragement, but rather to have the courage to risk going the extra mile for the good of the community. For this I particularly appeal to those who profess to be believers. No one can call himself or herself a Christian and remain indifferent in the face of a brother or sister in difficulty, in the face of growing unemployment, the lack of housing, or insecurity and injustice. Justice demands that; charity requires it. St John warns us: "One who has no love for the brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen."¹¹⁵

True Development Respects the Dignity of the Person

In order to be authentic and integral, society's development must first of all take into account respect for the dignity of the human person. The human person must never be sacrificed to it. However, development can be conceived and achieved to the detriment of the human person. The adequate solution to society's complex problems comes about first of all from the careful examination of their structural and functional causes. It comes about, besides, not only through technological and economic planning, but also, and above all, through a vigorous ethical and spiritual response. This demands each person's readiness to face matters and change them, and to honestly seek truth, serious professional preparedness and constant attention to the interests of the entire community. Ultimately that implies a different life style, one marked by service and solidarity. The inadequacies of the urban social system, which everyone complains about, are not accidental.

Mobilization of Conscience

Therefore we must be aware that the limitations of Naples and the South are the result of specific causes which require the involvement of the entire nation in opting for solidarity with a consistent development plan.

In their recent document *Development in Solidarity: the Italian Church and the South*, the Italian bishops, affirming the need for ethical openness on the part of the government and citizens, have called everyone to an authentic mobilization of consciences against the various pollutants within society, which in practice represent a denial of human dignity.

Mentioning the "moral question" in reference to the problems of the South is an invitation to reflect on the problems of labor and business and on the interaction of the economic and

¹¹⁵ 1 Jn 4:20.

ethical dimensions in light of the basic moral and spiritual values which the Church never ceases to propose.

Christian Conception of Work

The Christian concept of work has its roots in the biblical passage on creation, in God's original command: "Fill the earth and subdue it."¹¹⁶

The fact that the one who works is a person gives a specific ethical value to that activity, a value which is independent of the type of work done and the way in which it is done.

As the Second Vatican Council emphasizes, "by offering his or her work to God a person becomes associated with the redemptive work itself of Jesus Christ, who conferred an eminent dignity on labor when at Nazareth He worked with his own hands."¹¹⁷ If such is the dignity of work, one can better understand the negative consequences deriving from unemployment, from the other problems connected with it, and more generally, from the economic crisis which you are undergoing. Various social ills, such as crime, narcotics consumption and trafficking, corruption and organized violence, can flourish more easily precisely because of such situations. Therefore, we can never give them enough attention.

Authentic Development Possible Only through Solidarity

Among the many ways in which the Church feels the need to serve mankind, there is also her effort to enlighten it and reflect on the authentic meaning of development. Our current technological development certainly plays a positive role in the progress of human history. However, economic aspect alone cannot be considered without touching upon the intrinsic connection between authentic development and respect for the values of the person.

In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* I emphasized that authentic development can come about only through solidarity,¹¹⁸ that is "the firm and lasting determination to commit oneself to the common good."

Moral Criterion for Profits

The principle of solidarity is especially to be applied to the business world. There are moral criteria, not only economic ones, at the root of concrete business decisions. Among these,

¹¹⁶ Gen 1:28.

¹¹⁷ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 67.

¹¹⁸ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, nn. 38-40.

the primary one is certainly the principle of the common good. Pursuing profit per se is certainly not unjust if the profit is obtained by licit means and through proper management of the business. The search for a reasonable profit is also linked with the right of “economic initiative” which I defend in the aforementioned encyclical. Profit, however, cannot be held up as an absolute; it is only a working norm and is subordinate to the duties deriving from the principle of solidarity.

Today we are witnessing the growing separation between the economic and ethical dimensions when, instead, they should be in constant interaction.

In relation to events and phenomena within society, more and more we are seeing cases where the economy defends decisions which it makes without any reference to ethics.

The Church, which teaches the “truth about humankind,” knows the greatness of the person and his or her limitations as a creature. She knows the human thirst for well-being and the difficulties which cause people to become wrapped up in selfish interests. Likewise, she is quite aware that no system created by human beings, even though it may tend to improve continually, could ever achieve the fullness of justice upon this earth; in every system there will always be the need to correct aspects which work against human dignity and everybody’s participation and the common good.

Service and Solidarity

Dear Friends, I would like to conclude these reflections with a reference to an essential aspect of the Christian vocation, the aspect of “service,” which gives meaning and value to every human endeavor. The directions for the route to follow are given to us directly by Christ the Lord, who, although He was God, became a man among humans, “not to be served, but to serve.”¹¹⁹ The Church’s social doctrine, which has assimilated this supreme example, teaches that the person can fully find himself or herself only through generous self-giving.¹²⁰ The Church feels it is her duty to tell all of you that the most authentic force for development is love which is expressed in effective solidarity. It is in this light that I invite you to live and carry on with your activity.

¹¹⁹ Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45.

¹²⁰ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 24.

19.

EUROPEAN BUSINESS LEADERS SHOULD EMPLOY THE SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF EUROPE FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL¹²¹

Economic Laws and Profits, Human Development/Progress, Human Rights/Dignity, Materialism and Consumerism, Private Property/Co-ownership, Professional Training/Responsibility, Spirituality, Universal Destination of Goods.

As business leaders, you have come together to sign and publicize a Common Declaration in the framework of the so called “new European architecture,” the new situation of Europe resulting from the extraordinary political and institutional transformations which have been taking place internationally. When you met in Paris in December 1988 you stated that Europe was your “common enterprise” and you committed yourselves to greater cooperation in industry and to solidarity with the Governments and peoples of Europe in the construction of a better future for this continent. No approach to European development in prosperity and peace is possible without taking into account the specific contribution of business leaders to the present and future well-being of society.

Right of Economic Initiative and its Limits

The Church, in her social teaching, respects and defends the right of economic initiative as an expression of the subjective creativity of individuals and groups.¹²² But she emphasizes strongly that the economic process, which has a decisive influence on the life of almost every inhabitant of the earth, does not end in the production of wealth and material goods. Economic activity has an intrinsic social and moral function stemming from the inalienable dignity of the people involved and from the principle of the prior universal destination of goods.¹²³ Fortunately, a too narrow concept of development is giving way to a growing consciousness of the need to place economic growth at the service of the human, social, cultural and political advancement of peoples.

It is against the background of these general principles that I am pleased to note your concern to work for a development that improves standards of living in Europe, that respects the

¹²¹ This material was delivered as an address on December 6, 1990 in Rome, to Presidents of European Industrial Confederations. The translation was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 10, 1990, p. 2.

¹²² *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 15.

¹²³ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 42.

environment, that takes into account the special needs of less developed regions, that seeks to strengthen freedom and democracy, solidarity and peace. For this you intend to promote respect for the human aspects of all strategies and programs.

Role of the Spiritual and Cultural Dimensions of Europe

Europe is your common enterprise. You are therefore committed to the advancement of the single European market, with all that it entails of freedom of movement for people, capital and goods. But you are also aware that Europe is not merely or primarily an economic reality: it is above all a sublimely rich and intense cultural and spiritual experience. Likewise, European integration cannot be envisioned except as embracing the whole extension of the continent, which is determined by geography but even more so by the common religious heritage shared by its peoples, almost all of whom were baptized at one stage or another into the Christian faith.

Europe has the historical foundations and the spiritual and cultural resources necessary to build a way of life based on a humanism capable of correcting the materialistic and technological excesses present in other models of development. Business and industry will contribute to the achievement of this goal in the measure that they pursue objectives that are not merely economic but truly human. The members of your Association have a significant role to play in the growth of a society that takes full account of the spiritual dimension of its people, overcoming outdated contrasts between faith and science, between religion and “progress.” In this respect, the only worthy goal of all our efforts is the realization of a European continent which is ever more the expression of the highest values of the human spirit.

The Church has surely been the single most important factor in the formation of the “character” of Europe. From the Church’s two-thousand-year experience, allow me to draw the certain conclusion that no model of progress that does not take into account the ethical and moral dimensions of economic activity will succeed in winning the hearts of Europe’s peoples. The primacy of the “spiritual” in the widest sense of this term is a principle from which the peoples of Europe cannot depart without doing violence to their constitutive historical genesis and development.

Moreover, Europe has always been distinguished by its openness to the rest of the world. Without ulterior motives of domination, it now has a calling to be open to the so-called “South” of the world: those vast sectors of humanity which are in need of Europe’s help in order to be able to take charge of their own destiny. It is my hope that as business leaders you will always be convinced that poverty and the economic dependence of poorer nations is a moral category which makes serious ethical demands on the decisions to be made concerning the ownership and the use of the world’s wealth and goods.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 42.

Stewards of the World's Goods

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I appeal to you to work in your “common enterprise” for the well-being of the millions of human beings in Europe and elsewhere who stand to benefit from the realization of an authentically human development and progress. Recall the Gospel parable of the “faithful and wise steward” who gives the members of the household their portion of food at the proper time.¹²⁵ We are all administrators, not absolute owners, of the world that God has placed in our hands in order to make it bear fruit for the greatest benefit of all, and ultimately for His own glory. That glory is reflected not only in the beauty of nature but in the dignity of every human being, the image of God, and in the beauty of peace and brotherhood between all the members of the one human family. May He who is the Father of all give you the wisdom and courage to use your resources to direct your economic, civic and political influence towards the construction of a world of justice, peace, and solidarity.

20. CHRISTIAN MANAGERS HAVE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO OVERCOME ECONOMIC DIVISIONS¹²⁶

Economic Laws and Profits, Human Rights/Dignity, Justice, Professional Training/Responsibility, Solidarity, World Community.

You are not looking for an easy way out by bringing a Christian aspect to your jobs as business managers. You must reconcile demands which often can be considered contradictory: those which regard the rules and constraints of economic life, sometimes hard and even implacable; those which refer to technological development, which is always changing and costlier; and, on the other hand, those that proclaim the human and Christian conscience, those moral laws which are essential for our dignity as creatures made in the image of God. You find

¹²⁵ Lk 12:42-44.

¹²⁶ This material was delivered as an address on March 9, 1991 in Rome, to members of International Christian Union of Business Directors. The translation was taken from *The Pope Speaks*, September/October, 1991, pp. 261-3.

yourselves at the point of convergence of several series of laws—natural, technical, civil, and finally moral and evangelical.

Aim of a Just Society

I will go no further in this analysis. I simply want to encourage you in your common research which will aid you to respond better to what I may call your vocation. You must seek to act with the best professional skill in order to develop the best relations among all the personnel of your businesses, with those who use your products or services, with the various social agents or authorities responsible for the common good, all of this without ever losing sight of the primary objective, which is the construction of a just society in which the whole ensemble of people can achieve true social balance. I also note that business constitutes one of the intermediary bodies called to allow those who participate in its activity not only to earn a living for themselves and their family, but also to develop a large part of their capacities.

Social Problems

There will be no lack of obstacles on your path. Our era seems to multiply them in its own way. Throughout the world disparities in the treatment of workers between one place and another appear more clearly than ever before, and that affects the conditions of production and the market. Certain lucrative activities are in question which must be purified or renounced: I am thinking particularly of all that runs counter to human life and nature, from the exploitation of the environment to the development of weapons of unprecedented concept or the trafficking in drugs, which is also deadly; I am thinking too of the deviations and excesses of the many forms of financial manipulation. In order to safeguard the morality of the economic activity, you need a clear philosophy and a courageous desire to remain faithful to the enlightening demands of the word of God and the Church's teaching. I know that your movement is working in that direction and calls you ceaselessly to renew your adherence to Christ in the faith, to live as his disciples in love for mankind, and to effectively put it to work in all your activities.

“New Things”

You yourselves emphasize that 100 years after the “new things” which provided Leo XIII's reflections, our own age is in turn rich in “new things,” in political, social, economic, and technological changes.

A sizable part of the world is being liberated from ideological constraints of a collectivism which seriously fettered whole peoples, reduced their creativity, prevented their healthy social and economic development. You have weighed the importance of these changes. You know, from your own fields of study, that the passage to new forms of the market economy cannot come about, especially in central Europe, without the costly reconstruction of whole

economies, exacting a human price that is sometimes at the extremes of what is bearable.

International Support

You have wasted no time in taking the initiative to meet your counterparts in the nations faced with such changes in order to share with them the fruit of your experience, and offer them support so that they may organize and help one another in the area of Christian reflection on economic life, with a clear evaluation of what is at stake in their countries' accession to forms of enterprise and systems of exchange which are rather new to them. In this regard, I hope that the important discussions which you had with them in Prague last October will bear lasting results.

This reference to a new situation which more directly concerns Europe does not allow me to neglect the other parts of the world. UNIAPAC carries out part of its activity in the regional or continental context. It seems to me that this corresponds to the real needs, as I have said many times during the course of my pastoral visits. Even when we speak of the globalization of the economy, one cannot face its demands nor lessen its defects and injustices without holding trusting dialogues between partners who practice a constructive solidarity in their own region. Christians must work seriously among themselves and with all their partners so that some day we can overcome that division of the world which ranges from a first, second, third and even a fourth world! Can we accept that the terms North and South mean that people in one part enjoy more of the earth's goods while they are deprived of them in the other? On your level, do not stop acting against this unworthy division of the human family, far from the Creator's will and which, as you know well, constitutes an obstacle to social and international peace.

21.

CHRISTIAN BUSINESS LEADERS POSSESS A MISSION TO PROVIDE CHRISTIAN WITNESS¹²⁷

*Christian Witness/Mission, Community of Persons, Justice, Professional Training/
Responsibility, Service, Solidarity, Spirituality.*

¹²⁷ This material was delivered as an address on April 12, 1991 in Rome, to Italian Catholic business leaders. The translation was taken from *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 22, 1991, pp. 2,5.

I thank you for your visit and bid you a cordial welcome. Your association, which takes its inspiration from the perennial Gospel values, has its aim to promote in industry and labor a climate of true solidarity in order to stimulate an effective, just collaboration among all who participate in the production process. Spreading and fulfilling the principles of the Church's social doctrine, you want to put the Christian concept of work into practice. I heartily encourage you to work always with expertise and responsibility. I thank the president of your association who expressed your sentiments to me and interpreted your hopes and intentions.

New Conditions

The encyclical *Rerum novarum* faced with clarity the "conditions of the workers" which were, as you know, rather precarious at that time, not infrequently lacking legal and juridical protection and subject to pernicious forms of exploitation and abuse.

Fortunately times have changed. Social evolution has also affected the world of labor, and today business is more sensitive to the just demands of workers, overcoming the mentality of the absolute and unlimited profit which was dominant at that time. You are business leaders, and Catholic at that. Your attitude and behavior in regard to the conditions of the workers in your businesses cannot help but be inspired by the Church's social Magisterium.

Business Is a Community of Persons

In the light of Christian social doctrine today a business is understood as a "community of persons" who work together to produce a service to offer society.

Indeed, it is a matter of a productive entity whose foundation and development must deal with the complex rules of the economy. You are quite aware of this, as you also know the demands, or rather the urgent needs, that it has of investment, technological renewal, and continuous links with financial agencies.

Managers Need Spiritual Virtues

You are called to respond through your operations to the shareholders, employees, and workers and, in a certain sense, to all of society. An executive, a manager, an assistant administrator, must have good technical and administrative training. They should have broad natural abilities and professional skill. In reality, they should have authentic human and spiritual virtues.

Therefore, even if a business is an economic entity, even if it is one of the things that are essential for an area's prosperity, it cannot be reduced to that alone. Inasmuch as it is a community of persons, it is basically a human structure whose activity and economic and

technological involvement must be inspired by and oriented to the ethical and moral values of justice and social solidarity.

Justice

First of all, *justice*: justice in regard to your own workers, and in regard to the society to which are offered goods and services which can be truly useful according to a hierarchy of priorities which are themselves enlightened by criteria of the moral order.

Social Solidarity

At justice's side there is *social solidarity* which urges economic workers not to look on the company as an unlimited resource to exploit for their own good. Solidarity, furthermore, is not limited to the immediate context in which the business is located. It is rather a constant reminder of a broader vision which looks for that interdependence which today characterizes and defines human relationships, especially economic ones.¹²⁸ It is quite fitting that the congress you are holding is devoting a great deal of its study to those aspects and problems.

Justice and solidarity invite us to consider the use of natural resources and commit us to a responsible protection of the environment. Indeed, it is necessary, in the name of justice and solidarity, to take into close consideration the quality of the habitat and life, both within and around every productive entity.

Professional Tasks for Christians

These are some highlights and observations upon which you, especially as Catholic business leaders, have taken the opportunity to reflect. You must often make decisions which affect the company's economic progress, and therefore its morality and solidarity. Therefore, besides your managerial and entrepreneurial ability, you must also have a profound knowledge of your function, which is enlightened by the supreme values which must guide the Christian's professional activity.

Prayer and Holiness

The task which has been entrusted to you is certainly not easy, and there are many difficulties which can create serious obstacles. However, do not forget that the Lord's grace is with you if you faithfully and perseveringly seek to walk the road mapped out by the Gospel. For this you need to ask daily for his help in prayer and listening to his word. You need to

¹²⁸ *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 38.

strengthen more and more your knowledge of Christian social principles. The call to holiness is also addressed to you who, as a living part of the People of God, have received “a message of salvation intended for all people.”¹²⁹

Mission of Christian Business Leaders

In this centennial year of *Rerum novarum*, the year of the Church’s social teaching, I therefore exhort you to improve your mission as Christian business leaders in order to make the human and Christian virtues shine forth in the complex world of economic activity, the virtues which make that world respect the dignity of the person and be open to mutual solidarity.

¹²⁹ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1.