



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO THE MANAGERS AND WORKERS OF THE TERNI STEEL MILL
AND THE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF TERNI-NARNI-AMELIA, ITALY**

*Paul VI Hall
Thursday, 20 March 2014*

Video

I extend my cordial welcome to each of you! The occasion that has inspired your visit is the 130th anniversary of the foundation of the steelworks in Terni, which stands as a symbol of the entrepreneurial and labour skills that have made this name well-known far beyond the borders of Italy. I greet your Pastor, Bishop Ernesto Vecchi, and I thank him for the words which he addressed to me, and especially for the service that he renders to the Church of Terni-Narni-Amelia. It is a service he is offering at a time of his life when he has the right to rest, and rather than resting he continues to work: thank you, Bishop Vecchi, thank you very much! I greet the civil authorities, as well as the priests, consecrated persons, lay faithful and the various social groups and members of your diocesan community.

This meeting offers me the opportunity to renew my own closeness and that of the whole Church not only to the society “Acciai Speciali Terni” but also to the companies in your region and more generally to the world of industry. Faced with current economic developments and the distress that employment is experiencing, it is necessary to reaffirm that work is essential for society, for families and for individuals. Work, in fact, directly concerns the human person, his life, his freedom and his happiness. The primary value of work is the good of the human person since it fulfills him as such, with his inner talents and his intellectual, creative and physical abilities. Hence the scope of work is not only profit and economics; its purpose above all regards man and his dignity. Man’s dignity is tied to work. I listened to several young workers who are unemployed, and this is what they told me: “Father, we at home — my wife, my children — we eat every day because they give us something to eat at the parish, or the club, or the Red Cross. But Father, I don’t know what it

means to earn bread for the table, and I need to eat, but I need to know the dignity being a breadwinner". And work means this! This dignity is wounded where work is lacking! Anyone who is unemployed or underemployed is likely, in fact, to be placed on the margins of society, becoming a victim of social exclusion. Many times it happens that people without work — I am thinking especially of the many unemployed young people today — slip into chronic discouragement, or worse, into apathy.

What can we say before the grave problem of unemployment affecting various European countries? It is the consequence of an economic system which is no longer capable of creating work, because it has placed an idol at the centre that is called money! Therefore, the various political, social and economic entities are called to promote a different approach based on justice and solidarity. This word now risks being removed from the dictionary. Solidarity: it seems like a dirty word! No! Solidarity is important, but this system is not very fond of it, it prefers to exclude it. Such human solidarity should ensure that everyone have the possibility to carry out a dignified form of work. Work is a good for everyone and it needs to be available for everyone. Periods of grave hardship and unemployment need to be addressed with the tools of creativity and solidarity. The creativity of *entrepreneurs* and brave artisans who look to the future with confidence and hope. And the solidarity requires that all members of society renounce something and adopt a more sober lifestyle to help all those who are in need.

This great challenge calls the entire Christian community to action. This is why today you have come here together: steel workers, the bishop, the diocesan community. And this is why the contemporary history of your Church is inseparably tied to the visit [Bl. John Paul II](#) made to the steel works! The whole Church is engaged in a pastoral and missionary conversion, as your bishop underlined. In this regard, the primary commitment is always to revive the roots of faith and your fidelity to Jesus Christ. Here is the guiding principle of the choices made by a Christian: his faith. Faith moves mountains! The Christian faith can enrich society through the concrete fraternity that it bears within itself. A faith received with joy and lived fully and generously can confer a humanizing force on society. For this reason, we are all called to seek new ways to bear courageous witness to a living and life-giving faith.

Dear brothers and sisters, never stop hoping for a better future. Fight for it, fight. Do not be trapped in the vortex of pessimism, please! If each one does his or her part, if everyone always places the human person — not money — with his dignity at the centre, if an attitude of solidarity and fraternal sharing inspired by the Gospel is strengthened, you will be able to leave behind the morass of a hard and difficult economic season of work.

With this hope, I invoke the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary upon you and upon the whole diocese, especially upon the world of work, and on families who are struggling, that they may not lose the dignity that work gives, on children and young people and on the elderly.

And now let us all, seated as we are, pray to Our Lady who is our Mother, that she might obtain for us the grace to work together with creativity, solidarity and faith. *Hail Mary...*

May Almighty God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

And I ask you, please, to pray for me! Thank you!