



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION OF CREDITO ARTIGIANO

Thursday, 21 December 1978

Beloved Sons,

I express to you, very cordially, my satisfaction at this meeting. It is ideally linked with the meetings you had with my predecessor Paul VI of venerated memory, who had the fortune to know, already as Archbishop of Milan, your institution, its aims and its achievements.

1. Your work, which is now thirty-two years old, came into being with aims that were not solely and exclusively economic, but charitable: the fruits of the various initiatives were to be destined to the development of Catholic works. This is the interesting and, we could say, exemplary aspect of your activity, which, though following the so-called economic rules, first of all desires and must respect, with absolute consistency, professional ethics and the law of God as regards, in particular, justice in its most global sense.

But your perspectives go further. Drawing inspiration from the Christian concept of life and relations among men, you do not wish to let yourselves be prisoners of the mere individualistic logic of profit and gain, but wish to put into practice the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. The latter summed up Christian tradition and magisterial teaching as follows: "God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis."
(*Gaudium et Spes*, 69).

2. My sincere congratulations are accompanied by a cordial wish. In today's world, in spite of great and real progress, there is still such need of solidarity and sharing, because there is still such poverty and misery. Many of our brothers and sisters suffer from hunger, thirst, and diseases of every kind; they have not yet a decent house, in keeping with the dignity of the human person.

There remains, therefore, an immense space for charity, for "beneficence", considered and lived not as the proud gesture of one who, satisfied with his own wealth, ostentatiously drops a handful of coins into the treasury of the Temple, but as the discreet and humble gift of the "poor widow" of the Gospel, who gave two copper coins, which, however, were everything she had to live on (cf. Mk 12:41-44; Lk 21: 1-4). Charity—St Paul says—"is not arrogant or rude. [It] does not insist on its own way" (I Cor 13:5).

3. Keep on, beloved sons, along these main lines, which are the lines of the Gospel. The latter must always remain the firm and secure foundation of your individual and social behaviour. Let your profession be illuminated and directed by the light of faith, let it be expressed and put into practice in consistent witness to Christian life.

With these wishes I willingly impart to you, to all the members of Credito Artigiano and to their families, a special Apostolic Blessing.

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