



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE VATICAN FOUNDATION
"CENTESIMUS ANNUS - PRO PONTIFICE"**

9 may 1998

Your Eminence,

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to offer my cordial welcome to you all, gathered in the Vatican to take part in the annual study conference organized by the "Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice" Foundation on the theme: "*Globalization and Solidarity*". My thoughts turn first to Cardinal Lorenzo Antonetti, whom I thank for his cordial words on behalf of those present. With him I greet Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli and all of you, dear members of the foundation who have wished to visit me with your relatives. The work of your praiseworthy society is particularly inspired by the Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, in which I wanted to recall the centenary of the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* of my venerable Predecessor Leo XIII, who, at a time fraught with problems and social tensions, opened to the Church a new and promising field of evangelization and promotion of human rights. Comparison of the two documents highlights the profoundly different contexts to which these interventions of the Magisterium refer: the first dealt mainly with the "worker question" in a European context; the second, however, turns its attention to new economic and social problems and global horizons. In subsequent years, the latter situation has assumed even more complex dimensions, revealing questions of great importance for the very future of mankind and for peace among nations. In this whole web of new and problematic situations, the Magisterium has not been slow to reassert the perennial principles of the Gospel in defence of the dignity of the person and of human work, accompanying the constant, grass-roots activity of Christians in the social sphere with precise and frequent statements. I therefore congratulate you on your praiseworthy commitment to spreading and applying the Church's social doctrine, and I am grateful to you for this visit, which affords me a valuable opportunity to become acquainted with the developments of your laudable activity.

2. The theme of your meeting is globalization, which now concerns every aspect of economics and finance. The

advantages that a well-regulated and balanced “globalized” economy can bring to prosperity and to the development of culture, democracy, solidarity and peace are known to everyone. However, the harmonization of market demands with those of ethics and social justice must be constantly pursued. This ethical and juridical regulation of the market seems more difficult than ever, since the measures taken by individual States prove increasingly inadequate. It is therefore necessary to work for a culture of norms that not only concern the commercial aspects, but take responsibility for defending human rights all over the world. Indeed, to prevent the globalization of the economy from producing the harmful results of an uncontrolled expansion of private or group interests, it is necessary that the progressive globalization of the economy be increasingly met with a “global” culture of solidarity attentive to the needs of the weakest.

3. As members of various organizations concerned with the economy and work in the promising yet troubling context of globalization, you too are continually called to interpret the requirements of solidarity according to the spirit of Christ and the Church’s teaching. In this way you will be able to witness to God’s tenderness for every person and to promote, together with the dignity of the person, an international co-existence which is more just and fraternal because it is inspired by the perennial truths of the Gospel. In this exalting and difficult task, you are sustained by the word of the Lord, who invites us to see every act of love for our brothers and sisters as an opportunity to serve him: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (*Mt 25:40*). I entrust your good resolutions to the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin, who, in “hastening” to respond to Elizabeth’s needs (cf. *Lk 1:39*), shows us how to be constantly concerned for the needs of our brothers and sisters in want.

With these wishes, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and your co-workers, and I willingly extend it to all your loved ones.

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