



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NATIONAL COUNCILS OF LABOUR CONSULTANTS
OF ITALY, SPAIN AND POLAND**

Thursday, 30 April 1998

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to meet you and delighted to grant the request for this meeting which you had expressed some time ago. In a highly qualified way, you represent the profession of labour consultants, as it is found at the institutional level in Italy, Spain and Poland, that is, in the three National Councils of your respective organizations.

I thank Mrs Gabriella Perini for the kind words she addressed to me on your behalf.

First of all, I would like to express my satisfaction with the relationship you have been able to establish between your respective national organizations through links that are based primarily on common interests and professional problems, but which are also strengthened and confirmed by the concept of man and society inspired by the Christian message and the social doctrine of the Church.

It is a fitting occasion, then, for recalling some general elements of this concept, in the conviction that this will prove useful for your specific objectives.

2. From the point of view of social ethics, the main interest of your profession is the fact that *it deals with work itself*, or better with *work relations*, to protect their correctness and security in their various stages, to safeguard the dignity of the person and of the family, and to respect the legitimate concerns of business.

I wished to dedicate the Message for the World Day of Peace this year, the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the theme of justice. There is no doubt that promoting labour relations truly worthy of the human person means working to consolidate justice, thus laying the foundations for an authentic and lasting peace.

In this dimension the needs which you are called to answer are numerous. First among them, obviously, is that of *promoting employment* and fighting unemployment. This latter is always an evil and, when it reaches certain levels, it can become a true social disaster, even more painful when we consider the ominous consequences that it entails for families and for young people.

The high rate of unemployment carries with it serious risks of exploitation. It is therefore necessary to monitor carefully the *fairness of salaries and working conditions*, to see that the rights to health, rest and insurance are guaranteed. Then, what about the work that mothers do at home for their families? Should we not work with greater concern for a legitimate *social revaluation of maternal tasks*? I sincerely hope that time is taken to consider these requirements, which have been expressed by many people, giving concrete value to the hard work connected with domestic tasks and the need that children have for the care, love and affection of their parents and especially of their mother.

3. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your dedication and for the proper efforts you are making to safeguard workers' rights. Everyone knows that prudent attention to the legitimate demands of those who are joined in the same profession cannot fail to consider the *limitations imposed by the general economic situation of the country*.

I am thinking, at this time, of what Italy, Spain and Poland are doing to promote the desired growth in freedom and solidarity. I am also thinking of every initiative aimed at hastening the construction of a Europe that enjoys greater freedom and solidarity. May your commitment strongly encourage a harmonization of the legal systems of your respective countries in the area of work. This will effectively contribute to making the peoples of the continent advance towards that mutual integration which will be advantageous to everyone.

To this hope I join my best wishes for you and your families, as I bless you from my heart.

© Copyright 1998 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana