



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO BUSINESS AND TRADE-UNION LEADERS
ON THE ETHICAL DIMENSION
OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

Tuesday, 2 May 2000

*Dear Brothers and Sisters!*¹. I am pleased to meet you once again on the day after the [world Jubilee of Workers](#), which we celebrated together yesterday at Tor Vergata. Thank you for your presence! I cordially greet you all. In particular, I greet Bishop Fernando Charrier and thank him for his courteous words on your behalf. [The Jubilee of Workers](#), which brought to Rome representatives and workers from the vast field of work in every part of the world, gave us the opportunity to look at the complex realities of employment on a global scale and in its various sectors. We realized that there is still a great need for effective intervention so that human work can have its proper place in culture, the economy and politics, with full respect for the worker as a person and for his family, without ever penalizing one or the other. The Church follows these problems with great attention, especially through the work of the *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*, which is in contact with the international organizations of workers, employers and the world of finance. I hope that this fruitful collaboration will continue in a way that fosters the Church's ever more effective presence in the world of work.² In speaking with you, dear brothers and sisters, I would like to emphasize a characteristic aspect of work which is usually called "overall quality". In essence, it involves man's condition in the productive process: only his active participation in this process can make the business firm a real "community of persons" (cf. [Centesimus annus](#), n. 35). This is a challenge that accompanies the advanced progress of new technologies, which have the merit of reducing, at least in part, the element of human exertion in work. The challenge must be met so that the "indirect employer", that is, all the "forces" that determine the entire socio-economic system or result from it (cf. *ibid.*, n. 17), can be at the service of man and of society. Dear employers, financiers, trade unions and all of you who, by your cooperation and enterprise, put yourselves at the service of a development worthy of man, a particularly challenging but very important task lies before you. Without doubt, human liberation with regard to work depends in large part on the direction taken by finance and the economy: these must have an ever better grasp of their distinctive element, that is, the particular "service" they are called to render to development. The serious phenomenon of unemployment, which affects men, women and young people, and for which a solution is sought in many ways, would certainly have a positive outcome if economics, finance and the national and global organization of work itself were never to lose sight of the good of man as their ultimate goal.³ Today so-called "globalization" is making the world of work even more complex. This is a new phenomenon, which needs to be recognized and evaluated with careful and precise study, since it seems clearly "ambivalent". It can be something good for man and for society, but could also prove harmful, with serious consequences. Everything depends on certain

basic decisions: whether "globalization" serves man, every individual, or exclusively benefits a development that is not governed by the principles of solidarity, participation or responsible subsidiarity. In this regard, it is important to remember that the more global the market, the more it must be balanced by a global culture of solidarity that is attentive to the needs of the weakest. Moreover, democracy, including economic democracy, must be safeguarded, as must a correct conception of the person and of society. Man has the right to a development that involves every aspect of his life. The economy, even if globalized, must always be integrated into the overall fabric of social relations, of which it forms an important, but not exclusive, component. Globalization also requires a new culture, new rules and new institutions at the world level. Politics and economics must collaborate in this area to define short-, medium- and long-term projects whose goal will be the cancellation or at least reduction of the public debt of the world's poor countries. A commendable journey of co-responsibility has been undertaken in this regard; it should be strengthened and even globalized so that all countries will feel involved. A demanding journey, which for this reason enhances the responsibility of each and every one.

4. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the vast field that lies before you; this is the contribution that each of you and the institutions you represent are asked to make. The Church appreciates your work and accompanies your efforts to form relations of harmonious and active collaboration in a world marked by complex relations of interdependence. I promise each of you a remembrance in my prayer and entrust all your intentions to Mary and Joseph, faithful cooperators in the work of salvation, as I cordially bless you, your co-workers and your families. © Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana