



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE DIRECTORS AND PERSONNEL
OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRICITY AND WATER BOARD (ACEA)**

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 6 February 2010

Your Eminence,

Dear friends of the Azienda Comunale Energia e Ambiente,

I am glad to be with you and I extend a cordial welcome to each one of you. I greet Cardinal Salvatore De Giorgi and I greet Dr Giancarlo Cremonesi, President of ACEA, whom I thank for his kind words at the opening of our meeting and for the gifts. I am particularly grateful for the beautiful book on the application of the principles of the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* in the business world, published by the Vatican Publishing House and the UCID as part of the series "*Imprenditori per il bene comune*" [Entrepreneurs for the common good]. I would like to express my deep appreciation of this editorial initiative, in the hope that it may be a reference point in the search for solutions to the complex problems of the world of work and of the economy. I would also like to express my pleasure at your project of cooperation with the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel, in the endeavour to respond to the emergency in water and energy resources in their developing countries.

I have also seen with great interest your "Charter of Values" and "Ethical Code" that recall the principles of responsibility, transparency, correctness, and the spirit of service and collaboration that ACEA invokes. These are the guidelines that this Board desires to recall and on which it wishes to build its image and reputation.

You have just concluded the celebrations for the centenary of ACEA. Indeed, 100 years have passed since that 10 September 2009, when with a popular referendum the citizens of Rome decided that public lighting and collective transportation should be municipalized. Since that day your Board has developed together with Rome. It has been a long and fascinating journey, full of

both challenges and triumphs. It is enough to remember how complicated it was to guarantee essential services to ever wider social sectors, to new neighbourhoods that have often developed in a chaotic and illegal manner in a city that was changing and expanding out of all proportion. Thus, in the course of the years, we can say that the relationship between the City and ACEA has become ever closer, thanks, especially, to the many services that the company has supplied and continues to supply to the City, sustaining and encouraging its transformation into a modern metropolis.

This centenary celebration has ended in a period full of difficulties, marked by a serious international crisis that has led the world to rethink a model of development based primarily on finance and profit, in order to refocus human activity on our capacity to produce, to innovate, to think and to build the future. As I emphasized in the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, it is important to increase awareness in the business world of the need for a broader "social responsibility" that will impel it to continue to give proper consideration to the expectations and needs of their workers, customers, suppliers and the entire community and to pay special attention to the environment (cf. [n. 40](#)). Thus the production of goods and services will not be exclusively bound to the search for financial gain but also to the promotion of the common good. I rejoice that the history of the past 100 years has not only been expressed in the numerical terms of ever greater competitiveness but also in a moral commitment that strives to pursue the wellbeing of all.

In the spirit of service that characterizes ACEA I would like to express my appreciation of all that ACEA has achieved, thanks to the professional skill of its employees, in illuminating the monuments that make Rome unique in the world. In this regard, I would like to recall with gratitude the material assistance provided on the occasion of the celebrations for the 80th anniversary of the foundation of Vatican City State. Numerous churches, starting with St Peter's Basilica, have also been enhanced by skilful lighting which brings out what human beings have been able to achieve in order to express their faith in Christ, "the true light that enlightens every man" (Jn 1: 9).

I also appreciate ACEA's commitment to protecting the environment by means of the sustainable management of natural resources, reduction of the environmental impact [of its activities], and respect for Creation. However, it is equally important to promote a human ecology which can make both the workplace and personal relations worthy of the human being. In this regard I would like to reaffirm what I said in the [Message for the World Day of Peace](#) this year on "the adoption of a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, on the promotion and sharing of the common good, on responsibility, on a realization of our need for a changed life-style" ([Message for the World Day of Peace 2010](#), n. 9).

In Rome, as in every large city, one feels the effects of a culture that exasperates the concept of the individual: often people live closed into themselves, wrapped up in their own problems, distracted by the many worries that crowd the mind and prevent men and women from perceiving the simple joys present in each person's life. The preservation of Creation, a task that the Creator

entrusted to humankind (cf. Gn 2: 15), also implies the safeguarding of those sentiments of goodness, generosity, correctness and honesty which God has placed in the heart of every human being who is created in his "image and likeness" (cf. Gn 1: 26).

Lastly, I wish to address to those present an invitation to look to Christ, the perfect man and always to take his actions as an example in order to grow in humanity and thus to develop a city with an ever more human face, in which everyone is seen as a person, a spiritual being in relation with others. Thanks too to your commitment to improving interpersonal relationships and the quality of work, Rome may continue its role as a beacon of civilization which has distinguished it down the centuries.

As I renew my expression of gratitude for your visit, I assure you of special remembrance in prayer for each one of you and for your activities and I warmly bless you, together with your loved ones.

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