



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

MEETING WITH WORKERS IN GUADALAJARA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Tuesday, 30 January 1979

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear Workers,

I arrive here in the magnificent setting of Guadalajara, where we meet in the name of him who wished to be known as the carpenter's son.

I come to you, having before my eyes and in my soul the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, your patron saint, for whom you profess a filial love that I have been able to see not only in her sanctuary but also passing through the streets and cities of Mexico. Where there is a Mexican, there is the Mother of Guadalupe. A gentleman told me that ninety-six per cent of Mexican are Catholics, but one hundred per cent are Guadalupans.

I wished to come and visit you, working-class families of Guadalajara and of other localities in this archdiocese, which is distinguished by its adherence to the faith, its family unity and its efforts to meet, in God's name, the great human and Christian requirements of justice, peace, and progress.

I present myself to you as a brother, joyfully and lovingly, after having had the opportunity to travel through the streets of Mexico and to witness the love that is professed here for Christ, for the Blessed Virgin, and for the Pope—a pilgrim and messenger of faith, hope, and union among men;

I wish to express to you, right away, how happy the Pope is that this is a meeting with workers, with working-class families, with Christian families which, from their places of work, know how to be agents of social welfare, respect, love of God, in the workshop, in the factory, in any house or place.

I think of you, boys and girls, young people of working-class families; there comes into my mind the figure of him who was born in an artisan's family, who grew in age, wisdom, and grace, who learned from his Mother human ways, and who had his teacher in life and in daily work in the just man that God gave him as father. The Church venerates this Mother and this man; this holy worker, model of a man and, at the same time, of a worker.

Our Lord Jesus Christ received the caresses of his strong worker's hands, hands hardened by work, but open to kindness and to needy brothers. Allow me to enter your homes; yes, you want to have the Pope as your guest and friend, and to give him the consolation of seeing in your homes the union and the family love which gives rest, after a hard day's work, in this relationship of mutual affection that reigned in the Holy Family. It shows me, dear children and young people, that you are preparing seriously for the future; I repeat to you, you are the hope of the Pope.

Do not deny me the joy of seeing you walk along paths that lead you to be real followers of good, and friends of Christ. Do not deny me the joy of your sense of responsibility in studies, activities, and amusements. You are called to be bearers of generosity and honesty, to fight against immorality, to prepare a more just; healthier, and happier Mexico for the sons of God and sons of our mother Mary.

You know very well that the work of your parents is present in the common effort of growth of this nation and in everything that contributes to bring the benefits of modern civilization to all Mexicans. Be proud of your parents, and collaborate with them in your formation as honoured and Christian young people; my affection and my encouragement accompany you.

The Pope's affection also goes to the working mothers and brides present, and to all those listening to my words by means of the media of social communication. Remember that Virgin Mary who knew how to be a cause of joy for her husband and a solicitous guide for her son in moments of difficulty and hardship. When there are worries and limitations, remember that God chose a poor mother and that she succeeded in remaining firm in good, even in the hardest hours.

Many of you also work in one of the multiple activities that are opening to women's capacities today; many of you are also bread-winners for a good many homes, and a continual help in order that family life may be more and more dignified. Be present with your creativity in the transformation of this society. The modern way of life offers more and more important opportunities and posts for women; enlightened by your religious sense, make your contribution to all your fellow citizens, and even to the highest authorities.

Friends, worker brothers, there is a Christian conception of work, of family and social life. It contains great values, and demands moral criteria and norms in order to direct those who believe in God and in Jesus Christ; in order that work may be carried out as a real vocation to change the world, in a spirit of service and of love for brothers; in order that the human person may reach fulfilment here and contribute to the growing humanization of the world and its structures.

Work is not a curse, it is a blessing from God who calls man to rule the earth and transform it, in order that the divine work of creation may continue with man's intelligence and effort. I want to tell you with all my soul and with all my might that I suffer at the lack of work, I suffer at the ideologies of hate and of violence that are not evangelical and that cause so many wounds in mankind today.

It is not enough for the Christian to denounce injustices, he is asked to be a real witness and promoter of justice; he who works has rights that he must defend legally, but he also has duties which he must carry out generously. As Christians you are called to be architects of justice and of real freedom as well as forgers of social charity. Modern technique creates a whole set of new problems and sometimes produces unemployment. But it also opens great possibilities that ask of the worker increasing qualifications, as also the contribution of his human capacities and his creative imagination. For this reason, work must not be a mere necessity, but it must be considered a real vocation, a call from God to build a new world in which justice and brotherhood dwell, a foretaste of the Kingdom of God, in which there will certainly not be shortages or limitations.

Work must be the means in order that the whole of creation will be subjected to the dignity of the human being and son of God. Work offers the opportunity to commit oneself with the whole community without resentment, without bitterness, without hatred, but with the universal love of Christ that excludes no one and embraces everyone.

Christ proclaimed to us the Gospel from which we know that God is love, that he is the Father of all, and that we are all brothers.

The central mystery of our Christian life, the paschal mystery, makes us look to the New Heaven and to the New Earth. This paschal mystery must exist in work. Through it, sacrifices and efforts are accepted with Christian impetus in order to bring about that the new order willed by the Lord may shine forth more clearly, and to construct a world that will correspond to God's goodness in harmony, peace and love.

Beloved Sons and Daughters, I pray to the Lord for all of you and your families. I pray to the Lord for the unity and stability of your marriages, and that your home life will always be full and joyful. Christian faith must be stronger in the presence of all the factors of the modern crisis. The Church, as the Council taught us affectionately, must be a large family in which lives the dynamic of unity, life, joy, and love, which is the Holy Trinity.

The same Council called the family a "little Church"; in the Christian family the evangelizing action of the Church begins. Families are the first schools of education to the faith, and only if this Christian unity is preserved will it be possible for the Church to carry out her mission in society and in the Church herself.

Friends and Brothers, thank you for having offered me the possibility of taking part in this great meeting with the world of workers, with whom I always feel so much at ease. You are friends and companions for the Pope. Thank you.

This city of Guadalajara has distinguished itself in the whole of Mexico for the impetus given to sports activities which bestow on the family physical and spiritual development, and the joy of a healthy mind in a healthy body. The group of footballers that accompanies us gives our great meeting a new colour. The Pope gives his blessing to one and all of you. May it encourage you in your apostolic commitment with generous brotherly dedication, and with the certainty that God is working with you in order that you may construct a world that is more beautiful, kind, just, human and Christian. Amen.

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