



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
to the Christian Union of Business Executives**

Friday, 7 March 1997

*Your Eminence,
Mr National President.
Dear Brothers and Sisters.*

1. I am pleased to receive you today on the occasion of the national convention marking the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Christian Union of Business Executives (UCID) and I extend a cordial welcome to you all.

I especially greet dear Cardinal Michele Giordano, Archbishop of Naples, your national ecclesiastical adviser, and I thank him for the kind words he addressed to me on your behalf, as he explained the basic characteristics of your association. With him I greet Bishop Quadri, who is always attentive to questions in the Church's social teaching. I also extend my greeting to the national president, Prof. Giuseppe De Rita, to the national advisers and to all the members of your association.

2. Your statutes, recently approved by the Italian Episcopal Conference, include among the principal goals of the Christian Union of Business Executives "the knowledge, implementation and dissemination of the Church's social doctrine", "the Christian formation of its members and the development of a high professional morality", as well as co-operation among the employees of a business, with respect for the central value of the person and of solidarity.

These objectives commit you to considering your association as an outpost, so to speak, of the Church's mission in the world of economics and business, to promote Gospel values by opposing mentalities that debase the dignity of man such as the various expressions of statism, the

excessive search for profit and different forms of discrimination.

This commitment to giving witness, which has guided the first 50 years of the UCID, has become ever more urgent in view of the unprecedented situations in our time, which call on businesses to promote a real well-being that can never be separated from human and ethical values.

3. In this regard, the Church's social doctrine considers the capacity for initiative and entrepreneurial ability as an essential part of "disciplined and creative human work" (*Centesimus annus*, n. 32), while acknowledging the businessman's leading role in development. Energy, the spirit of initiative and of creativity, indispensable for a businessman, make him a key figure for social well-being.

The right to entrepreneurial activity and free economic initiative should therefore be safeguarded and developed, because it is "important not only for the individual, but also for the common good" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 15). Corresponding to this right is the businessman's responsibility to make his business a community of men who work with others and for others (cf. *Centesimus annus*, n. 32) and together they help one another to mature as human beings, without marginalizing anyone.

It will be the task of your praiseworthy Union to cultivate this essential function in the vast, dynamic world of Italian business, by drawing attention especially to the urgency of offering new job opportunities to the far too many people who today are in critical need of them.

4. The correct relationship between profit and solidarity represents another fundamental point of the Church's social teaching. In fact, a conflict situation between these demands would not only harm a firm's efficiency but would betray its authentic purpose, which "is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a community of persons" (*Centesimus annus*, n. 35). It will therefore be the businessman's task to create suitable conditions so that in the firm the development of the worker's ability is harmonized with the rational production of goods and services.

The current phenomenon of economic globalization, which is bringing profound changes to the economic world, highlights the growing interdependence of those involved in it. Experience shows us each day that in the contemporary world we all depend on everyone. Solidarity, more than a duty, is a need that arises from the same objective network of interconnections. Therefore, attention to the value of solidarity in the production process not only promotes the good of the person, but also helps to overcome the profound causes that hinder full development.

I urge your praiseworthy Union to work tirelessly so that economic laws may increasingly be at the service of man. It is indeed necessary that, in the transformations that are taking place in business and the production process, that man should always have the leading role that is his due.

5. The history of the Christian Union of Business Executives is interwoven with political and social events in Italy over the last 50 years.

Your association has wanted to be involved in the profound changes that have taken place in these years by offering the world of production valuable incentives for humanizing work and business, and by affirming the values of freedom, justice and solidarity. The new role of social subjects vis-à-vis the State and the concrete prospects of European integration today call Christian businessmen to take new leadership in the Italian Catholic movement and in society, in order to provide concrete answers to the challenges of the moment and to contribute effectively to the cultural and economic growth of the country.

As I deeply hope that your Union can carry out its new tasks with the skill and generosity shown thus far, I entrust you all to the maternal protection of Mary and impart to each of you, to your businesses and to your families a special Apostolic Blessing.

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