



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II FOR THE ANNUAL "CAMPAIGN FOR FRATERNITY" IN BRAZIL

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Brazil,

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers" (Mt 20:1).

1. With these words of Sacred Scripture, I would like to join the entire Church in Brazil in opening this year's Campaign for Fraternity, whose theme is: "Fraternity and Unemployment: Let us walk resolutely towards the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000". In this perspective, I reaffirm that "a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 51).

2. To be able to work in the Lord's vineyard is certainly a divine gift. This vision of the definitive possession of the kingdom of heaven, presented in the parable of the vineyard workers, does not exclude, but indeed reinforces the need to understand the right to work in this world. Lent, as a special time for conversion to God through penance and prayer, is an opportunity for reflection and good intentions, so that all men and women of goodwill will realize they have an important role in "the civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty, which find their full attainment in Christ" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 52). Bread is something "which earth has given and human hands have made", but the disconcerting world phenomenon of unemployment and underemployment must increasingly challenge the conscience of all Christians with the distressing question posed by the Campaign for Fraternity: "Unemployed ... why?" (cf. Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 18).

3. In expressing the wish that all available means be used to alleviate the tragedy of unemployment, as I have already suggested in the celebration of the World Day of Peace this year (*Message*, n. 8), I invoke abundant light from on high and a Blessing for all who hear me.

Praised be our Lord Jesus Christ!

From the Vatican, 8 December 1998.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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