



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO CHRISTIAN BUSINESS EXECUTIVES AND
ITALIAN MEMBERS OF St VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY**

Saturday, 10 October 1998

*Your Eminences,
Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I am delighted to welcome you on the occasion of the 20th World Congress of the *International Christian Union of Business Executives* (UNIAPAC). Your presence symbolizes your Christian commitment and desire to work at putting the world economy truly at the service of the human person. You are faced with the challenge of ensuring the effectiveness and quality of production in a world marked by the spirit of competition, without ever losing sight of the economy's human dimension.

The world economy is rapidly moving towards broader market interdependence. The consequences are far-reaching and very complex. As Christian business executives, your understanding of globalization cannot be limited simply to economic situations. Your congress is a special opportunity to affirm that economic globalization must not neglect the inalienable dignity of every human being, and that the goods of creation are destined for all. Individuals and human work must never become just two more elements in the production process. A recent document issued by the *International Labour Organization, the Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights of Work*, establishes the basic criteria if we want workers' rights to be respected everywhere. Christian executives are called to show the way, so that the criteria are followed fearlessly and identically in every country.

2. You are also responsible for promoting solidarity in all economic processes. Globalization must

lead to wider participation and not to exclusion or marginalization, to greater sharing and not to impoverishing a large portion of the population for the benefit of a few. No one must be excluded from economic circulation; on the contrary, every individual must be able to benefit from technological and social progress, as well as from the fruits of creation.

By your reflections and by the decisions you will be able to take in your businesses with the cooperation of all your employees, you will develop new ways of showing that concern for the human being can go hand in hand with economic development. In this spirit, it is important that small and medium-sized businesses, which often represent the future of human communities in developing countries or in disadvantaged zones, become aware of the importance of their presence for the local people. Some projects are the only hope for young people in these regions. I am pleased that many of you, attentive to these issues, are already involved in this area. I invite you to continue working in this direction, so that each individual will recognize his responsibility for the economy and will carefully fulfil it for the sake of serving his brethren.

I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to all of you and to your families.

3. I warmly welcome the English-speaking members of the International Christian Union of Business Executives. Be steadfast in bearing witness to the values of the Gospel in your professional lives. Never cease to promote the good of the human person by ensuring that the principles of justice and solidarity are respected in business enterprises and relations.

I extend a cordial greeting to the Spanish-speaking participants at this international congress, and I express my confidence that the historical and cultural wealth of their native countries will encourage their creative activity, so that economic progress will accompany the integral progress of individuals and peoples by putting itself at the service of the most important and irreplaceable value, which is the dignity of the human being.

4. I now turn to you, dear brothers and sisters who are taking part in the National Italian Convention of the St Vincent de Paul Society. I greet the General President, the Presidents of the Regional and Central Councils, and all of you whose presence reminds me of the discreet and productive good accomplished daily by the Vincentians in so many Italian regions.

I still cherish a vivid memory of the solemn celebration on 22 August last year when I had the joy of beatifying Ven. Frédéric Ozanam at the [12th World Youth Day in Paris](#). In this way I wanted to hold up to believers and especially to young people this splendid example of a lay Christian, father of a family and university teacher.

Given the scandal of old and new forms of poverty in today's affluent societies, how can we live according to the teaching of Bl. Frédéric Ozanam? How can we answer the needs of those who are forced to leave their native land, of the refugees and illegal immigrants, of the families without

rights and the essentials of life, of the many unemployed, of the lonely and abandoned elderly, of the sick and of people who are exploited and enslaved by greed and selfishness?

5. You have reflected on these questions during your meetings, seeking new ways to expand the boundaries of charity by proclaiming the Gospel in the language most accessible to all, that of love for the lowliest.

As I hope you will be worthy disciples who continue Frédéric Ozanam's work in Italian society, I urge you to make prayer and the concrete practice of brotherhood the soul of your service to the poor. May your meetings not only be opportunities to know and serve your neighbour's needs, but may they become moments of spiritual growth, through listening to the word of God, fervent prayer and fraternal dialogue. May your association share the full breadth of the Church's vision and, in total harmony with its Pastors, give the needy a love that is continuously measured by the charity of the One who, though he was rich became poor out of love (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).

With these wishes, as I encourage you in your good intentions, I entrust you to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin and, invoking upon all your members the protection of St Vincent de Paul and Bl. Frédéric Ozanam, I cordially give you a special Apostolic Blessing.

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