



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES OF THE BANK OF ITALY

Friday, 26 November 1999

*Mr Governor,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is a joy for me to welcome you today, employees of the Bank of Italy, who have come with your families to Rome from the various branches in Italy. Today's meeting takes place on a particular occasion: you are celebrating 30 active years of service in the Bank of Italy, where highly skilled people work, their activity being of great importance for Italy's economic life. I cordially greet Governor Antonio Fazio and I thank him for the kind words he spoke to me. My affectionate welcome is extended to you, members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Board and the Board of Auditors of the Bank of Italy. I also greet the senior executives, the Treasury representative who attends the meetings of the Executive Board and the Commander of the Carabinieri detail in charge of security at the institute. Lastly, I greet your family members, who have accompanied you on this happy occasion.

Your welcome visit brings back memories of the warm welcome you gave my words on 27 January 1994, the first centenary of the foundation of your prestigious bank. This morning's meeting allows me to express once again the esteem I have for the institution you work in and which you represent here this morning.

2. For some years your bank has felt the need to create, within the organization, a unique opportunity of fraternal reflection and friendly conversation which is summed up in the "Convention for the 30th Anniversary of Employment". This occasion, aimed at appreciating each "honouree" for his specific human and professional experience, also represents a strong reminder of the ideals of the ethics, dignity and solidarity that cause work to be considered not just a means of support, but also something ennobling the person. May this initiative help you to develop this awareness, so that your daily efforts may become a generous and significant contribution to the creation of an economy based on a correct hierarchy of values in which the dignity of the person

always takes precedence.

The new role that the Italian nation and Europe today entrust to the Bank of Italy, in terms of well-qualified participation in the European system of central banks, confers a special importance on the "Convention for the 30th Anniversary of Employment". Economic and financial questions depend to a great extent on the decisions made within the central banks and, ultimately, on the skills of the people that work there, on their good will as well as on their abilities and expertise in dealing with problems; in a word, on their "responsibility".

3. The Church is close to those who, like you, wish to draw inspiration for their commitment from those Christian values that are an inalienable component of the Italian and European heritage. In this regard she hopes that the individual States or particular communities will also seek effective ways to regulate relations between them, adapting them to the common good, that is, by taking into account the issues of the autonomous or integrated local communities, the moral aspects as well as the economic concerns of the whole human family.

In particular, I cannot forget in this context the complex problems connected with the regulation of the indebtedness of economically underdeveloped countries in relation to those more economically developed. The central banks' authoritative voice can suggest appropriate guidelines for identifying and reaching equitable solutions that will give hope to people in need of solidarity, necessary at times for their very survival.

4. Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to accept my observations as a sign of the esteem I have for you and for your important role. May the Lord, to whom I remember you together with your loved ones, enlighten your minds and strengthen your wills so that, thanks also to your contribution, everyone can look to the future with greater confidence, in the certainty that God comes to the aid of those who work for the good of their brothers and sisters.

For this reason I invoke on you an abundance of heavenly favours, as I bless you from my heart.