

# ***Provisional Record***

Sixty-eighth Session, Geneva, 1982

---

## **Twentieth (Special) Sitting**

Tuesday, 15 June 1982, 9.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Grados Bertorini

Address by HIS HOLINES

POPE JOHN PAUL II

*Interpretation from Spanish:* THE PRESIDENT- I have the great honour of opening this special sitting of the 68th Session of the International Labour Conference, to hear a message from His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

I request the Secretary-General to introduce His Holiness to the Conference.

*Interpretation from French:* THE SECRETARY-GENERAL-Holy Father, I deeply feel the great honour that befalls me to greet you on behalf of the International Labour Organisation.

The authority emanating from the lofty office that you have been called upon to hold, added to your vast knowledge of the world, qualifies you exceptionally to address an international gathering such as this one which has the privilege of welcoming you today. But there is another reason which gives your presence at this special sitting of the International Labour Conference a particularly moving tone. In your person the Conference is also welcoming-I am sure you will allow me to recall that time of your life-a former manual worker who worked as a Stonemason and later in a chemicals factory. It is only right and fitting to recall in this hall that you have worked face to face with the realities of the working world, because it is the lot of the workers that we have come here to discuss. Ninety years ago Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Rerum novarum* in which he condemned the unmerited poverty of the workers. You, Your Holiness, wished to commemorate this anniversary by publishing the encyclical *Laborem exercens*, entirely concerned with the promotion of the dignity of labour and of the worker.

Holy Father, today you see here before you the International Labour Conference, the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation. It brings together representatives of governments, workers and employers from 149 countries. Although they come from countries whose economic and social systems and cultural features are different, the members of this assembly work together to define the conditions of greater social justice.

In addressing them, you will be expounding further the message of *Laborem exercens* in front of an audience which covers the whole world. Before you speak, may I emphasise the convergence that exists between the aims and purposes of the ILO and the human values which you tirelessly and unceasingly affirm. We work for a common cause: the promotion of human rights and the dignity and freedom of the worker. The ILO, from the outset, has known how to heed the voices of the valuable forces represented by the social movements, and it must continue to heed them if it is to progress. It is its duty to do so because this is the place where mankind forges a common conscience,

But, Holy Father, in the office I occupy I cannot help but feel deep concern because, despite the progress made, a great gap still exists between the objectives set forth in the texts and the daily facts of existence for the majority of mankind. This is a challenge to our consciences and to justice. Time is pressing, time is harsh to those who are suffering, men and women without work, millions of children deprived of their childhood, workers relegated to the fringes of society, the disabled. All of this is a grave threat to peace.

Everything prompts us to translate into concrete achievements without delay the objectives set

forth in the Development Strategy adopted by the United Nations and reach agreement on ways and means of creating many more jobs, income sharing on a more equitable basis and, lastly, making work more human.

It is here that the spiritual forces and social movements must continue their work, enlightening our minds, awakening our consciences and opening our hearts.

This is why, Holy Father, on behalf of the International Labour Organisation, I rejoice at the opportunity to hear you renew our inspiration and strengthen our determination.

We shall be listening with attention and respect. Thank you.

*Interpretation from French:* HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II-First, I should like to express my joy at having this opportunity of being here today and addressing this illustrious assembly gathered for the 68th Session of the International Labour Conference. Events you are aware of prevented me from responding to the Director-General's invitation to attend last year's session. I give thanks to God for having preserved my life and restored me to health. My inability to come to Geneva in 1981 further strengthened my determination to meet you, especially in view of the multiple ties that link me to the world of labour - not least among them being the awareness of a special responsibility in regard to the many problems inherent in the reality of human work. These are important problems, often difficult; they are fundamental and they constitute the *raison d'être* of your Organisation. The invitation which the Director-General repeated as soon as I was convalescent was therefore a source of particular joy to me. In the meantime, I have published my Encyclical *Laborem exercens*, on human work, intended as a contribution to the development of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, whose great texts, beginning with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*, were respectfully and favourably received by the International Labour Organisation, attuned as it always has been, throughout the various historic stages of its existence and in its activities, to the varied aspects of all the complex problems associated with human work.

Allow me, therefore, to express here my gratitude for your invitation and for the warm welcome extended to me. At the same time, I want to tell you how much I appreciate the kind words the Director-General has just spoken; they make it so much easier for me to address you now in my turn. As the guest of your Conference I speak to you on behalf of the Catholic Church and the Apostolic See, and within the framework of their universal mission, which is primarily and essentially a religious and moral one. From that point of view, the Church and the Holy See share your Organisation's concern for its basic objectives, just as they are at one with the entire family of nations in its aim of promoting the progress of mankind.

#### *Tribute to human work*

In addressing you, I wish first, through you, to pay tribute to human work, whatever its nature and wherever in the world it may be performed-a tribute to all work and to each and every man or woman engaged in it-irrespective of its specific content, including "physical" as well as "intellectual" work;

irrespective, too, of its particular purpose, whether it be "creative" or "reproductive"; and irrespective of whether it consists of theoretical research providing a basis for the work of others, or an activity aimed at organising the conditions and structure of such work, or, again, the management or the actual performance, by workers, of the tasks involved in carrying out programmes. In all its forms, work deserves particular respect because it is an act of man and because behind all work there is always a living subject-the human person.

That is the source of the value and dignity of work. In the name of that dignity, which is a feature of all human work, I should also like to express my esteem for each of you, Ladies and Gentlemen, and for the concrete institutions-the organisations and authorities-which you represent here. In view of the universal character of the International Labour Organisation, this occasion enables me to pay tribute to all the groups represented here and to praise the efforts of each of them to develop its own potential for promoting the common good of all its Members -men and women united from generation to generation in their various jobs.

### *Esteem for the ILO: humanisation of work*

Finally, I think I am speaking here not only for the Apostolic See but in a certain sense for all those present. I wish to express special esteem and gratitude to the International Labour Organisation itself. Your Organisation occupies an important place in international life both because of its age and by reason of its lofty objectives. Following its creation in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles it undertook to contribute to lasting peace through the promotion of social justice, as stated in the opening words of the Preamble to its Constitution: "Whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice." This fundamental commitment to peace was quoted by the Director-General at the Symposium organised in Rome by the Papal Commission "Iustitia et Pax" at the beginning of April of this year, when he referred to the parchment contained in the foundation-stone of the International Labour Office building, with the inscription *Si vis pacem cole iustitiam* - If you seek peace, cultivate justice.

The merits of your Organisation shine forth in its many international Conventions and Recommendations establishing international labour standards, these "new rules of social conduct" to compel "particular interests to submit to the wider vision of the common good" (*address of Pope Paul VI to the ILO*). These merits are also evident in the many other activities aimed at satisfying the new needs to which the evolution of social and economic structures has given rise. They are, finally, reflected in the persevering every-day work of the officials of the International Labour Office and the bodies it has created to strengthen its activities, such as the International Institute for Labour Studies, the International Social Security Association and the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Training.

If I have ventured to mention the International Labour Organisation in my Encyclical *Laborem exercens*, I did so both to draw attention to its many achievements and to encourage it to strengthen its activities aimed at making work more human. I also sought to highlight the fact that in efforts to give human labour a truly moral basis-which is consistent with the objective principles of social ethics-the aims of the International Labour Organisation are very close to those which the Church and the Apostolic See are pursuing in their own sphere with means adapted to their mission. This, indeed, has been stressed on several occasions by my predecessors Pius XII and John XXIII, and in particular by Paul VI in 1969 when he visited the International Labour Organisation to take part in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. Today, as before, the Church and the Apostolic See take great joy in their excellent co-operation with your Organisation, co-operation which has already lasted for half a century and which culminated in the formal accrediting in 1967 of a permanent observer to the International Labour Office. In this way the Holy See sought to give stable expression to its desire for co-operation and to the lively interest of the Catholic Church in labour problems, stemming from its concern for the true good of man.

### *Man always at the centre*

The message which you expect from me is bound to be no different from that which I have delivered to other gathering of representatives of the peoples of all nations of the world: the General Assembly of the United Nations, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. My thinking aims at reflecting, in a coherent way, one fundamental idea and one basic preoccupation: the cause of man, his dignity and the inalienable rights flowing therefrom. Already in my first Encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, I stressed the fact that "man is the first road which the Church must travel in fulfilling its missions; it is the first road and the fundamental road of the Church, mapped out by Christ himself" (N. 14). That is also the reason why, in celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum novarum* I felt I should devote a major document of my papacy to human labour, to man at work "Homo laborem exercens". For not only does work bear the imprint of man, but it is in work that the meaning of his existence is revealed to man: in all work considered as a human activity, regardless of its specific content and regardless of the circumstances in which this activity is carried out. Work is endowed with "this basic dimension of human existence" through which "man's life is built up every day". From work "it derives its specific dignity, but at the same time contains the unceasing measure of human toil and suffering and also the harm and injustice which penetrate deeply into social life within

individual nations and on the international level. (*Laborem exercens, N. 1*)

### *The solidarity of the world of work*

The problems of work-problems that have repercussions in so many spheres of life and at all levels, whether individual, family, national or international-share one characteristic, which is at one and the same time a requirement and a programme and which I would like to stress before you today: solidarity. I feel impelled to place these considerations before you, first, because solidarity is inherent in different ways in the very nature of human work, but also because of the objectives of your Organisation and especially of the spirit which inspires it. The spirit in which the International Labour Organisation has carried out its mission since its foundation is a spirit of universalism, which rests on the fundamental equality of nations and on the equality of men, and which is perceived both as the starting-point and as the point of arrival of any social policy. It is also a spirit of humanism, which seeks to develop all of man's potentialities, both material and spiritual. Lastly, it is community spirit, which is successfully reflected in your tripartite structure. In this connection, I can only repeat the words pronounced here by Paul VI during his visit in 1969: "Your original and organic instrument is to bring together the three forces at work in the human dynamics of modern labour: men of government, employers and workers. And your method, that has become a model, is to harmonise these three forces, so that they do not oppose each other, but combine in a courageous and fecund collaboration by means of constant dialogue for the study and solution of ever renewed and recurring problems". The fact that the solution to the problems of work has been seen to lie in a commitment by all the parties involved, and in peaceful bargaining aimed at the well-being of man at work and peace between societies shows that you are conscious of the need for solidarity, which unites you in a common effort transcending the real differences that exist and the divisions that may always occur.

### *Work unites*

This fundamental intuition which the founders of the International Labour Organisation so strongly emphasised in the structure of the Organisation itself and the corollary of which is that the objectives it pursues can be achieved only through community and solidarity, reflects the reality of human work. For, in its fundamental characteristics, the reality of work is the same all over the world, in every country and in every continent; among men and among women of every race and nation who speak different languages and represent diverse cultures; among men and women who profess different religions or express their relationships with religion and with God in a variety of ways. The reality of work is the same behind a multiplicity of forms: manual work and intellectual work; work in agriculture and work in industry; work in the services sector and work in research; the work of the craftsman, the technician, the work of the educator, of the artist or of the mother in her home; the work of the factory operative and the work of the supervisors and managers. Without concealing these specific differences which remain and which often differentiate quite sharply the men and women performing these very varied jobs, work - the reality of work—unites all in an activity which has the same significance and one and the same source. For all, work is a necessity, a duty, a task. For each and every one, it is a means of assuring a livelihood, family life and its fundamental values. It is also the way which leads to a better future, the path of progress, of hope. In the diversity and universality of its forms, human work unites men because every man seeks in work "to realise his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity". (*Laborem exercens, N.6*). Yes, "work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons" (*Laborem exercens, pre-amble*). Work bears the stamp of unity and solidarity.

Moreover, it is difficult-in dealing, before this Assembly, with such a vast, such a varied and at the same time, such a universal panorama as the work of the entire human family-not to hear in the depths of one's heart the words of the Book of Genesis in which work is given to man as a task so that by means of this work he may subdue the earth and dominate it. (cf. Gn 1.28).

### *Work: the meaning of human life*

The fundamental reason why I single out the theme of solidarity lies therefore in the very nature of human work. The problem of work has a very profound link with that of the meaning of human life. Because of this link, work becomes, and indeed is, a problem of a spiritual nature. This observation in no way detracts from the other aspects of work, aspects which one might say are more easily measurable and which are related to the various structures and operations of an "external" character, arising out of the organisation; this same observation indeed enables us to set human work, in whatever way it is performed by man, within man himself, in other words, in his innermost humanity, in the essence of his nature, in what makes him a man and therefore destined to work. The conviction that there is an essential link between the work of every man and the over-all meaning of human existence is the whole foundation of the Christian doctrine of work—one might say the foundation of the "gospel of work"—and it permeates the teaching and activities of the Church, in different ways at each stage of its mission throughout history. "Never again will work be against the worker; but always work... will be in the service of man"—it is worth while repeating today the words spoken in this same place 13 years ago by Pope Paul VI. If work must always serve the good of man, if the programme of progress can be achieved only through work, then there is a fundamental right to judge progress in accordance with the following criterion: does the work really serve man? Is it compatible with his dignity? Through it, does human life achieve fulfilment in all its richness and diversity?

We have the right to conceive human work in this way; and we also have a duty to do so. We have the right and the duty to consider man not according to whether or not he is useful in his work, but to consider work in its relation to man, to each man, to consider work according to whether or not it is useful to man. We have the right and the duty, in our reflections on work, to take account of the various needs of man, both of the spirit and of the body, and to take this approach to human work, in each society and in each system, in areas where well-being prevails, and even more so, in the areas where destitution is widespread. We have the right and the duty to take this approach to work, in its relation to man—and not the reverse—as a fundamental criterion for assessing progress itself. For progress always requires an evaluation and a value judgement. One must ask whether a given step forward is sufficiently "human" and at the same time sufficiently "universal"; whether it helps to level out unjust inequalities and to promote a peaceful future for the world; whether, in the work itself, fundamental rights are ensured, for each person, for each family and for each nation. In a word, one must constantly ask oneself whether the work helps to fulfil the meaning of human life. While seeking a reply to these questions in an analysis of socio-economic processes in general, one must not overlook the aspects and the content which form man's inner self: the development of his knowledge and of his awareness. The link between work and the very meaning of human existence bears constant witness to the fact that man has not been alienated by work, that he has not been enslaved by it. Quite the contrary, it confirms that work has become the ally of his humanity, which helps him to live in truth and freedom: in a freedom built on truth which enables him to lead, in all its fullness, a life more worthy of man.

### *A new solidarity, based on work, is necessary*

Confronted with the blatant injustices arising out of the systems of the last century, workmen reacted, especially in industry, and thereby discovered beyond their common poverty the strength that comes from concerted action. As victims of the same injustices, they united in a single line of action. In my Encyclical on human work, I called this reaction a "just social reaction"; this situation "caused the impetuous emergence of a great burst of solidarity between workers, first and foremost industrial workers. The call to solidarity and common action addressed to the workers—especially to those engaged in narrowly specialised, monotonous and depersonalised work in industrial plants, where the machine tends to dominate men—was important and eloquent from the point of view of social ethics. It was the reaction against the degradation of man as the subject of work... This reaction united the working world in a community marked by great solidarity" (*Laborem exercens*, N.8). Despite subsequent improvements, despite the greater and more effective respect for workers' fundamental rights in many countries, various systems based on ideology and power have allowed flagrant injustices

to persist or have created new ones. Moreover, the enhanced awareness of social injustice has brought to light new forms of injustice which, because of their geographical extent or because of contempt for the inalienable dignity of the human person, are nothing less than challenges to mankind. There is a need today to forge a new solidarity based on the true significance of human work. For it is only through a just concept of work that it will be possible to define the objectives of this solidarity and the various forms it should take.

#### *A solidarity aimed at social justice*

The world of work is the world of all the men and all the women who, through their efforts, are trying to respond to the call to dominate the earth for the benefit of all. The solidarity of the world of work will therefore be a solidarity that broadens horizons to include not only the interests of individuals and particular groups but the common good of society as a whole, whether nationally, internationally or world wide. It will be a solidarity for work, manifesting itself in the struggle for justice and for the truth of social life. For what justification would there be for a solidarity that spent itself in uncompromising opposition to others, in a struggle against others? Of course, the struggle for justice must not ignore the legitimate interests of workers associated in the same occupation or suffering from certain forms of injustice. It cannot ignore the tensions between groups which are often liable to break into open conflict. True solidarity seeks to struggle for a just social order in which all tensions can be absorbed and in which conflicts -whether between groups or nations-can be settled more easily. In order to build a world of justice and peace, solidarity must remove the foundations of hatred, selfishness, and injustice, which have too often been erected into ideological principles or as a vital law of life in society. Within the same community of work, solidarity sets out to discover the unity inherent in the nature of the work rather than the forces making for division and opposition. It refuses to conceive of society in terms of the struggle "against" and of social relationships in terms of uncompromising opposition between classes. Solidarity, which derives its origin and its strength from the nature of human work, and therefore from the primacy of the human person over things, will create the machinery of dialogue and co-operation that is needed to resolve opposition without seeking to destroy the opponent. No, it is not Utopian to assert that the world of work can also be made a world of justice.

#### *Solidarity without frontiers*

The need for man to safeguard the reality of his work and to free it from any ideology in order to bring to light once more the true meaning of human effort becomes particularly apparent when one considers the world of work and the solidarity that it calls for in the international context. The problem of man at work today must be set against a world-wide background which can no longer be ignored. All the major problems of man in society are now world problems! They must best be approached on a wide scale, in a realistic spirit, true, but in an innovative, critical spirit as well. Whether we are dealing with the problems of natural resources, development or employment, a satisfactory solution can only be found if the international aspect is borne in mind. As long as 15 years ago, in 1967, Paul VI noted in his Encyclical *Populorum progressio*: "Today, the major fact that everyone must grasp is that the social question has become worldwide in character" (N. 3). Since then, many events have borne out the truth of this observation. The world (economic crisis, with its repercussions throughout the globe, compels us to recognise that the horizon of the problems is increasingly a world horizon. The hundreds of millions of starving or undernourished human beings, who also have the right to rise up out of their poverty, should make us realise that the fundamental reality today is mankind as a whole. There is a common good which can no longer be confined to a more or less satisfactory compromise between sectional demands or between purely economic requirements. New ethical choices are necessary; a new world conscience must be created; each of us, without denying his origins or his allegiances and roots in his family, his people or his nation, nor the obligations arising therefrom, must regard himself as a member of this great family, the world community.

In other words, we must also seek a fresh significance in human work, seen in a world context, and therefore set ourselves fresh tasks. This also means that the world-wide common good requires a new solidarity without frontiers. In saying this, I do not wish to belittle the importance

of the efforts that each nation has to make, within the limits of its own sovereignty, its own cultural traditions and in accordance with its own needs, to achieve the type of social and economic development that respects the distinctive character of each of its members and of its entire people. Nor must it too readily be supposed that consciousness of solidarity is already sufficiently developed because of the simple fact that we are all aboard this space ship, Earth. On the one hand, we must ensure that nations complement each other in their efforts to develop their own spiritual and Material resources, and on the other, we must proclaim the demands made by universal solidarity and the structural consequences it implies. We must maintain this creative tension and in so doing, demonstrate how these two realities complement each other, for like the human person, the nation is distinctively individual and outward-looking at one and the same time.

### *Solidarity with work: the problem of unemployment*

Solidarity in the world of work, among men of work, has several facets. It means the solidarity of the workers amongst themselves; it means solidarity with the workers; above all, in its deepest sense, it means solidarity with work, seen as a fundamental dimension of human existence, on which the meaning of that existence in fact itself depends. Taken in this sense, solidarity casts a special light on the problem of employment, which has become one of the major problems of our present society and one with harsh consequences for the workers, something which too often is overlooked, especially when they receive no assistance from society; with harsh consequences for the developing countries as a whole, as has been the case for a long time past; harsh consequences for rural workers whose lot is so often so precarious whether they remain in the countryside, where there is less and less work for them, or whether they try to compete for the few jobs available in the towns; harsh consequences for professional workers and indeed for all those who, in various categories and various segments of the world of work, run the risk of a new form of proletarianisation whenever their specific contribution is not appreciated at its true value because of changes in social systems or living conditions.

As we know, the causes of involuntary unemployment may be and indeed are many and varied. One of these causes may lie in the improvement of the instruments of production which progressively curtail the direct share of man in the production process. This involves us in a new antimony which may well set human labour against "capital", defined as the means of production as a whole, comprising natural resources and the means by which man appropriates this wealth which has been freely bestowed upon him and converts it to meet his needs. Thus we face a new problem, which is only beginning to reveal its scope and its consequences. To identify it, even in vague and imprecise outline, means being prepared to seek a solution from the outset, without waiting for it too much to force itself upon our attention by the harm it causes us. The solution must lie in solidarity with work, in other words, in accepting the principle of the primacy of human work over the means of production, and the primacy of the individual at work over production requirements or purely economic laws. The human person is the first and ultimate criterion in the planning of employment; solidarity with work must be the overriding theme in any search for a solution, and it opens a new field to man's ingenuity and generosity.

### *Solidarity and unemployed young people*

For this reason I ventured to say in *Laborem exercens* that unemployment "in all cases is an evil and..., when it reaches a certain level, can become a real social disaster. It is particularly painful when it especially affects young people". (N. 18). Except in a very few privileged countries, mankind is now undergoing the painful experience of this sad reality. Is there always a proper appreciation of the tragedy it represents for so many young people who "see their sincere wish to work and their readiness to take on their own responsibility for economic and social development of the community sadly frustrated"? (ibid.) Can we tolerate a situation in which many young people may find themselves without any prospect of one day finding a job and

which, at the very least, could leave them with lifelong scars? To this complex problem there are admittedly no easy answers-none, certainly, uniformly applicable in all situations and in all regions. The Director-General rightly points this out in his Report to this 68th Session of the International Labour Conference and, in the course of your deliberations, these problems will surely be explored in their full complexity. In the search for answers, whether at the national or international level, the guiding principle should be that human work is both a right and an obligation for all, not only reflecting but enhancing the dignity of the human person. Moreover, this search for answers should be a matter of solidarity among all. Yes, here again, solidarity is the key to the employment problem. I say so emphatically: whether at the national or international level, a positive solution to the problem of employment, and more particularly employment for young people, presupposes solidarity of the highest degree within and among all peoples. All must be prepared to accept the necessary sacrifices, all must co-operate in the establishment of the programmes and agreements through which economic and social policy will become a tangible expression of solidarity, all must help in erecting the appropriate economic, technical, political and financial structures which the establishment of a new social order of solidarity indisputably requires. I refuse to believe that mankind today, with its prodigious scientific and technical prowess, is incapable of the kind of creative effort, inspired by the very nature of human work and solidarity among all living beings, which will yield fair and effective answers to the essentially human problem of employment.

#### *Solidarity and freedom of association*

A society of solidarity is built up day by day, first by creating and then by preserving the conditions on which the free participation of all in the common effort effectively depends. Any policy to achieve the common good must be the fruit of organic and spontaneous cohesion of the forces of society. This is another form of solidarity-solidarity as an imperative of social order, the kind that manifests itself typically through the existence and the work of associations of social partners. The right to associate freely is a fundamental right for all those who are connected with the world of work and who constitute the work community. It means that no working man need be either alone or isolated; it expresses the solidarity of all in the defence of the rights which are rightfully theirs and flow from the requirements of their work;

it affords a normal channel for participating actively in the performance of work and everything related to it, while being guided at the same time by a concern for the common good. This right presupposes that the social partners are truly free to form or join an association of their own choosing and to manage it. Although the right to freedom of association seems beyond a doubt to be one of the basic rights most generally recognised, as attested by the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), yet it is a right that is severely threatened, often flouted either in its principle or-more often-in one of its substantive aspects, with the result that freedom of association is disfigured. It seems essential to point out that cohesion among the forces of society, always desirable in itself, must be the outcome of a free decision taken by those concerned, in full independence from the political authorities and arrived at in full freedom as regards the determination of the internal organisation of trade unions, their operating methods and their activities. The working man must assume responsibility for defending the truth, the true dignity of his work. He must not be prevented from exercising that responsibility, though also bearing in mind the good of the community as a whole.

#### *Conclusion: the way of solidarity*

I have tried, transcending systems, regimes and ideologies for regulating social relations, to suggest to you a way - the way of solidarity, solidarity of the world of labour. It is an open, dynamic concept based on the idea that human work derives its value, first and last, from the dignity of the human person, in keeping with God's own command. May such solidarity serve as your guide in your debates and achievements.

The International Labour Organisation already has to its credit a tremendous record of achievement within its field. You have drawn up many declarations and Conventions and you

will draw up still more, to keep up with ever-changing problems and provide ever better answers. You have furnished guidelines and launched a multitude of programmes, and you have shown your determination to pursue that awesome adventure known as making work more human. In speaking for the Apostolic See, the Church and the Christian faith, I reiterate my most deeply heartfelt congratulations to your Organisation for its accomplishments. At the same time I pray that its work - all your efforts and all your work - will go on promoting the dignity of human labour and genuine human progress. May yours be a tireless contribution to the building up of a civilisation of human labour, a civilisation of solidarity and-even more than that - a civilisation of human love. May man, by dint of mighty efforts of all kinds, achieve true domination over the earth (Gn. 1.28) and truly fulfil his destiny as a human being, as preordained by Eternal Wisdom and Eternal Love.

*Interpretation from Spanish:* The PRESIDENT -The pastor of the Catholics, the pilgrim Pope, following all ways and facing all dangers, the Pope of the workers with calloused hands, has enriched our spirits with a message of transcendental importance for all of us, whatever our creed may be, which extends to the uttermost ends of the earth.

We have heard his message as a message for all nations, all creeds, all races, all men; a message pointing to tasks which could be carried out if we really intended them to be.

The tribute to human work, which your Holiness paid here this morning, on this unforgettable occasion, is a call to all of us - governments and peoples, employers and workers - to proceed along the path of the solidarity with the world of labour.

The world of labour, a really new world, free from injustice, selfishness, the abuse of power and misunderstandings which, regrettably, still largely characterise the relationship between production and labour in the internal order of our individual society and in the international order.

A new world in which labour will be the essence of solidarity, this solidarity which is so greatly needed by us in this world divided, as I said in my inaugural address to this Conference, by the meridians that separate prosperity and poverty. A divided world which expresses itself in violence and war, in conflict in the predominance of the powerful nations or in the exploitation of the deprived classes.

His Holiness has called for solidarity of labour and this appeal embraces all work for peace, reaching beyond frontiers to the whole of mankind. It is the new chapter of his illuminating Encyclical *Laborem exercens*. We all welcome the fact that His Holiness has chosen this International Labour Conference to bring us his message ; we are happy that he was able to do so in the presence of the Directors of UNCTAD, of the World Health Organisation, of the Red Cross, of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, bodies which are all committed - as we are - to securing recognition of the dignity of man.

This message, which in the final instance is as though the Sovereign Pontiff had looked penetratingly at each and everyone of us, seeing into our innermost minds. We, men of government, ministers, politicians, employers, civil servants, workers, journalists ; men, by respecting man, respecting the work of man, we respect human dignity.

Your Holiness, our gratitude is as deep as our emotion at having been able to be present on this historic occasion. We recall the great disappointment we had last year that we were unable to hear your enlightened words. We thank God that we have been able to do so this year. We thank you. Holy Father, for the renewed inspiration you give us to return to our daily struggle, strengthened to continue the task of building a new and more just society.

The civilisation of human labour you have outlined for us must be built here on earth for those of us who believe in the city of God that is awaiting us in eternity.

For all this we offer Your Holiness the homage of our support for your work, which knows neither fatigue nor frontiers.

*(The Conference adjourned at 10.45 a.m.)*