

PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM PRO LAICIS

YOUTH AND WORK

Proceedings of the
9th International Youth Forum



LIBRERIA EDITRICE VATICANA

Youth Collection – 4

Pontifical Council for the Laity

PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM PRO LAICIS

Youth and Work:

witnessing to Christ in the world of work

9th International Youth Forum
Rocca di Papa, 28 March - 1 April 2007



LIBRERIA EDITRICE VATICANA
2008

© Copyright 2008 – Libreria Editrice Vaticana
00120 CITTÀ DEL VATICANO
Tel. 06.698.85003 - Fax 06.698.84716

ISBN 978-88-209-8150-1

www.libreriaeditricevaticana.com
www.vatican.va

CONTENTS

Introduction 9

Wednesday 28 March:

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WORLD OF WORK TODAY

Message from Benedict XVI on the occasion of the 9th
International Youth Forum 13

Opening Address (Most Rev. STANISŁAW RYŁKO) 16

Transformations in the world of work in an age of globalisation
(Prof. GIANCARLO ROVATI) 25

Young people from around the world contribute to the theme . . . 48

Mobility, 'precarity' and unemployment
(Prof. MICHELE TIRABOSCHI) 68

Panel discussion: *Work in a changing world* 80

*The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young
people* (Rev. ÁNGEL MIRANDA REGOJO) 80

Creating new business ideas (LORENZO CROSTA) 99

*The frustrations, demands and expectations of young people
in poor neighbourhoods* (INÈS MININ) 105

Facing unemployment and crisis situations in professional life
(Rev. DOMINIQUE PECCOUD) 115

Contents

Thursday 29 March:

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

A day of pilgrimage and encounter in Rome

Friday 30 March:

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK IN HUMAN LIFE

<i>Work as a Vocation: Drawing on the Catholic Social Tradition 25 Years after "Laborem exercens"</i> (Prof. MICHAEL J. NAUGHTON)	129
Panel discussion: <i>Work at the service of the person and the person's growth</i>	151
<i>Using our talents in the choice and exercise of our profession</i> (MARGUERITE CHEVREUL)	151
<i>Work as a place for human relations and solidarity</i> (BUNITA KÖHLER).	160
<i>Work, free time, consumerism and use of money</i> (CAMILO CORONEL ESCOBAR)	166

Saturday 31 March:

PROCLAIMING THE "GOSPEL OF WORK" TODAY

Panel discussion: <i>Christian witness in the workplace</i>	175
<i>Pastoral ministry of workers today</i> (Msgr. PAOLO TARCHI) . . .	175
<i>The role of Catholic associations</i> (AGNÈS ADJAHU AVOGNON) . .	184
<i>Christians in trade unions</i> (SAVINO PEZZOTTA).	203

Contents

“Ora et labora”: joining our professional life with our Christian life (Most Rev. GREGOR MARIA HANKE) 207

Personal experiences: *In search of the spirituality of work* 220

 A young worker (IDY BALBERAN, The Philippines) 220

 A young professional (LAURA VARGAS VILLALOBOS, Costa Rica) 224

 A young entrepreneur (EARNE BENTLEY, United States) 229

Concluding address (Most Rev. STANISŁAW RYLKO) 232

APPENDICES

Countries and territories represented at the 9th International Youth Forum 243

Movements, Associations and Communities 244

INTRODUCTION

The 9th International Youth Forum, organised by the Pontifical Council for the Laity Youth Section, was held from Wednesday 28 to Saturday 31 March 2007 in Rocca di Papa near Rome. Around 190 young people, delegates sent by bishops' conferences from around the world and by the main international movements, associations and communities, came together to discuss the theme "Witnessing to Christ in the world of work". These young people already had experience of the workplace, and they came from very different vocational backgrounds. They included company employees, managers, workers, public servants, self-employed professionals, farmers, etc. Over twenty international guests were present to guide the reflection. Several of these contributed by delivering a lecture or participating in a panel discussion.

Three days were dedicated to the sessions focussing on one specific aspect of the theme each day. On Wednesday, an overview was presented of the contemporary situation of youth employment and of the current major changes being brought about by globalisation. Friday's theme dealt with the meaning of work in the light of the social teaching of the Church. The sessions on Saturday dealt with the essential question that had brought two-hundred young Christians together to this Forum: how to be witnesses and missionaries in the world of work.

The active participation of the delegates was crucial, and we encouraged them to contribute to the open discussions and working groups. They all had the opportunity to share their experiences, to bring up topics of interest and to propose new ideas. Some of them were assigned to speak to the assembly about their personal experience, and several others were asked to give a presentation on the youth employment situation in their countries and regions. The main assignment we gave them was to be carried out on their return home, and that was to transmit the Forum experience to their Church communities, and to communicate

Introduction

the message of hope they had received from working and praying together with others.

The Forum had a very full programme, but yet it was not simply a congress. It was not its purpose to be an intellectual examination of the world of work, but to be an opportunity to have a spiritual and ecclesial experience with others. In addition to sharing daily prayer and Mass together, an entire day was spent on pilgrimage in Rome on Thursday, following in the footsteps of the apostles Peter and Paul. The Forum concluded in Saint Peter's Square with Palm Sunday Mass presided by Pope Benedict XVI, joining together with the youth of Rome who were celebrating the 22nd World Youth Day.

The present publication contains the proceedings of the Forum. We sincerely hope that it will help young people to be more aware of the urgent need to be committed Christians in the world of work. May they meet the challenges this presents by living and witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus who is the only Way, Truth and Life.

MSGR. FRANCIS KOHN

*Former Head of the Pontifical Council
for the Laity Youth Section*

Wednesday 28 March
YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE
WORLD OF WORK TODAY

Message from Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of the 9th International Youth Forum

To Archbishop STANISŁAW RYŁKO
President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity

It gives me great pleasure to send my cordial greeting to you, Venerable Brother, to the Secretary, to those working with the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and to all those who are taking part in the 9th International Youth Forum on the theme “*Witnessing to Christ in the world of work*” that is taking place this week in Rocca di Papa. It is with particular affection that I direct my thoughts to the young delegates from the bishops’ conferences and the international movements, associations and communities that have come from the five continents and who work in very different fields. I extend my respectful greetings to the distinguished speakers who have agreed to contribute to the meeting with their expertise and experience.

The theme is very much a topical issue and takes into account the transformations that have taken place in recent years in the fields of economics, technology and communications, changes that have radically changed the appearance and conditions of the labour market. The progress achieved has, on the one hand, given new hope to young people, but on the other it has created disturbing forms of marginalisation and exploitation with more and more situations of personal hardship. Because of the noticeable difference between the education and training received and the world of work, it is now more difficult for them to find employment that meets with their personal skills and studies, and there is no certainty that they will be able to maintain even unstable employment for any length of time. The process of globalisation taking place in the world entails a need for mobility that obliges numerous young peo-

ple to emigrate and live far from their home countries and their families. This brings about an unsettling feeling of insecurity that undoubtedly has repercussions on their ability to not only dream and build up a project for the future, but even to commit themselves to matrimony and start a family. These are complex and delicate questions that must be faced in due course, keeping in mind the reality of our times while referring to the social doctrine of the Church. This is duly presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and especially in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

The attention of the Church in recent years has been constantly directed on the social question, and in particular on that of work. We remember the encyclical *Laborem exercens* published a little over twenty-five years ago, on 14 September 1981, by my well loved predecessor John Paul II. This reaffirmed and updated the great intuitions developed by Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI in the encyclicals *Rerum novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo anno* (1931), both written during the period of the industrialisation of Europe. In a context of economic liberalism conditioned by market forces, of competition and competitiveness, these pontifical documents forcefully call on the need to evaluate the human dimension of work and to protect the dignity of the person. In fact, the ultimate reference of every human activity can only be the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. A close analysis of the situation, in fact, shows that work is part of God's plan for humankind and that it is participation in his work of creation and redemption. Every human activity should be an occasion and place for the growth of individuals and society, the development of personal "talents" that should be appreciated and placed at the ordered service of the common good, in a spirit of justice and solidarity. For believers, moreover, the ultimate aim of work is the building up of the Kingdom of God.

While I invite you to treasure the conversations and reflections that take place over the next few days, I hope that this important assembly of

young people may be a profitable occasion of spiritual and ecclesial growth for the participants, through the sharing of experiences and personal accounts, and common prayer and liturgies celebrated together. Today, more than ever, it is necessary and urgent to proclaim “the Gospel of Work”, to live as Christians in the world of work and become apostles among workers. In order to fulfil this mission it is necessary to remain united to Christ through prayer and a deep sacramental life, and for this purpose, to hold Sunday in special high regard, for it is the day dedicated to the Lord. While I encourage young people not to lose heart when faced with these difficulties, I invite them to participate next Sunday in Saint Peter’s Square in the solemn celebration of Palm Sunday and the 22nd World Youth Day, the final stage of preparation for the World Youth Day that will take place in Sydney Australia next year.

The theme for reflection this year is: “*Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another*” (Jn 13:34). Here I repeat what I wrote to young Christians all over the world, that there may be awakened in young Christians, “trust in a love that is true, faithful and strong; a love that generates peace and joy; a love that binds people together and allows them to feel free in respect for one another”, and allows them to develop their abilities to the full. It is not simply a question of becoming more “competitive” and “productive”, but it is necessary to be “witnesses of charity”. It is only in this way that young people – with the support of their respective parishes, movements and communities, in which it is possible to experience the greatness and vitality of the Church – will be able to experience work as a vocation and true mission. To this end, Venerable Brother, I assure you of my prayers, with the heavenly protection of Mary and Saint Joseph, patron of workers, I send you and all those participating in the International Forum and all young Christian workers, a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 28 March 2007

Opening address

Rethinking work, a pressing need of our times

Archbishop STANISŁAW RYŁKO

Pontifical Council for the Laity

1. **O**n behalf of the Pontifical Council for the Laity I cordially greet all the participants to the 9th International Youth Forum that will deal with the theme: “Witnessing to Christ in the world of work”. A very special greeting to you, dear young people, the main players in this gathering. You have been selected by the relevant commissions of the bishops’ conferences and the ecclesial associations and movements to which you belong, and you represent around eighty countries from five continents. Your presence makes this Forum an “observatory” for the world on the situation of work for young people, and each one of you is here to make a contribution. I greet the speakers, the moderators and the experts that are taking part, and I thank you for having generously accepted to bring to this Forum a contribution that comes from your expertise and wisdom. Last but not least, I greet our guests and thank you for honouring us with your presence.

As we begin this Forum, I wish to express our deep gratitude to the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI for his personal message to the participants. Once again this demonstrates his paternal concern for young people and for the problems and the challenges they face today. His words are a great gift and they will be a stimulating guide for us during this conference.

2. Work is the central theme of the ninth International Youth Forum. It is a delicate question nowadays and is seen as one of the most important areas in our lives, one that is undergoing “an epoch-making

phase of transition”.¹ The globalisation phenomenon has brought about major widespread change in the organisation of work. We are passing from an industrial type economy to an economy centred principally on services and technological innovation. We are told that in the world of big industry progress mostly means a reduction in personnel, and technological development means replacing workers with computerised systems.² This implies greater mobility and flexibility in work and, specifically, a passing from dependant employment that is not fixed-term, that is, a permanent position, to a working career characterised by a succession of different kinds of occupation and habitual changing of job. We are passing from a system of work that is compact, clearly defined and conventional to a universe of fixed-term and part-time employment that is chequered and changeable, full of promise but also containing disturbing uncertainties concerning the future. Flexibility easily becomes precarious. Analyses carried out on the present situation are not lacking in voices of warning. They denounce the phenomenon of the “commercialisation of work”, of “occasional flexibility”, of “throw-away jobs”. It is not surprising, therefore, that surveys show that one of the strongest and most common fears in economically developed countries is the fear of current or impending unemployment.³ The social doctrine of the Church points out how unemployment is a “real social disaster”, especially when it affects the younger generations, and it constantly reminds us of the fact that “work is a good belonging to all people and must be made available to all who are capable of engaging in it. ‘Full employment’ therefore remains a mandatory objective for every economic system oriented towards justice and the common good”.⁴ In this

¹ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 310-316.

² Z. BAUMAN, *Consumerism and the New Poor*, Open Univ. Press, 1998.

³ Cf. *Ibidem*.

⁴ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, cit., 288.

sense, it is significant that reduction in unemployment levels is not included among the parameters of a healthy economy as laid down for entry into the European Monetary Union.⁵ There is no doubt that the world of work is undergoing a change that marks the end of an era and the start of another in which fresh and innovative opportunities are unfortunately accompanied by huge anxieties.

3. Right in the eye of this cyclone of changes in the marketplace and in the organisation of work, we always find a predominance of the younger generations. According to statistics, the highest rate of unemployment everywhere is that of young people, and the age at which they enter the workforce is forever increasing. Moreover, an almost systematically precarious situation in the field of employment brings about the postponement of fundamental life decisions, in particular moving away from home, marriage and starting a family.⁶ For many of them this state of affairs is a cause of great hardship and of a sense of helplessness confronted with a situation that they despair of changing and that could confine them to an attitude of passivity or sterile resignation.

Nowadays it is very important to know how to be open to the possibilities offered by the new labour market. Therefore, young people have need of a profound change in mentality. They need to be convinced that resorting to apathy will not be of any help whatsoever. It is possible to transform a crisis into an opportunity. They have to try to understand the meaning of the transformations under way and to give an appropriate response. The young people of today should regain the strength and courage needed to take control of their lives and be builders of the future, entrepreneurs, creative, capable of risk, investing their best energies into their professional training and, where necessary, into a change

⁵ Cf. Z. BAUMAN, *Consumerism and the New Poor*, Open Univ. Press, 1998, cit.

⁶ Cf. M. SACCONI – M. TIRABOSCHI, *Un futuro da precari? Il lavoro dei giovani tra rassegnazione e opportunità*, [A precarious future? Youth employment between resignation and opportunity] Mondadori 2006, p. 28.

Opening Address

of career. In this regard, there are those who speak of a “cultural revolution” that has still to take place.⁷ This implies, in particular, a radical rethinking of the educational role of the family, as well as of the school and university system in relation to the world of work. Young people need a revitalisation of hope so that they will really understand that not all the *res novae* [new things] in the labour market⁸ are necessarily a bad thing. Ours are times of new paths, of new professions, of new kinds of enterprises and new ways of understanding the economy. It is up to us to point it towards a more human and caring world.

4. Work plays a decisive role in the existence of each person. It is a necessary means by which we can earn our living and go on to form and raise a family, and to contribute to the common good. Work is the pre-eminent way for individuals to be self-fulfilled and to express and grow in their human dignity. However, labour is often understood and experienced in a disparaging, superficial and ambivalent way. As someone said, “work is liberating, absorbing, and involves you to the extreme, and then it becomes exciting, but also draining, empty and meaningless. It is inevitable and economically and socially indispensable, but at the same time it is intolerable, the object of growing condemnation, a place of humiliation and anxiety. Work today is at the centre of all kinds of ambivalence”.⁹ This is why the question of the meaning of our work and our daily toil – one of the central queries we shall be discussing during this Forum – is so essential for each one of us. Human work cannot be reduced to “do in order to have” because if this is an end in itself, it enslaves us. Work should regain its dimension of “do in order to be”, to be more as persons and as Christians...

⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 69.

⁸ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, cit., n. 88.

⁹ A. CAILLÉ, *Il lavoro dopo “la fine del lavoro”* [Work after “the end of work”], Città Aperta Edizioni 2003, p. 8.

In *Laborem exercens* the Servant of God John Paul II wrote “Work is a good thing for man – a good thing for his humanity – because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes ‘more a human being’”.¹⁰ Work is therefore an essential expression of the inner life of a person, for each product of his/her labour leaves its own indelible mark. This ‘personalist norm’ is fundamental for each and every individual who works, and for the “social order of work”. The labour market should “enable a person to become, in work, ‘more a human being’ and not to be degraded by it not only because of the wearing out of his/her physical strength [...], but especially through damage to the dignity and subjectivity that are proper to [the human person]”.¹¹ Here we find ourselves at the heart of the “Gospel of work” proclaimed by the Church which continues to reaffirm that “the primary basis of the value of work is man himself, who is its subject. [and that] however true it may be that man is destined for work and called to it, in the first place work is ‘for man’ and not man ‘for work’”.¹²

Work, however, although necessary, should not become an absolute. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* warns against “the temptation of making an idol of work, for the ultimate and definitive meaning of life is not to be found in work. Work is essential, but it is God – and not work – who is the origin of life and the final goal of mankind”.¹³ There is a genuine risk of allowing ourselves to be enslaved by work. It can be like a drug that satisfies us to such a point that we forget about the things that really matter. It is not by chance that “workaholics who work beyond the timetable from morning till night

¹⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens*, n. 9.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*, n. 6.

¹³ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, cit., n. 257.

Opening Address

seven days a week, in this day and age are not counted among the slaves, but among the elite of the fortunate and successful”.¹⁴ Work is necessary, but it must regain its proper sense and place in a person’s life. A person must have time for rest, because it “gives men and women the possibility to remember and experience anew God’s work, from Creation to Redemption, to recognize themselves as his work, and to give thanks for their lives and for their subsistence to him who is their author”.¹⁵ The Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI places emphasis on the fact that “it is on the day consecrated to God that men and women come to understand the meaning of their lives and also of their work”.¹⁶ This is why Sunday is so important for Christians. It is the day of the Lord on which we stop to take account and step back from our daily routine to reflect on the one true goal to which we all aspire. “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing” (*Lk* 10:41), Jesus said.

5. Work does not only have a human and moral value, but it also has spiritual and salvific benefit.¹⁷ This is how we reach the summit of the “Gospel of work”. This Forum is for all of us an opportunity to discover the beauty of the Christian spirituality of work. The dignity of human work resides in the fact that each person is called to collaborate with awareness and responsibility in God’s work of Creation and Redemption. The greatness of humanity is seen when working in collaboration with and not against our Creator. Consequently, we have the moral duty to use our intelligence and will to the utmost to bring to completion those talents granted to us by God so that they may best correspond to the divine plan. Therefore, when making important

¹⁴ Z. BAUMAN, *Consumerism and the New Poor*, Open Univ. Press, 1998, cit..

¹⁵ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, cit., n. 258

¹⁶ BENEDICT XVI, Post-synodal Apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, n. 74.

¹⁷ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens*, n. 24.

choices – choosing a profession among them – it is important that you ask a fundamental question: What does God want from me? What does God ask of my life?... Benedict XVI wrote in his message for World Youth Day this year: “Develop your capacities, not only in order to become more ‘competitive’ and ‘productive’, but to be ‘witnesses of charity’. In addition to your professional training, also make an effort to acquire religious knowledge that will help you to carry out your mission in a responsible way.¹⁸ The Pope therefore affirms that charity is the fundamental and definitive measure of human work. It is love that confers on our toil a decisive value that does not perish, but endures for eternal life: “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (*Mt 25:40*), said the Lord. Later, Paul would say: “Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (*Col 3:14*), love for God and love for neighbour. In this way our work, no matter how simple and ordinary, becomes doxological: *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. United to the Eucharistic sacrifice, it becomes a priestly act, a pleasing sacrifice to God, expression of the common priesthood of all the baptised. In *Sacramentum caritatis*, Benedict XVI wrote:

“Christians, in all their actions, are called to offer true worship to God. Here the intrinsically eucharistic nature of Christian life begins to take shape. [...] There is nothing authentically human – our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds – that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full”.¹⁹ For this reason, work is for us the normal way to Christian perfection, a school of holiness. The ancient Benedictine maxim “*Ora et labora*” is essentially a powerful call to us never to allow our daily work to lose its referral to God, the ultimate source of the meaning of human existence. Between our faith, our sense of “being Christians”, and our daily work, there

¹⁸ BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 22nd World Youth Day 2007*.

¹⁹ BENEDICT XVI, Post synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, n. 71.

Opening Address

should be unity and continuity. Christians are also called to witness to Christ through their work, and the world of work today is an important Areopagus awaiting the proclamation of Christ and the Gospel. “You are the salt of the earth [...] You are the light of the world [...] let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (*Mt* 5:13-16), are words that the Lord continually repeated to his disciples. They are exhorted to do their work well with honesty, diligence, commitment, professionalism, with great respect for the people they meet, and to apply themselves always in a spirit of charity and solidarity. Each one must do their part to bring a new culture of work that emanates from the Gospel into the various areas of humanity’s daily toil. This is an area that pertains to the apostolate of all the lay faithful, adults and young people. The Second Vatican Council tells us that by their vocation “seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.”²⁰

6. Here we have the broad outline of how we shall approach the topic of work over the next few days. We sincerely hope that our reflections will produce appropriate elements to help young people not only to understand the full meaning of work, but also to face up to the sad situation of hardship brought about by precarious employment and unemployment. It is our common desire that this Forum may succeed in its aim to give a concrete response to questions on this most important topic of work that is so widespread in the world. However, as we look at

²⁰ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, n. 31.

the evils inflicted by the labour market that have heavy repercussions on the younger generations, we especially want to proclaim the “Gospel of work”, being aware that as Christians we have much to offer in order that the present labour market may truly place itself at the service of the human person. If we want this to happen, we cannot wait for others to do this for us: the State, politicians, economists, entrepreneurs, mayors. Of course, each of these is important and they have a role that they should not refuse to acknowledge. It is equally important that each one of you, according to the principle of subsidiarity, should play your own part. As individuals or as part of communities, associations and movements to which you belong, you should use your creativity, entrepreneurship and spirit of solidarity. We must base our efforts on the social doctrine of the Church, a sure compass and a true mine of inspiration and encouragement to action. May this Forum be for all of you a suitable opportunity to discover or rediscover this important teaching of the Church. May the message we take with us be a message of hope. It is precisely of hope that the youth of today have the most need.

One more observation: our Forum is an ecclesial experience and epiphany of a Church that is young, missionary, and has faith in the future. For this reason the main parts of the conference – talks, panel discussions, group work and debates – will be interspersed with community prayer and eucharistic celebrations. Moreover, an entire day will be dedicated to an introduction to Christian Rome, in particular with Saints Peter and Paul, two pillars of the Church that conserves their tombs. As in the previous Forum, the high point of this one will be the meeting with the Successor of Peter, Benedict XVI, on Palm Sunday, during the celebration of the 22nd World Youth Day that will open the last stage of the path of preparation for Sydney 2008 for the youth of the world.

We entrust our Forum to the special protection of Saint Joseph, patron saint of workers.

God bless the work!

Transformations in the world of work in an age of globalisation

PROF. GIANCARLO ROVATI

Lecturer in Sociology, Sacro Cuore Catholic University of Milan, Italy

A general overview of the transformations in the world of work in our contemporary age is not easy to present. Ours is an era in which the interdependence of peoples with their economies and cultures has greatly increased. The challenge in describing the consequent changes is due to the huge differences that exist within each industrially advanced country and also between those countries and other nations that have only recently taken the path of industrialisation. The specific conditions (technological, economic, environmental, organisational, cultural) under which a person's work is carried out are in effect extremely variable, and it is only with ample generalisations that we can identify some broad basic lines. If we look at advanced industrialised countries, we see a common characteristic, and that is the transition from specifically industrial-manufacturing work to post-industrial work. This is marked by the growing production of services and non-material goods (e.g. basic and applied research) and high utilisation of capital. If, on the other hand, we look at countries undergoing industrialisation, we see that common characteristics include the opening up of basic manufacturing production, a high intensity of labour, products mostly destined for export and only at a second level destined for the internal market and hence for the well-being of the home population. These two variants can only be partly attributed to the idea of one great industrial "means of production", and they do not automatically correspond to a geographical-territorial specialisation in the international division of work. We can see advanced industrial production (e.g. the manufacture of personal computers) localised in recently industrialised areas

and traditional industrial production (e.g. footwear, clothing, construction) that remain localised in advanced countries, often employing immigrant workers to compensate for the local labour shortfall or the refusal of a section of the local population to fill jobs that they shun and perceive as being low paid.

A study of the transformations taking place in work cannot be limited to a consideration of the objective aspects. If we base it on these, work is counted as just one of the factors of production at the same level as technologies, capital and organisation. Even more important are the subjective aspects that define the human character of work, its scope, its rights and its meaning.

By means of work, we not only assemble the items we need in life, but we also build human relations, and through these, forms of sociality and solidarity. It is through work that the creativity of people is expressed, and their ability to transform the world according to their requirements and desires. It develops their sense of responsibility towards others, as well as awareness of their own dignity and rights. In this sense work is an integral part of a person's education as it completes their training and helps them to grow and mature.

1. THE GLOBALISATION PROCESS AND ITS INTERPRETATIONS

Over twenty years have passed since the concept of globalisation entered permanently into the language of the social sciences (economics, sociology, political theory, international relations) and many changes have taken place in the meantime both at the phenomenological level and in theoretical study on the characteristics and dynamics of the globalisation process. The multiplication of theoretical studies is undoubtedly brought about by the fact that globalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon that produces profound effects at the economic, social and cultural level.

The origin of the globalisation process is due to a growing interdependence between the various economic and social systems that came about with the birth and spread of the modern world, and it encompasses the spheres that are prone to change: the social-cultural, institutional and individual. This increase in interdependence was decisively influenced by certain important scientific-technological innovations, beginning with those that impact directly on the transport and communications systems. These shorten geographic distance in the spatial and temporal sense and thereby make the world we live in so much smaller and reachable, giving it far greater intercommunication.

The most obvious example today is the arrival of the internet and mobile telephone. They allow us to be in contact with each other at any distance in real time. This has made obvious to all of us something that a pioneering researcher in communications defined as the “global village” (McLuhan, 1964; McLuhan and Powers, 1989). This term is a classical oxymoron intertwining two opposing concepts. A *village* conveys the idea of a small community who know each other and meet each other daily without needing to expend much energy, while *global* describes an entity without confines that embraces the entire globe. The familiar and the uncharted merge together. Closeness and distance blend in a time-space compression previously unknown in the history of the world (Giddens, 1994). The notion of the growing interconnectedness of economic, social and cultural systems was sustained on the theoretical level by the “world-system theory” developed in the 70s by the sociologist Wallerstein (1978) on the basis of theses formulated by Braudel on the *economie-monde* (1979). Its supporters claim that the world-system theory should substitute modernisation theory and dependency theory, bringing us to interdependence theory. The idea of interdependence has been applied to relations between states and nations, relations connected to the ecosystem, the environment, demographic development, economic growth, and coexistence between cultures and civilisations.

Aside from the more optimistic perspectives, we should take note that the increase in the flow of communication and economic exchange has not brought about the disappearance of conflicts and inequalities. If anything, they have become even more evident and intolerable to anyone with a common sense of justice.

Like every macro-social process, global interdependence also produces costs and benefits: it furthers cooperation wherever it allows for exchange of goods and services between countries at similar parity, but at the same time it reduces autonomy and advantages for weaker countries as they have a lower bargaining power; most exchanges do not eliminate inequalities between the more advanced and less advanced countries. The emphasis that is placed on the ongoing gradual convergence towards one means of industrial and capitalist production makes us underestimate the weight and relevance of the persistent economic and social inequalities that continue to divide the world. This dialectic is not only experienced by economic and social systems but also by individual people. While they realise that they are living in an increasingly "circumscribed" and "close-by" world, they are also aware of the persistent divisions and inequalities that characterise the world in which we live.

Globalisation therefore plays an ambivalent role. While it accelerates exchange and contacts, it also raises the perception of cultural diversity and brings about ambivalent feelings of curiosity yet of estrangement, of familiarity yet of backing away (Beck 1997).

Together with the economic and social aspect, there is a cultural dimension at work in the globalisation process. It is carried through the great networks of the culture industry and communications (typically global), through exchange of manufactured goods (semi-finished and finished), and through direct contact between individuals and groups that belong to different ethnic groups, nations and civilisations. Among those involved in cultural exchange we remember all those who form part of the massive movement of international tourism which is a form of voluntary and temporary mobility. There are also huge numbers who migrate (tem-

porarily or permanently) which is semi-obligatory due to circumstances beyond their control. Together with merchandise, cultural products, long-distance interpersonal communications and direct contact, there is a transmission of symbols, meaning, values, conventions and customs that promote awareness of diversity, sometimes tearing down barriers of misunderstanding and sometimes making them even stronger.

In the early days of contemporary modernisation there were those who imagined globalisation would bring about a great blending of cultures by demonstrating either effects of integration or those of uniformity and violence. Beyond the expectations both favourable and otherwise, historical experience has shown that globalisation does not in fact imply automatic homogenisation and cultural integration. On the contrary, it lives side by side with cultural fragmentation and has in fact generated an unprecedented dialectic between local and global cultures. The perception of similarities and possibilities of understanding are therefore intertwined with the perception of differences, inequalities, and potential (or real) cultural and political conflicts.

This experience in the western cultural context has provoked a reconsideration of possible forms of meeting and inclusion of the "other". This has led to the theory of a form of coexistence no longer based on assimilation or integration but rather on multiculturalism, that is, the right to preserve what makes us different (Habermas, 1998; Habermas and Taylor, 1998; Kymlicka, 1999). The tacit assumption of this model is that all the participants of multiethnic and multicultural societies will accept the criterion of tolerance and the principle of voluntary adherence, but it is precisely the many refusals of this assumption that have placed in crisis the practical implementation of a model that is noble in intent but abstract in practice (Beck, 2003).

A widely debated point is the equilibrium between advantages and disadvantages that globalisation produces on development, on economic and cultural equality, and on the extension of human rights under the terms in which they are defined in contemporary western culture. On

each of these aspects opinions differ, according to the empirical evidence that can be called upon in favour of one or the other perspective. In other words, it is difficult to define a final all-embracing equilibrium. With regard to development and the possible expansion/reduction of inequalities, there is no doubt that globalisation has increased them, both in terms of contrasts between the more advanced countries and the more undeveloped, and in terms of social-economic indicators conventionally used by international bodies (Gallino, 2001). It is equally true, however, that the countries that have entered the orbit of globalisation have improved their position, while those who have remained at the margins produce worse economic and social indicators (Ornaghi, 2001).

The controversial interpretations of the globalisation process have aroused not only an intense intellectual debate, but they have provoked the emergence of cultural and political movements openly opposed to the spreading of what has been called “capitalist” or “liberalist” globalisation. Even within this movement of opposition to “the system” that initially called itself the “no-global” movement, there have emerged positions that differ somewhat, and from the initial block refusal they have arrived at formulating proposals for its governance. It is for this reason that many critics of the globalisation process today prefer to define it as “new global” (Stiglitz, 2002).

The cultural transformations connected with the globalisation process could not have achieved their present characteristics and levels if from 1995 onward we had not witnessed the spread all over the planet of the great technological and communications revolution linked to the internet (World Wide Web). It is rightly considered to be the mother of all networks, the subject of the theoretical paradigm of network analysis. Just as the spread of the press in the West brought about what McLuhan (1962) called the Gutenberg Galaxy, the spread of the web gave life to the Internet Galaxy as it was defined by Castells (2002), one of the greatest scholars and theoreticians of network systems. What I wish to emphasise here is not so much the history of the internet or its

countless applications, but the effects that this prodigious technology (which is part of the microelectronics revolution) has introduced at the organisational and production levels and hence at the level of how we work. The arrival of the internet brought about a “new economy” and a “new way of work” in which the “flexible” functioning of different organisation and production systems are the main fallout/consequence. The spread of the internet has brought about huge changes not only at the macro level but also at the micro level: in the organisation of companies, in the professional careers of workers, in work relations.

The paradigm of network analysis – which draws its inspiration from information technologies – uses observation of experience and at the same time a forward-looking perspective when attempting to reshape preceding organisational models. They were unavoidably more rigid and limited by the obligation to use direct relations, as they lacked communications channels that were equally interactive but did not require simultaneous physical presence. “Networks are open structures capable of being expanded without limits. They integrate new nodes until these are able to communicate with each other within the network, that is as long as they share the same communication codes. A social structure that is founded on networks is a highly dynamic system, open to innovation and yet not compromising equilibrium” (Castells, 2002: 536).

This paradigm underpins the organisation of “business networks” that are made up of several autonomous units. They relate to each other on a basis of cooperation rather than on hierarchy because of the contribution of their specific specialist skills. Business networks (large or small) are organised around projects carried out in cooperation with other companies that are interconnected for as long as necessary. On account of the new information and communications technologies, the businesses take on a more “horizontal” organisational structure that permits them to keep decentralised processes of production under control even at great distances. These aspects are directly linked to the question of flexibility, a concept that has become almost central in the

area of new interpretive paradigms and new empirical evidence. In any case, although the emergence of the network economy would be unthinkable without the supports provided by information technologies, the system of concepts and innovation remains. However, it is closely tied to the capabilities of human work as it remains the source of productivity, innovation and competitiveness.

When we think of the future of globalisation, it is helpful to remember that we are not dealing with an impersonal and inevitable process. This is a concrete historical phenomenon, the result of unforeseen circumstances but also of conscious choices and decisions. This historical phenomenon, for example, has been deeply affected by two events of an economic and political nature: the first event was the sudden increase in oil prices in the seventies, that struck, simultaneously and severely, both the western developed economies and the less developed oil importing countries. The oil shock laid bare the strong economic interdependence between countries in several continents and it showed the need to find more effective ways of coordination between the choices of national and international political economies, reinforcing tendencies that were already taking place. The second event was the soviet block crisis at the end of the eighties (with the emblematic fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989) and the simultaneous “pro-market” orientation that saw, on the one hand, the sudden abandoning of central planning as used in the ex-socialist economies, and on the other, the tendency to de-nationalise that was taking place in the western countries, with the liberalisation of international capital flow, deregulation, and the privatisation of production activities under public control. In synthesis, the process of globalisation has most recently been affected by simultaneous phenomena that are *geopolitical and international* (ultimately linked to bipolarism at a global level, a factor that also led to the inclusion of China in the global sector), *institutional innovations* (connected to the move towards liberalism and deregulation in the main developed countries), *technological innovations* (with specific reference to ICT) and *financial innovations*

(involving many more people and financial instruments, especially of the derivative kind). Each of these elements continues to operate today and will most likely operate in the near future, but it is evident, for example, that possible geopolitical “upsets” could inevitably modify the frame of reference.

2. GLOBALISATION TRENDS SHORT TERM OUTLOOK

According to a recent World Bank report on global economic forecasts for 2007 (World Bank 2006), in the next 25 years globalisation could bring about faster growth in mean income than that registered between 1980 and 2005, and developing countries will play a central role. For the 2007-2008 two-year period it is expected that growth in developing countries will show about 6 per cent which is more than double the growth rate of high income countries which is forecast at 2.6 per cent. Nevertheless, the World bank forecasts – in the absence of adequate readjustment policies – that this growth could be accompanied by greater income disparity and dangerous pressure on the environment.

Strong economic growth in developing countries could have a significant impact on global poverty, with a reduction of 50 per cent in the number of people who live on less than one dollar a day (going from the present 1.1 billion to 550 million in 2030). Nevertheless, some zones, especially on the African continent, risk being left behind, with income disparity that could increase within many countries.

Developing countries that only twenty years ago produced 14 per cent of the manufactured goods supplied to rich countries, today supply 40 per cent. By 2030 they will most probably supply over 65 per cent. At the same time, the demand for imports from developing countries is becoming the engine of the global economy. The ongoing integration of markets will make jobs all over the world mostly subject to the pressures

of competition. Increasing cross-border competition will mostly affect unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Instead of defending jobs that are no longer competitive, governments should support workers who have lost their jobs and offer them new opportunities for employment by encouraging training and career flexibility.

On the basis of the forecast put forward by the World Bank, by 2030, 1.2 billion people in developing countries (equivalent to 15 per cent of the world population) will enter the “global middle class” and join the present 400 million. This class would have a purchasing power of between 4 thousand and 17 thousand dollars per capita, and it would allow international travel, cars and other durable goods, international level education and important decision-making roles in the policies and institutions of their country and the world economy.

The authors of the Report conclude by emphasising that the challenges presented by globalisation impose new responsibilities on national governments and international organisations. At the national level, governments must insure that the poor participate in economic growth by creating investments in their favour in the fields of education, infrastructure and reintegration in the labour force. At the international level, the Report asks institutions to make more effort to address the problems of shared resources, and it also asks for greater and better assistance for development. Even the reduction of trade barriers is important, given that this can allow more opportunities for poor countries.

3. MIGRATION, DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT, WORK

A fundamental component of the most recent globalisation process is the resumption of *international migration*, especially in developing countries. The incidence of immigrants in developed countries (coming from both developed and developing countries) has almost doubled in the last 20 years. It was 6.2 per cent in 1980 and reached 11.4 per cent

by 2005, the number of people being 112 million out of a total of around 180 million migrants. The impact of national and international politics on the level of migration is not easy to foresee, but it is highly possible that the number of migrants is likely to increase significantly. This is not so much because of the difficulties in controlling borders as because developed countries still have reasons to attract them. These include the reduction in the available labour force due to the combined effects of an ageing population and the higher levels of education that reduce the numbers with low and middle level skills, especially in some sectors. In practice, advanced countries have to recover part of this deficit with a growing number of immigrant workers, most of whom are young people in search of a better life.

The internal causes of migrations from the South to the North will also continue to have a strong impact. Most of all, it will be influenced by the difference in potential income which will continue to remain high in the future. In the second place, it will be influenced by the combination of a high number of people wishing to emigrate and the gradual reduction in the costs of emigration. The third cause is the excess of the labour force with respect to the possibility of adequate employment.

The economic importance of migratory phenomena is explicitly documented through the dependence of many countries on the remittances of their emigrants.¹ On the social and cultural level migrations facilitate the transfer of ideas and lifestyles from one country to another with possible positive consequences for the innovation of the whole system. In each of the interested parties (society of arrival and departure) there are phenomena of cultural hybridisation and mixing taking place, and this is one of the characteristic traits of contemporary multiethnic and multicultural societies. Cultural exchange however is not automatic nor harmonious insofar as it can also bring about misunderstandings,

¹ For example, India receives annual remittances from its emigrants that correspond to six times its receipts in external aid.

barriers and conflicts. In addition to the positive aspects of migrations – which on the personal level are never without trauma and fatigue – there are also the risks of the impoverishment of human capital in the countries of origin, especially when those who emigrate are the most dynamic and educated of that population. The problem of the fragility of local cultures and social networks with respect to the processes of globalisation is furthermore a real problem with which those in global governance should concern themselves.

The migratory question is intertwined with the *demographic dynamics* of developing and developed countries. The developed countries are showing a huge decline in birth rates (well below replacement levels), a stable workforce that is beginning to decline and a rapidly ageing population. Developing countries, on the whole, are also showing a significant reduction in fertility levels and a substantial reduction in the number of young people in the total workforce. People in the working age group are still increasing rapidly in most countries because of the increase in births during the past two decades. Most developing countries are only having a modest increase in the older population because the increased lifespan is affecting the middle generations, that is, the more recent rather than the older generations.

Partly linked to demographic and partly to political-economic dynamics are *employment prospects*. According to World Bank forecasts, employment growth in developed countries will remain stable until 2010 with about 1.2 million new jobs annually. However, it will immediately become negative with an average loss of about 700 thousand jobs between 2010 and 2015, destined to increase to over 3.2 million between 2025 and 2030. The cause of this contradiction varies from country to country. It is already discernable in Japan, it will begin in the EU countries after 2010, and it will be postponed in the United States, Australia and New Zealand. On the other hand, growth in the labour force is fast in developing countries which, however, need about 50 million jobs annually in order not to have great numbers of unemployed. The greatest need can be seen in China and India

where 8 to 10 million jobs need to be created every year. Even the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa need to create almost 10 million jobs each year, but their low economic growth makes this difficult to achieve.

Growth in the workforce in developing countries is guided mainly by demographic conditions and is essentially determined by the growth of the working-age population. On the other hand, the increase in qualified workers is due to the improvement in schooling rates of the younger generations.

4. YOUTH AND WORK IN EUROPE

The problem of youth employment and training is very much taken into account in the EU and has been the subject of many studies, directives and proposals. One of the most recent documents that deserves particular attention is the communication on *European policies concerning youth* (March 2005). It examines the employment situation of young people in the 26 member states (including Romania) on the basis of unemployment figures, legislative norms and national programmes specifically aimed at raising levels of employment (European Foundation 2007). The study is based on individual national reports drawing from integrated guidelines. In general, young people are defined as those between the ages of 15 and 24 in conformity with the norms that regulate the ages of those entering the workforce and finishing higher studies. However, there are countries that extend the age of youth to 29-30 and over.

The most recent demographic projections drawn up by the Commission² indicate that between 2005 and 2050 the youth population between 15 and 24 years of age is to decrease from 12.6% to 9.7% of the total population, while those aged over 65 will increase from 16.4% to 29.9%.

² *The Commission's Green Paper on 'Confronting demographic change' 2005.*

The first consequence of this trend is that a lower number of young people will have to support a higher number of elderly people. Secondly, the thrust towards growth and compatible development will require a significant contribution on the part of the youth population, and they will therefore have to be adequately prepared to sustain the task. Thirdly, the entry of youth into the job market is crucial to ensure social inclusion, all the more so because this presents a high risk of poverty, reaching 19% as opposed to 12% of those between 25 and 64 years of age.

The available data show how entry into the job market is difficult for young people. The average rate of youth unemployment in Europe is more than double (17.9% of those under 25) with respect to the older age groups (7.7% among the over 25s). It is of particular concern that the economic slow-down has an immediate effect on the rate of youth unemployment. The imbalance remains high between the genders in accessing the job market. Even though young women do better in their studies than their male colleagues, they are more likely to find themselves unemployed. Young women also have a higher risk of poverty than young men.

In youth employment programmes, the first objective in many countries is to facilitate entry into job training in order to foster inclusion in the job market. A less common way of furthering youth employment is the promotion of entrepreneurship by giving grants to finance young people who want to go out on their own or set up their own business.

Public policies tend to consider those at risk of unemployment to be young people who lack job training, have little schooling, and lack work experience. Those most at risk of exclusion are young long-term unemployed, and special programmes have been set up to help them. Long-term unemployment is devastating for all workers, but for young people this experience runs the risk of ruining their chances of ever finding a job. Efforts are made to open up possibilities for them to find a first job and incentives are given so that they will maintain them.

Young people who are new immigrants or second generation immigrants are particularly at risk and have a higher rate of unemployment

than average. The aim is to encourage these young people to obtain qualifications as lack of education and training is the main cause of exclusion from the job market and of increasing marginalisation.

Ongoing discussions in all European countries on how to combat youth unemployment come up against another common question: how to guarantee young people an income without creating disincentives to study and search for work. The problem is particularly noticeable among young people in a state of poverty who have to be helped earn an income and at the same time helped to enter a virtuous circle of commitments and responsibilities (Sarfati and Bonoli, 2002).

The main topic in debates and policies to combat youth unemployment is the gap between education, qualifications and the skills required by the job market. All European states claim that education and training are the best means of addressing youth unemployment. At times the states respond to the problem by prolonging education and at the same time by fostering flexible ways of work. Over and above the time spent in education, the quality is crucial. There is a great risk that the level of instruction and the professional skills acquired do not respond to the needs of a rapidly changing job market. The youth population have a great variety of needs and resources. In any case, it is necessary to identify the needs of the industry and the financial sectors in order to draw up the most appropriate policies regarding work and to implement them. The context in which this takes place has become integral to the multiple objectives that must be combined in order to ensure employability, company competitiveness, social cohesion and economic sustainability in Europe.

5. EDUCATE FOR WORK, EDUCATE WORK

As I mentioned at the beginning of this lecture, work as an experience involves more than the financial and professional aspects. There is also the need for self-esteem, social satisfaction, security and a sense of usefulness and fulfilment.

Each of these demands – integral to the way one works – can be threatened by several factors: the lack of job opportunities, skills, development, protection networks, and adequate motivation. The transformations at work in the economy and organisation of work continually test ability, tenacity, the spirit of entrepreneurship of each individual and collective; they require realism and ability to adapt, but at the same time imagination and creativity, gifts not to be taken for granted, but that are in the very fibre of all who are young. The challenge is also addressed to those responsible for policies, and they can be helped by the exuberance and innovativeness coming from the lower ranks.

Work expresses an active relationship with reality, because its purpose is to transform reality so that it will respond to one's needs, desires and projects. In order to be equal to the task, people who work need to be educated, instructed and trained adequately by other people who have already taken the same course and who can demonstrate their work capabilities to others. More than in previous societies, contemporary society needs to *educate* the younger generations *for work*. At the same time they must *educate the work*, even that of older generations, using the constant and rapid transformations that mark the present methods of working.

5.1. *Flexible work, nomadic work*

In the advanced industrial countries, we have been going through an *epoch-making transformation of work*, going from the so-called “Fordist system” – manufacturing, rigid, predictable – to the so-called “post-Fordist” system based on flexible production and on the decisive importance attained by the production of services. In the Fordist period a relatively *stable method of production* prevailed, and this brought about, among other things, a particular system of guarantee and security. Stability, which in the agricultural economy was based on the land, over the past 100 years has evolved into becoming the relationship that a

person establishes with companies and large bureaucratic organisations. It was in this context that the concept of *job* arose, as well as the trade unions of the common people who strove to attain better *security for workers*, in the form of protection of wages, health and job stability. This system is based on the premise – realistic for the industrial era, but no longer realistic in the present phase – that we have to tie personal security to large productive or bureaucratic organisations. People's experience of work is increasingly linked to *movement and transition* through kinds of work (dependent and independent), types of activity (manual-executive or intellectual-autonomous), employment sectors (industrial, commercial, services) all undergoing *constant change*. Dependent and independent work are no longer two separate options that we embark on at the beginning of our working life, but are different phases in our working careers. This is an inevitable trend in a system in which organisations are no longer stable. Technology and markets change rapidly, and therefore the average life span of an organisation is no longer 40 years, as it was before, but only a few years. In this context, work can only be a path that gradually changes its own structure, marked by contents, contract relations and social connections.

Our cultural systems and our social institutions are not yet equipped to deal with this state of affairs. This was seen at the European summit (2000) during which there was the launching of an ambitious programme for the next decade in Europe “*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*”. One example, even if indirectly, is the debate on work flexibility and the so-called “atypical jobs” (fixed-term work done by workers with autonomous contracts). Something that has escaped most public opinion until now is that this type of work is not a “sector” in the job market, but is an ever more frequent phase of every person's working life. Each person's working career is more and more varied, with phases that are not full-time work and that are non-permanent. Therefore it

does not make sense to make a distinction between what is considered to be “typical” and that considered to be “atypical”. The flexibility demanded of workers is the mirror result of the flexibility required in the companies that operate in competitive markets; a flexibility that is first of all organisational, but that sometimes serves to deal with the peaks (positive and negative) of demand or the need to drastically change activity. It is not only the younger generations who are involved in this process. Older workers are implicated too, and it is perhaps they who are most at risk of being sidelined from the job market. All these transformations cannot but generate a general sense of uncertainty and precariousness, and this is felt more intensely the more they are separated from the networks of formal and informal solidarity that are capable of providing information, knowledge and opportunities for training and work. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the real “guarantee” of work is not in the nature of contracts, but in a context of full-time employment.

We should observe that the flexible and irregular organisation of work that we experience is not only in the interests of the companies but also of individual workers corresponding to demands tied to stages in their lives. The demand for flexibility and irregularity closely suit the young generations who are setting out in the world of work but at the same time wanting to continue their studies or alternate periods of study with periods of work. The formula of training courses or part-time work or job training contracts that takes place in all European countries is a practical response to young people’s need to “try”, “experiment”, “explore” a series of possibilities, without being tied for long to any of these.

A peripheral but quite eloquent case of this option is that of *nomadic work*, made possible through the web and mobile phones, of thousands of people (most of whom belong to the advanced economies), who choose, for a period of long or short duration, to travel with their backpacks and at the same time to have paid and professionally qualified work in the field of research, marketing and communications.

What is suitable for one phase of life is not so good at other stages, for example, when one assumes family responsibilities and needs a better and steady income. This kind of flexible and individualised organisation of work depends on the existence of a dynamic and vital economy where work opportunities are plentiful and where professional and geographic mobility are just as intense. In practice it requires a society that is thoroughly mobile, with people who are culturally and psychologically equipped for mobility. Otherwise the costs (or benefits) of mobility and flexibility fall on specific social groups who are mobile for two different reasons: either they are so poor in opportunities and skills that they are available for anything in order to survive – as happens to immigrants when they first arrive in a foreign country – or because they are so rich in opportunities and skills that they can choose to change continually, as happens to those in the higher classes.

5.2. The importance of training and new forms of solidarity

If large companies and bureaucratic organisations are no longer able to build a system of security around the worker, in what way can we create new points of reference to reduce the inevitable uncertainty? A possible answer is to foster a system of security and social protection built around a new kind of “professional solidarity”. Already towards the end of the eighties, at the level of social volunteer work, there were new experiences of solidarity aimed at creating networks of personalised support in the areas of training and matching supply and demand. These experiences were at first built around certain professional areas (information technology, commerce and crafts) and they gradually expanded to other areas. In addition to their undeniably practical use, these experiences influenced the culture in such a way as to bring back to the centre of attention, in a non-bureaucratic way, interest in the individual and in a person’s professional skills. Many institutional training initiatives use this “capital” – supported by public funding – and

thereby socialise the costs of ongoing professional updating, something that could not be afforded by individuals themselves.

Work protection at the present time should be seen as a *support in the shaping of a professional career*, and not to leave a person alone, especially at the most critical moments. It would involve training support, help in matching supply with demand, support in starting new initiatives, help with insurance. The approach should be comprehensive, that is, people should be helped from the moment they arrive on the job market and then throughout the various phases they go through. Those searching for work already have an experience of unemployment behind them and they often face such strong bewilderment or disappointment that they find it hard to take up or resume an active position, not only towards work but towards life in general. In the allocation of services for guidance and training there is nevertheless a need to create personal relations with each individual. It is the *person* who should be helped in this process, not the *client* presenting occasional demands. It is therefore necessary to have an integrated structure of *services to the person* that includes guidance, supply-demand matching, and ongoing training. This system of personal services cannot be managed by old or new public bureaucracies, but it should be continually able to follow the changes in the job market with a high degree of dynamism and specialisation. In practice, it is necessary to reinforce services, especially through a system of *local networks* (because the power of initiatives of this kind is in their ability to recruit people wherever they are) and, secondly, through connections with *national networks*. They can discover real needs only by sharing the situation of workers. A worker left alone is at risk of succumbing to despair.

5.3. *To give meaning back to work*

I have mentioned several times that we are entering a very diversified world of work with problems and possibilities, some of them unprecedented. The methods of industrial production undoubtedly

brought about deep changes with respect to the methods of pre-industrial production that had been unchanged and repetitive for centuries. In the post-industrial era we are seeing even faster changes in ways of work, not only in the sense of professional contents and organisational forms, but also in the *sense of work* that needs to be seriously rethought and rebuilt.

At the origin of work there is the need for human beings to make reality correspond more closely to their needs. The purpose of work is to *humanise reality*, and on the other hand work also implies the need to *adapt to reality*. By means of work, a person changes the surrounding reality, but is also changed through relating to it. Reality is not produced by us. It existed before us, so in our relating to reality we should experience continual change. From this point of view, we see today a “work fatigue” that is not so much due to its difficulty as to its lack of significance. Every job requires effort (intellectual, physical and psychical), but what makes it light and bearable is the connection with the object, the purpose and the ideal for which one is working, in other words, its meaning.

In the footsteps of Jewish-Christian tradition, western culture has drawn up a concept of work for which the terms of reference are the *good of the person*. This dimension might seem obvious to the point that we tend to take it for granted, and yet in other societies or cultures this perception of work is and has always been non-existent. In contemporary western society work is easily reduced to its dimension of usefulness for survival, earnings and power. In the oriental cultures work is often seen as servility, as total integration in society and as self-effacement in fulfilling the destiny of the country.

As all the social encyclicals have emphasised, particularly “*Laborem exercens*” by John Paul II (1981), at the centre of every working experience there must be the good of the *person*, and from this comes the *collective* good. This concept is different from that of classical liberalism which sees the pursuit of individual interests as fundamentally opposed

to the social, like Marxism which also gave primacy to collective interest, overriding individual rights. In the experience of social movements of Christian inspiration the two things stand together. On this point there has emerged (and continues to re-emerge) a substantial cultural and organisational dialectic with other ideological and political traditions. The first resource of work is not the *capital* – which has to be there in any case – but the *person*. This is quite a challenge in our economy today. Under certain conditions, everyone today could share the idea that “healthy competition” helps to improve the collective well-being. In order that work (and the market) do not become a jungle, it is necessary to remember that the measure of reference is the good of every person. It is from this that true justice is born.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BECK U., *What Is Globalization*, Polity, Cambridge 2000.

BECK U. *The Brave New World of Work*. Cambridge University Press 2000.

BRAUDEL F., *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XV-XVIII siècle*, Colin, Paris 1979.

CASTELLS M. *The rise of the network society*, Blackwell, Oxford 2000.

European Foundation, *Youth and work*, Dublin 2007.

GALLINO L., *Globalizzazione e disuguaglianze*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 2001.

GIDDENS A., *The consequences of modernity*, Polity, Cambridge 1990.

HABERMAS J., *The inclusion of the other*, MIT, Cambridge MA 1998.

HABERMAS J., Taylor C. (1998), *Multiculturalismo. Lotte per il riconoscimento*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

KYMLICKA W., *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995.

MCLUHAN M., *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*; 1st Ed. McGraw Hill, NY 1964; reissued by Gingko Press, 2003.

Transformations in the world of work in an age of globalisation

- MCLUHAN M., *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Univ. of Toronto Press, 1962.
- MCLUHAN M., POWERS B.R., *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1989.
- ORNAGHI L. (ed.), *Globalizzazione: nuove ricchezze, nuove povertà*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2001.
- SARFATI H., BOTOLI G. (eds), *Labour Market and Social Protection Reforms in International Perspective*, Ashgate Publishing Lt., Burlington 2002.
- STIGLITZ J. E., *Globalization and Its Discontents*, W.W. Norton, 2002.
- WALLERSTEIN I., *The Modern World System*, Academic Press, New York, 1978.
- WORLD BANK, *Global Economic Prospects 2007: Managing the Next Wave of Globalization* (Dec. 2006).

Young people from around the world contribute to the theme

AMINA PORTER, USA

The Youth Experience in North America

“THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY... FOR THE EDUCATED AND SKILLED”

Needless to say, the experience of young working adults in the U.S. and Canada is a very difficult topic to sum up in 5 minutes, so I will attempt to give some highlights and emphasize 3 major themes: 1) The need for higher education and technological skills to improve job security in this era of globalization, 2) The impact of young women in the professional workforce, and 3) Our hope for the future, particularly in Catholic Christian circles where we have an obligation to witness for social justice, the value of the human person in this pro-abortion/pro-death age, and the importance of strengthening and protecting the family...all of which we must often address at the workplace.

THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

For young people entering the work force today, it is absolutely crucial to prepare for a fast-paced, high-turnover globally competitive labor market. Back in the 1950's, 60% of workers in the US were unskilled – today less than 20% are. Young adults planning a career in retail, service, or technology find themselves needing to keep up with technological trends to maintain productivity at a time when such jobs are being increasingly outsourced overseas. Job security is not guaranteed, but most workers have adopted a spirit of flexibility. A recent study showed that in Canada “career confidence” is high – in other words, employees

are more confident about finding a comparable job if laid off today than they were 6 months ago. The survey (which included 18 countries and 9100 workers) concluded that employees in Norway were the most confident, the UK had the most pessimistic workers, and the US and Canada workers' confidence was on the rise. In addition, more and more young people in the US and Canada are opting to start their own businesses and follow the path of entrepreneurship.

Unfortunately, for the surprisingly large number of young people who do not obtain a solid public education the story is very different. One-third of Americans do not attend college or some form of further education after high school. The working poor and disadvantaged have an uphill battle without basic skills and literacy. In fact, 1/5th of working Americans have a zero or minimal literacy level in reading and math. Without these skills, large numbers of Americans are in greater danger than ever before of falling behind as the age of globalization and technology speeds ahead.

YOUNG WOMEN IN THE WORK-FORCE

Today in the US more women than men attend college (the average college campus enrollment is 58% female vs. 42% male), and most go on to work in a variety of fields. The number of women pursuing higher education with graduate degrees in business, law, medicine, and education has continued to rise. In my field, OB-GYN, more than 75% of OB/GYN residents are female.

This group of women, however, are different from the feminist pioneers of previous decades. They have unique expectations of having a fulfilling career outside of the home and having the flexibility to devote time to family as well. As many young professional women are postponing marriage and family until they have established their careers, some have the expectation of returning to work only part-time after having

children. As businesses have begun to grow more accustomed to the demands of working mothers, men have followed suit with demands for parental and family leave with the birth of a new baby or other demands at home. In this way, the workplace in general has become a bit more humane in acknowledging the need for balance between work and life outside of work.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Young adults entering the North American work force today face interesting challenges. No matter what type of career or workplace environment, particularly Catholic and other Christian young adults find opportunities to witness to their faith ...on the job. I can speak from my own experience in health care, that scarcely a day goes by without a discussion of politics, ethical and unethical practices, or comments about a woman's access to abortion "services," and other hot topics that set us apart as a culture of life in the midst of our current culture. We are increasingly committed not just to earning a living, but also to securing social justice for those outside of our national boundaries.

* * *

MICHÈLE KHALIFÉ, *Lebanon*

The Youth Experience in Lebanon and the Middle East

Ever since I was invited to speak about the recent trends in the world of work for young people in Lebanon and the Middle East, I have been asking myself about it and discussing the issue with young colleagues at work.

I feel I should mention that the notion of globalisation is not understood by young people. The idea is actually absurd for some, and they do not understand or are not aware of its impact and the changes that it has brought about. Moreover, for some the notion of globalisation is only connected to the political dimension and the increasing influence of the West. As you can imagine, to speak on this subject with regard to the Middle East is not easy.

Our diversity is not only among the countries of the Near East – Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Palestine –, and those of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, etc., but there is also diversity within each country. In Lebanon there are 17 confessions. I can tell you that each community behaves, interacts and evaluates the world in their own distinctive way. And, of course, we have to take into account the politicalisation of social life. The youth of the Middle East live with politics and everything is subject to the law of politics.

Globalisation is therefore perceived (if it is perceived at all) by young people according to their political affinities and their ideologies. Either it is a symbol of the influence of Western superiority often rejected by the nationalists, or it is perceived as a means of progress and opening up to the West by those in the other camp and those not involved in politics.

This contradictory effect and dilemma lead young people either to consider globalisation as a weapon that they should not leave in the

hands of the world powers; that they should educate themselves for it, learn foreign languages especially English, and have professional experience abroad with the only aim of mastering that weapon that they consider fatal for their country. Others consider it to be a means of self development and a way to avail of opportunities that were denied to them before, or simply inaccessible because they see the Western world as more developed than theirs and constantly progressing. In any case, we cannot deny that globalisation exists and has brought progress to the Middle East, although with varying effects and rhythms.

At the economic level, one of the major tendencies in most countries is the increasing number of multinationals that are opening up offices in the region. For the youth of the Middle East, to be hired by a multinational is considered a privilege and a chance not to be missed because of the better working conditions, better salaries, access to further training, international experience, etc. In order to be hired, you must have foreign languages, have followed higher studies, be quite open and most of all be capable of leaving your milieu and integrating easily with new structures, mentalities and customs.

The way the youth of the Middle East deal with the new trend differs from place to place. In Lebanon, the fact that the level of education is high, that foreign languages are commonplace, and that the youth are able to accept other cultures and to integrate easily has allowed a better acceptance of multinationals and their presence in the job market (even if we cannot generalise this fact for all social categories). In Syria, they are opening up much more slowly. The lack of qualified workers and their substitution by foreign workers in management positions causes a feeling of frustration and inferiority among the young. This does not help to reduce the unemployment levels nor to increase the minimum wage which remains low. In the Gulf countries it is even more complicated. The multinationals continue to grow while the youth of the country are seldom hired. On the one hand their mentality and their easy financial circumstances do not encourage them to find work, especially

in multinationals where they have no privileges and are treated the same as the other employees. On the other hand they often lack the necessary training and the will to undergo it.

To conclude this point, multinationals are one of the main factors of globalisation. They have created more opportunities for work at a higher level for young people who have the necessary qualities, leaving the others marginalised. It has meant the exportation of young qualified people to the West because of the opening up of world markets (another factor of globalisation) and at the same time it has unfortunately weakened local craft enterprises where there is an increase in unemployment for young unqualified workers.

At the social level, another trend in globalisation that I would like to mention today is the working habits of young people. Ever since globalisation started to spread with multinationals, privatisation, the opening up and exchange with world markets, and the presence of international organisations and their local influence, the habits and customs of young people have changed. To wear signs of your religion in clothing and ornaments is often prohibited in the large multinationals. Religious customs are often not respected. For example, the official holidays mostly had a religious connotation to allow everyone to celebrate religious feasts with their families and communities. In order to adapt to the international economy, the countries in the region have had to more or less follow the general rule. This has added confusion to the way of life of young people and has created a difference between theirs and the old way of life. Even weekend holidays have had to change to coincide with those of the West. For all the middle eastern countries except Turkey and Lebanon the weekend was Thursday and Friday. For the past few years this has changed to Friday and Saturday in order to reduce the gap with the rest of the world. Working hours have also changed. In order to synchronise with world markets, working hours are often prolonged, especially where there are no laws to oversee the rights of employees in these countries that we could consider to be mostly underdeveloped. All

of these changes have overturned the lifestyle of young people from a more family oriented life following the rhythm of religious and local customs to a more western style of life with work as the centre of interest and especially as the main criterion for social recognition, sidelining the basic values that characterised this part of the world. We should note that in this region even aspirations have changed. Unskilled jobs are held in low regard. The kind of work esteemed by society now is the kind that requires a high level of education. Consumer behaviour has also changed. Traditional products are now spurned.

To conclude: globalisation has brought many changes to the Middle East. I have only mentioned two points here. In my opinion, young people are affected by this wave both positively and negatively, like with all the other new trends that have taken place in this era. We just have to know how to take everything into consideration and adapt to changes that are inevitable and indeed necessary.

* * *

LUCY JUBARA, *Sudan*

The Youth Experience in Sudan and Africa

Sudan is the largest country in Africa, located in the eastern part of the continent and bordering nine countries. The population is about 30 million, and the official languages are Arabic and English. There are 580 tribes in the country. The religions are Islam, Christianity and other traditional beliefs. Catholics make up 70% of Christians.

Sudan is a developing country with high potential for development, but this is being slowed down due to political and socioeconomic circumstances.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment for young people in Sudan is assisted by the Government to some extent by reserving jobs for graduates of certain colleges, particularly in the fields of medicine and education. However, graduates in other fields receive no help and the unemployment level is high. Our leaders are reluctant to employ young people for fear of losing their jobs. This attitude is hindering development in many parts of Africa.

NGOs that work in Africa to bring humanitarian aid employ graduates in fields unrelated to their training. Meanwhile, vacancies are left unfilled in certain governmental sectors. Moreover, those graduates find it difficult to return after much time has elapsed and take up employment in their profession. We feel that this is one factor that hinders development in our country.

Unfortunately, the high rate of unemployment drives some young

people to become involved in activities that are not beneficial to our society, for example, drug addiction, forgery and gangsterism.

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Young people in Africa are generally brought up to be aware of cultural diversity with all the differences in religions, ethnicity and cultural traditions. However, in Sudan most people are still affected by the past twenty-one years of civil war. Young people are working hard to rebuild the nation through initiatives of peace building and trauma healing. They try to promote a climate of forgiveness rather than vengeance.

Although young people maintain their culture and traditions to a certain extent, they are also influenced by behaviour in western countries. Now we have cigarette smoking, sex outside marriage, etc. Sometimes we feel that our way of doing things is inferior, but in fact it may simply be different.

RELIGION

Young people in Africa generally participate fully in Church activities. The Church in Africa plays a large role in their faith life and encourages their participation. However, they are not often given roles of responsibility in Church life.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

The devastation of twenty-one years of civil war in Sudan has left much of the country in poverty. Young people who are employed have to support their extended families and they find it impossible to pursue their personal goals. Although there are financial institutions that grant loans, they do so only to people belonging to the "correct" political party.

POLITICS

In many parts of Africa “power lies in the barrel of a gun” as many regimes are military. It is quite common that leaders rule for life unless they are taken out by a bullet. It is very common to see an unequal distribution of wealth, lack of tolerance for other groups, injustice and human rights violations. Under these conditions, young people find it hard to follow their dreams in life and work in a profession of their choice. However, in my country at least, the youth are committed to rebuilding our society that has suffered so much from war. We have great hope for the future.

* * *

DIEGO VACOU, *Argentina*

The Youth Experience in Latin America

Hello. My name is Diego Vacou and I come from Argentina. I have been asked to give a brief description of the work situation for young people in my country, Argentina, and in Latin America. This is quite a challenge. Although the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have many things in common, we also differ in many ways. However, we can say that Latin America is an extraordinarily rich part of the planet with plenty of natural resources, biodiversity, water and forests. It is blessed with resources that should really guarantee the livelihood of all Latin Americans. Unfortunately, we are witnessing an increase in poverty and misery whereas it ought to be totally the opposite.

The effects of globalisation, as many have already said, have sometimes been only at a political level and have not reached the people.

Social marginalisation seems to be on the increase. In Latin America there are 230 million people practically living in poverty, and 100 million experiencing extreme poverty who have to struggle to meet their daily needs. This is scandalous in a continent so rich in resources.

One of the problems affecting my country, and I think most Latin American countries, is the question of education. The system is inadequate and there are many school dropouts. Some leave school at a young age in order to work. It is estimated that 17 million youngsters between 5 and 14 cannot continue their studies because they are regarded as being potentially economically active and so they must go out to work to help support their families. We should consider, first of all, that a child should not have to work, and secondly, they certainly should not have to do hard jobs as they can be harmful to a child's health. They are often employed in drug trafficking, the sex industry and other kinds of activities that do not consider their welfare but leave children without hope for the future.

Salaries do not correspond to the cost of living in Latin America. They do not always guarantee an employee the means to make a living, to pay for adequate housing, transport, etc. Only a section of the population have the means to access available resources. There are in fact two levels of society: the middle and upper classes who have access to resources, and the rest of society who are excluded and marginalised.

There is also a notable difference at work between youth and adults. A young person earns 40% of an adult's salary. I work in a bank which was a state bank that privatised 8 years ago. My older colleagues who have been working there for a long time and passed to the private entity, earn twice the salary we younger employees earn. This happens in many businesses and corporations.

There are many transnational and international companies who arrived in Latin America a long time ago and who are providing work opportunities. However, they require cheap labour and offer contracts

that we find ridiculous as they constantly need to be renewed because they last for two weeks, or maybe a month or three months.

The older generations used to expect to remain in their jobs until they retired with a pension. Now in Argentina and Latin America nobody is assured of work. People starting out in employment do not know how long it will last. It is quite probable that they will have to change their job, either for a better one, or because their contract has been terminated. From this point of view globalisation is not a positive thing for employment. It is positive for communications, as the professor said in his lecture. Many things have become accessible to us through communications and the internet, and they save time and shorten distance. However, they also divide humanity sometimes.

For example, a wall is being built between Mexico and the United States at a time when we feel we should be tearing down walls in order to unite people. It is time for more contact, to be united with the richness of our various cultures so that all may have equal dignity. We see that, with respect to developed countries, this is not happening in Latin America. Another large problem in Latin America is the disparity in income. A minority of people and companies have the most earnings and many people do not even have access to the minimum.

As our bishops in Latin America say, globalisation is neither positive nor negative, but it depends on what we do with it. The challenge for Christians in Latin America is to turn globalisation into solidarity, to humanise it, not to leave it to politics and economics that suit a minority. It should be enjoyed and experienced by all and guarantee that we may all get along together in peace.

As I said, Latin American countries have many things in common like natural resources and their great cultural richness, and the differences in language are not very great. Nowadays there is a growing Latin American identity. This is not always a good thing as it can give rise to political “adventures”. The fact that there is not a good standard of education and that there are many poor people, means that “adventur-

ers” easily enter politics. This has given rise to many cases of corruption. My own country has quite a high level of corruption, even though it has decreased recently, but not enough. We have to continue working to make corruption disappear. This makes young people feel that the future is not secure with regard to work and the future of Latin America. Things can seem bleak, and there is no motivation to work hard. Many young people have no interest in working because they do not know what the future holds. It is a challenge for us Christians to bring meaning to work.

As mentioned earlier, women also suffer from sexual harassment, and from the lack of respect for their rights as women and as mothers. They are important in the workforce of our country and of Latin America. Many women are studying in the universities, perhaps even more than men. There is more equality between men and women. There are feminist groups, although it is not always clear what rights they are demanding.

Another concern in Latin America, not yet widespread but on the increase, is the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas). This comprises the treaties for free trade between the powerful American countries and the underdeveloped countries. Although there is nothing written that says that natural resources can be taken to more developed countries, it does say that they can be privatised. The services in Latin America are potable water, gas and energy. These can be privatised and taken out of the country without controls or phytosanitary barriers and taken to other Latin American countries and the more powerful countries.

The free zone areas are another sad reality. There are international capital companies that set up in underdeveloped countries, produce their products, package them and take them back to their countries. They go to underdeveloped countries because they are not charged high taxes. They have cheaper labour, and they do not always provide social security and benefits that workers require. This means much lower costs for the companies in manufacturing their goods.

Young people from around the world contribute to the theme

As I said, globalisation will do whatever we want it to do. This is the challenge for Christians. We hope that this Forum will help us to bring a beam of hope to our countries. From what I have heard so far, it is giving us a vision of what is happening in our countries and also showing us good things to be imitated and others to be corrected. We can learn from the experiences of others. Thank you.

* * *

PHAM QUANG HUY, *Vietnam*

The Youth Experience in Vietnam

1. SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Vietnam is a developing country with a market-oriented economy which has been growing at a high rate in recent years. At the end of 2006, Vietnam officially joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), and now it is more integrated in the global economy.

Together with the development of the economy, the material life of the Vietnamese has improved and the spiritual life has also changed very quickly. People have more chances to take part in as well as to share the achievements of other cultures and civilizations of the world. However, the negative aspects of a “hedonistic culture” bring about many adverse effects. It causes many complicated problems for society such as unemployment, emigration, social evils, or the commercialization of education and health care. These troubles greatly influence Vietnamese youth who make up a large percentage of Vietnam’s population (60% of the people are under 30 – according to the data from Vietnam Government statistics).

2. SUMMARIES OF THE VIETNAMESE YOUTH SITUATION IN RECENT YEARS

This report is not an exhaustive description of the situation of Vietnamese youth. Only general features of the problem through writers' viewpoints and the data and ideas collected from the media and newspapers are mentioned, as follows:

2.1. *Some positive points*

– Vietnamese young people are very active, sensitive and swift to access new things. They predominate in many new main sectors and fields in Vietnam such as stock investment, internet, information technology and other high technical areas... They will play a very important part in the process of industrialization and modernization of the country by the year 2020, according to the Vietnam Government's assessment.

– Vietnamese students are very hard-working, industrious and interested in studying. Thus they obtain great achievements in many national as well as international exams. There are more and more students who study abroad to obtain new modern technical and scientific knowledge so that they can get more experience and understanding for themselves and serve the country.

– Many young people are willing, energetic and desire to advance, always trying their utmost to better themselves. They do not accept a backward life but aspire to get rich. According to a survey of 500 students in grade 12 at some high schools in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh city about their choice of future occupation, most of them prefer jobs or sectors from which they can get much money such as business (20%), IT (15%)... (from *Vietnamese youth in renovation times*, page 62).

– Vietnamese youth live in wholehearted solidarity and helpfulness with their friends and colleagues.

– Although the number of young people taking part in missionary activities is not much, it has been increasing year by year. In many dioceses, there are charitable groups consisting of many young people who are willing to visit and help HIV/AIDS patients with the desire that they can ease the pain of these unfortunate people. Besides charitable activities, we are now also focussing on young students and workers' pastoral ministry. We establish youth groups for praying and sharing the Word of God and to help them to understand the Catechism in order to guide them in life. Consultancy offices have been opened in some dioceses to help emigrants regarding health, psychology, friendship, love, jobs, etc. John Baptist Cardinal Pham Minh Man, Archbishop of Saigon was appointed by the Vietnam Bishops' Conference as head of the pastoral ministry of migrants.

2.2. Some negative points

– “Nowadays the youth are more attracted by a hedonistic lifestyle”. That is a very exact comment by our Pope John Paul II in his work “*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*”. As in society in general, Vietnamese youth are more influenced by the bad aspects of the market economy. They prefer living in luxurious ways and they become less thoughtful and caring. Few young people are willing to live for public benefit.

– For some of the youth, morality is further corrupted. They imitate the free and licentious lifestyles seen in foreign films and publications. In love, young people are attracted by sexual desire instead of respecting the holiness of love. The number of abortions is increasing. Vietnam is one of the countries with the highest abortion rate in the world (about 35%).

– Some young people are involved in social evils such as drugs and prostitution. According to the official report at the beginning of the year 2006, there are about 105,000 cases of HIV infection in which about 18,000 people are suffering from AIDS and over 10,000 have died from this in Vietnam. (The actual number must be higher, even 4-5 times).

– The unemployment rate in Vietnam is about 5-6%. The number of emigrants from the rural areas to the cities increases annually and most of them are young. They flock into the cities to get jobs but few of them can get a good job. The average income is about USD 450-500 per year.

– Marriage is now in crisis. Many young families have broken up because people often get married without careful preparation beforehand. They live without taking care of and respecting each other. They consider marriage certificates as just formal contracts. There are even some marriages only serving commercial purposes or other benefits. The traffic of women and children is a sad problem in Vietnam now.

– In the Catholic Church, young people's spiritual life is facing many difficulties. Many of them go to church because they are obliged to by their parents, not by their own choice. The number of young people taking part in the activities of the parishes is still limited.

3. CONCLUSION

Due to the changes in social and economic conditions, Vietnamese youth now tend to follow many other new standards and values in their lifestyles. Anyway, their keen desire, ambitions to achieve success, their energy, enthusiasm and sensibility to the signs of the times are traditional characteristics of the youth in Vietnam.

Faced up with the many problems of young people, parents and others who take responsibility should have tolerant attitudes and reasonable viewpoints so that they can find out the reasons and solutions for existing troubles together with their children. This may help the youth to get more experience to overcome difficulties, limit their weakness, and maximize their strong points so that they will know how to use their talent and understanding, the wonderful gift of God to be used for the benefit of society and the Christian community.

* * *

OLGA KARPOVA, *Russia*

The Youth Experience in Russia and Eastern Europe

Hello. My name is Olga and I come from Moscow in Russia. I would like to say a few words about our country.

For the past number of years all the countries in eastern Europe have been undergoing a complete transformation at the social and economic level and also at the professional and educational level. Everyone knows that we have passed from a state-controlled market to a free market. I must say, in parenthesis, that in Russia now the state is clearly attempting to recuperate the role in the market and the economy that it lost 15 to 20 years ago. Moreover, as you know, some countries in eastern Europe are now in the European Union, and so their circumstances are entirely different from ours. Therefore, I would like to concentrate on the Russian situation, both because I know it better, and because it would be of more interest to those of you who come from the European Union.

I would say that Russia is rather an unusual case because there are two conflicting tendencies. On the one hand there is a certain amount of integration with international structures. Russia is a member of international agencies like the United Nations and G8. We have ratified the Bologna Convention which means that the Russian University system is gradually establishing connections with European educational establishments and entities. We are also preparing to join the World Trade Organisation.

However, on the other hand there are still forces that tend towards separation. This morning, Archbishop Rylko told us that the age of young people entering the world of work is constantly rising. In our country young people begin to work even before they finish their uni-

versity studies. This is partly due to a fear of unemployment which we discussed earlier, but it is also due to the fact that it is very hard to find a good job after graduating. This is because employers look for candidates with work experience. The result is that, unlike in the 1970's and 80's, young people prefer to enter the job market rather than continue with their university studies or research. Statistics show us that ex-university students want to acquire new qualifications, get experience in the field and learn new languages, because this is all useful for their careers. One in four change profession. For example, there are many mathematicians who have become specialists in public relations or advertising, and many philologists who have joined firms and work as clerks. I would not say that this is all bad. It often happens that the first professional choice is conditioned by parents and this has a strong influence on the university courses chosen.

In our society there are also tendencies against integration. Pope John Paul II knew the situation in eastern Europe very well, and in many of his talks and in the Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, he pointed out the risks we faced after the fall of the communist system: the logic of the market – possessing and acquiring (even using unlawful means), using and disposing, taking advantage of others, diminishing family values, etc. This all goes against the Russian way of life which was always rooted in Orthodox Christian values. That is why we often hear Patriarch Alexius II, Head of the Russian Orthodox Church, together with the Synod and collaborators, raise his voice to warn us not to live according to corrupt western principles, but according to our values and our Christian traditions. However, this is not something new. Even at the beginning of the last century a Russian Catholic priest, Sergej Solovev, a nephew of the famous philosopher Vladimir Solovev, said that we need the West of Dante and Saint Francis of Assisi more than the West of the telephone and telegraph, that is, of spirituality and not technology.

Young people from around the world contribute to the theme

I would like to emphasise that all of this presents a challenge for us young Catholics, because we must strive to collaborate in society and not side with nationalistic forces that want to keep our country from the process of integration.

Thank you.

Mobility, ‘precarity’ and unemployment¹

PROF. MICHELE TIRABOSCHI

*Director of the Marco Biagi Centre for International and Comparative Studies
Lecturer in Labour Law, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia*

I find that it is not at all easy to speak briefly on complex technical issues like mobility, precariousness and unemployment. In addition to that difficulty we have the challenges of language, not only of terminology but also that connected to different practices and traditions. What might be included in the topic of work for an Italian, most probably will not be an issue for a Brazilian or Mexican and for others with very different backgrounds. I shall try, therefore, to summarise my concepts as briefly and concisely as possible. Please bear with me if this talk does not go into great depth in certain respects, but I think that it will be possible to deal with more complex questions in the debate afterwards.

As I said, there is a double difficulty here. The title of the topic I was given – Mobility, ‘precarity’ and unemployment – is a very western and Eurocentric title. It clearly does not reflect the experience and circumstances of other countries. However, it can help us to find a point of convergence because it brings to light certain ambiguities and contradictions that go together with the topic of work.

On the one hand – taking the case of Europe with which I am most familiar – the topic of work includes the new situation of precarious and temporary employment, and the difficulties encountered by young people trying to enter the job market. We must also be aware of the fact that, in Europe today, young people are certainly more highly educated and usually enter the job market after substantial years of education and training.

¹ Translated from a transcription of Professor Tiraboschi’s talk.

On the other hand, we have the emerging economies where the situation is completely different, perhaps similar to the circumstances here many decades ago. In the cultures and job markets of Europe, the concept of “youth” is becoming wider. When we speak of youth and work, the first ambiguity emerges because “youth”, according to statistics and current legislation in Europe, are people under the age of 25. At the same time, in Europe and advanced countries, 25-year-olds are not yet in the job market. They are still studying and are often still living in their parents' home. Therefore, when they enter the job market they are no longer youths as they are between 28 and 30 years of age.

There are countries that “throw away” the years of youth in the sense that young people do not develop according to models that to us seem to be integrated and tranquil (education and training). They are countries in which there is an enormous level of wealth and development, but the younger generations do not enter the labour market. They no longer want certain kinds of job – especially unskilled manual work. Nowadays we see a huge number of young people who leave their native countries to go to these countries to fill those jobs. Many of them are talented and even brilliant, and many are quite highly educated. The contradiction is precisely this: we often see an immense contrast between rich and poor countries, between the north and the south. Therefore, the subject of young people entering the world of work is very complex because the circumstances are so different due to demographic and social development. There are huge differences in the markets, the rules and logic, the cultures and levels of political intervention.

However, nowadays the topic of youth and work is becoming a national and international emergency, although some global organisations like the International Labour Organisation are working hard on this issue in order to establish common norms. These norms may seem to be unimportant in industrialised countries, but they are actually important for them too because they establish a minimum standard for decent work related to the age of entry into employment. These are

important aspects that need international regulation, even if nowadays, unfortunately, the rationale is nationally based. The issue of work presents enormous difficulties because national decision-making bodies in this matter still predominate. International norms unfortunately play a secondary role. They try to follow some emergency cases like the most harmful and precarious forms of youth labour and often underage labour, but there is a lack of proactive competence to standardise the rules through which youth enter the job market.

However, when we speak of youth and work, we believe that the most important indicator is the level of unemployment, except in the cases of some developing countries where they do not even speak of unemployment. Yet people there have to emigrate and leave their own land and go in search of work. Of course, the level of unemployment is an important element and can shock at first glance. Young people are in fact far more effected by unemployment than older people. In some countries, for example in eastern Europe, they have a very high rate of unemployment of about 35-40%. Yet even countries like Italy and France have rates of 20-25% youth unemployment. Others like Germany have lower rates, and then the lowest rates are found in Japan and the United States.

However, unemployment is not the only significant parameter. Those who study the issue at a technical level will realise that the problem is not just unemployment, but rather inactivity. This means that they are neither in a process of education and training nor are they employed. They have chosen or have been obliged to remain inactive because they abandoned school or training, and when they did not find a job they were discouraged. This is an important element that does not appear in statistics. However, there is one fact that I believe is significant. Although it applies to Italy, it can be seen at an international and comparative level. We in Italy talk a lot about unemployed youth and temporary jobs, yet we know that temporary youth jobs are no more than one million units. Meanwhile, people who are not studying or

training and do not even have a temporary work contract, are about one million three hundred thousand. In a working population of twenty-three million, this figure is indicative. We do not realise – although many of you from other countries are aware – that the more advanced countries speak of the lack of jobs or of precarious work or low-level work, yet the main problem is that many do not even arrive at the job market. Many lose their way, and these are most probably the weakest and most disadvantaged.

Here too the concept of youth has to be seen from different angles because there are various categories of young people. They come from the north and from the south, from rich families and from less well-off families. We know very well that even in advanced countries, if you are young and male, it is much easier to enter the labour market. There are far more difficulties to be overcome if you are female. Then we have young people with disabilities and hardship, young people who are excluded and at the edge of society. The weakest of the weak, the dropouts, are outside the networks or any set course, and they lack any kind of security. It seems today that youth in general are a weak group, at least with regard to their opportunities to enter the job market. However, there are sectors of youth who suffer even more.

In outlining this scenario for you today, I would like to find an element that would permit us to really use common terminology in order to realise that, beyond the difficulties due to economic and social circumstances, there is perhaps an element that unites all of you here. The question you young people ask yourselves, whether you are Canadian, Chinese or South African, is the same one: what is my future career?

We know that the world is still divided, even if our theme this morning was about phenomena like globalisation that have removed borders from markets. This world is in fact still divided. However, all of you, no matter what nation you come from or your experience and traditions, you have a common identity that unites you today in the sense that you all wonder how you can fulfil your dreams and your talents in

the service of society, in the service of your life plan. I believe that this is the point of departure in discussing such complex issues. It reminds us that we all have experiences to contribute that are similar to those of so many other people.

Work is above all an individual experience that belongs to each one of you. Each of you has a plan, an idea, a dream, an ideal, and a school-university-market work journey that allows you to fulfil your vocation, hopes and talents.

As an expert in labour law, I could give you a complex discourse on subject matter within the area of my expertise. However, the main thing I want to say to you, based on my past experience as a youth and on my technical knowledge, is that what most frightens you young people is the loneliness you often feel on the way, in your growth and in fitting into society through work. This is common to people in almost all countries. The fact that, beyond legal systems and the more or less favourable conditions under which each of you lives, beyond the varying rates of unemployment and the degree of the social exclusion of youth, the real problem is that young people are often left alone when making decisive choices.

A common experience that I have noticed exists in all countries is the fact that governments, politicians, trade unions and experts often deal with two major worlds without trying to build bridges between them and to provide communication channels. These two worlds are, on the one hand, school and university, and on the other, the labour market. Nobody is concerned about what is in between them, the transition: that is the growth, the passing from youth to adulthood, the acquiring of personality, critical sense, an idea of why you are in the world. This is an important aspect, because we can see that the transition phase in all countries is being greatly prolonged. If you look at international tabulations you will see that today the average young person who leaves secondary school or equivalent will have to wait for two or three years before finding any kind of job. If they want to find a stable or higher

quality job (not necessarily a permanent contract, but a job that they would like to keep and that satisfies them), then they need four, five, maybe six years. Of course, some countries have more difficulties even though they are affluent, like Italy and France, and others where job-finding is faster like Germany, but this is the critical point that I would like to highlight today. The theme that was assigned to me is certainly important – mobility, 'precarity' and unemployment. However, mobility, 'precarity' and unemployment come after a period of transition in which, if you are left alone, you are likely to have unstable, uncertain and fragmentary possibilities that bring about low quality jobs and hence dissatisfaction. We must try to understand what is being done and what you young people should ask of institutions and politicians in order to find a solution to these problems. Some are old problems like lack of job opportunities, and others are modern like jobs that have no security and stability. It is necessary to give much attention to the processes of transition and mentoring. Very few countries have done anything about these issues.

Those who live in rich structured labour markets know that the process of integration is gradual and mostly "second class". This is because young people are offered to the world of work through cheaper contracts and lower salaries. Businesses are motivated to employ people that they otherwise, for some reason, would not take on for the sole reason of being young. This is done by lowering the cost of work, granting tax relief and financial incentives, establishing minimum wages that are even lower than those of adults, and so on. We know that this is a very weak line of action and that it is precisely this that brings about precarious situations and difficulties. We know that today businesses emphasise the lowering of labour costs and the cheapest possible contracts, often with lower guarantees of growth and investment in personnel.

However, there are a few countries where they have tried to build on this stage of transition. They have not simply taken the option of supporting work by youth by lowering its value, nor have they

depended on the role of legal regulations – which has been given far too much importance in Europe where it is believed that legislators through laws and decrees can change the labour market. These countries, I am referring to Germany and Japan, have been overcoming difficulties and following the processes of transition for a long time now. They have been investing heavily on the personnel who work in institutions by means of two splendid instruments.

The Japanese case is very interesting because it is based on processes of labour market insertion, built up through a strong alliance between companies, schools and universities. Of course this model too can be criticised, but experience shows us that it works better than others. Companies have learned to dialogue with schools and universities and to clarify the kind of professionals that are needed. For their part, the schools and universities have learned to build on the talents of young people that will answer to the needs of the world of work.

This is often what is missing in many other countries, beginning with Europe, and it is here that the first mistake is made that then results in unemployment, precarious employment or excessive mobility. Young people from these other countries often do not have appropriate connecting channels between their training and the world of work, and so they take the wrong courses of study, they go to colleges that are unable to meet the needs of companies, and they choose university courses that are not compatible with the needs of production – nor with the requirements of companies today, nor with those they may have in the future. This is the most serious aspect. You should not think that the problem for young people is temporary work, part-time or intermittent work, obtained through temporary-work agencies: all of that is the consequence. Companies often have recourse to these instruments, but in themselves they are neither good nor bad. They become bad only because that are unable to find the personnel they need on the open market. I can give you more data that concerns Italy but that can help us to make a comparison. Every year in Italy 200,000 young people gradu-

ate, but companies only take on 50,000 to 60,000 annually (with the result that Italy has the lowest rate of graduates). This is indicative. It is not that companies are foolish and do not want graduates. They do not want those graduates who are not trained for that kind of work. This is happening because there is no connection between industrial representative associations, trade unions, schools and universities. Self-referentiality is the problem.

The Japanese model is interesting because it is not governed by self-referentiality. They are not closed worlds but rather very integrated worlds. It is a perspective in which it is worth investing. It would be a very good thing if schools and universities in every country had offices for career guidance and job placement. This is not only in order to offer possibilities to those completing education and training, but also in order to build stable alliances between those who provide training and those who need to avail of personnel who have been trained. This is a huge gap that must be dealt with if we wish to combat precarious employment and unemployment. Actually, when a person is suitably trained to meet the demands of the world of production, that is, when they have received training that is much in demand by companies and hard to find on the labour market, it is clear that they have a serene and tranquil future ahead. This is because they have expertise and can express their talent with suitable instruments. It is therefore essential to create a positive alliance between the sphere of industry and the sphere of education and training. Many countries today, especially in Europe, have not made this kind of investment and therefore have very self-referential training courses that then create the real trap of precarious employment.

Another very serious problem is that young people find themselves alone when they try to enter the job market because there are not enough public or private services for job placement. Employment services are lacking. A very low percentage of people find a job through institutional channels. They enter the labour market on their own, or by

means of the traditional grapevine, recommendations and connections, or by surfing the internet which can be filled with traps. They offer you a job, but you must pay or do a further training course only to find that the job does not exist. It is a deregulated world, a jungle that is not sufficiently overseen by any public or private institution. You only have to look at the proportion of employment in the labour market that is covered by public or private job placement agencies in order to realise that almost all job entries are managed informally by individuals who are not qualified in guidance and mentoring. I feel that there is great need for this because young people are the most interesting part of the labour market. Entrepreneurs know that this is where they should invest. Young people have energy, talent, creativity and motivation, and they still dream and are determined. However, if mentoring that comes from experience and correct information is not provided, then enthusiasm is exhausted and they become demotivated. This brings about the situation we spoke of earlier where young people can lose their way and remain trapped in the transition phase. The longer they remain at this waiting stage, the more the risk increases that they may not gain entry into the labour market, or that they may enter through the wrong door.

This means that you young people should have the possibility of making the right choice at the right time. Precarious employment and unemployment are not tackled with new laws, decrees or miraculous interventions by governments, but rather through building institutions that handle the transition phase and help people to make the right choice at the right time. You young people, precisely because of your age and lack of experience, often have to make choices. Who among you has confidently chosen a school or university with a clear idea of your future plans? Few of you. We choose a college because our parents suggested it and we go ahead with the support of our parents or friends, but not because there is specific training and reliable guidance. A lot remains to be done in this area.

In addition to the Japanese experience, the German experience is

also interesting. There are efforts under way to apply it in Italy, and there is some development in Denmark, Switzerland and Austria. This is the experience of a dual process by means of apprenticeship. It attempts to shorten the phase of transition by offering training courses that incorporate work experience. In this way young people are already in contact with the world of work while they are studying. They prepare to enter this world by following paths of common understanding between training institutions and the world of work. This system helps to do away with self-referentiality in these contexts, and in particular, it helps us not to feel alone. If they begin to sustain these means of transition, it is clear that it will be easier for you young people to make the right choice and not to get lost in the process because there is guidance and mentoring. Of course, it is clear that here there are choices and responsibilities that pertain to the individual. This is something you all have in common, beyond the fact of being young. The world of work, with markets of varying degrees of complexity, asks you all to make responsible choices. You must make the right choices at the right time. That means that you do not have choices made for you, nor do you choose when it is too late either because you are following a course that has no point of return or one that it would be troublesome to go back on. Most of all, the world of work relies on your sense of responsibility.

This is the path to follow. I tell you this as a work critic, that is, as an expert in this area. After so many years of study, I have little trust in government intervention but very much trust in individual responsibility: work as vocation, work as a life plan, work in the service of society and individuals. I have seen in the forum programme that you will deal with this theme on Friday. I would only like to advise you, and this is the main message of my talk, not to fall into the prejudiced view that you young people today have difficulties in the world of work because things are worse today than they were yesterday and that there is no future. The opportunities that you young people have in a globalised world – for example, here with different languages, cultures and tradi-

tions – are opportunities that your parents did not have. The misery and poverty experienced by our parents or grandparents cannot be compared. We must look to the future with confidence and optimism. Of course we can be confused and critical of the inertia of governments and institutions. However, the primary lever or key to success in the world of work is ourselves. We are the primary resource. We and, of course, the institutions that guide us. In my talk I have pointed out that the true problem is not to be found in the labour market but in the preceding phase, the transition stage. That is why I have questioned the role of schools and universities. I must also point out the role of families. They have to deal with precarious employment and unemployment. Families give values and points of reference. Young people with values and who build their path of entry by means of a life plan and not just by “getting a job”, do not have problems today in any part of the world. Of course, some of them may have to make the sacrifice of going to another country and moving. This happens both in developing countries and in rich countries where perhaps nowadays experience in some other part of the world is not only useful but is often obligatory.

Today I just wanted to give you that message. It was clearly impossible, not only because of time limitations but mostly because of the audience here in front of me, to make a technical-juridical argument concerning legislative policies on job creation measures and on current labour policies. I can only tell you that these policies exist in all countries, but empirical analysis tells us that they have no effect. We spend so much money on current policy, but they go towards self-referential routes with subsidies and temporary incentives. This is not the way to build stability. Stability is built up from the first steps of life accompanied by family, school and university. As I said, these are the real keys to access and success in our labour market which is a modern global market that contains so many traps and runs the risk of not being very inclusive. However, it also offers great opportunities.

Young people who know how to choose a job in a responsible way

and who are sufficiently informed and guided, are the ones who are not alone and do not get lost in the transition. They can confidently use temporary job experiences as opportunities, as ways to become known by the companies, to be of service and to show how good they are. However, if a person is not so good and has neither talent nor motivation, if one does a job out of necessity and not because it is a vocation, it is clear that the company will not be satisfied. The person him/herself will not be satisfied either because it is precisely from this situation that the feeling of discontent arises. Note well, because nowadays we think that people's sense of insecurity and discontent is mostly linked to "bad" jobs, but this not so. This feeling of dissatisfaction present in our society is also felt by people with permanent employment who even work on Sundays and have reached the peak of their careers. However, they feel empty inside, they have no values and they find no meaning in what they are doing.

What counts is to know where you are going, and that is what you own. We can no longer say that a job belongs to us, or a stable contract. What is mine is my knowledge, my skills, my awareness of my limitations and my abilities. This is all I can convey to you today, and I hope that it is a message in a language common to all. You should know that what counts in the markets is not so much external help from institutions, although we certainly need it. The definitive choice is ours and we have ultimate responsibility.

Panel discussion:
Work in a changing world

**The new professionals and the creativity
and initiative of young people**

REV. ÁNGEL MIRANDA REGOJO
Secretary General of Don Bosco International

While a large number of the traditional professions are in crisis or are disappearing because of the increasing competition brought about by globalisation, over the past few years new sectors have been emerging that are opening up interesting perspectives for the future of youth employment. Creativity and flexibility are essential qualities in order to find openings, but young people must also be encouraged and helped in their professional careers with orientation, training and mentoring. In this part of our panel discussion we shall present various experiences that have proved to be valid and fruitful in different places.

Perhaps it is because of my professional, or even vocational, training...

I would like to begin my short talk on the creativity and initiative of young people in the emergence of the new professionals with a document of particular interest to this Forum.

It is the earliest apprenticeship contract that has been found to exist in the world. In Europe long ago, Giuseppe Odasso was a young unskilled man who arrived in the big city to look for work. He wanted to learn a trade. With this purpose he headed for the workshop of Master Bertolino accompanied by two adults, his father and the priest John Bosco who had welcomed him to the oratory that he had opened for these young people in Turin.

The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young people

Already in 1852, the working conditions and course of apprenticeship had to be put in writing:

– the young person promised to behave correctly and to work hard in his apprenticeship;

– the master assumed the task of teaching the young man the carpentry trade, just like a father, respecting his pace of learning and his right to training;

– the young man's father would be responsible for his son's behaviour, and;

– John Bosco, the priest, would contribute the educational and pastoral dimension of this contract by means of the complementary education provided in his Oratory for an integral development of the person.

The conditions and timetable requirements, remuneration, apprenticeship teaching, etc, could be applied to the circumstances of millions of young people who search for work in our industrial or post-industrial milieu.

A second documented fact that calls our attention

Child labour, imposed on over 200 million children in our times, raises an alarm signal on the importance of dealing with the topic of youth work together with that of several other issues: initial training, help throughout the processes of job finding and ongoing training, and the acquisition of personal and professional skills that correspond to the new professional, the topic of this talk.

Focussing our reflection a little further. A time for questions

We are speaking of creativity, of young people, of the new professional, but in a specific setting: the world of work.

Nevertheless, what is our perspective on these three aspects? Where do we place the point of departure and the horizon of arrival? What significance do they have in a post-industrial society that is evolving towards a globalisation that is not only economic but that is centred on the value of knowledge?

Furthermore, from the faith reference of the participants in this Forum and from a perspective open to gospel criteria that place the person at the centre as a child of God, how do we read these three realities: creativity, young people and professionalism?

In this globalising environment we are dealing with policies of youth employment that affect all involved in the world of work: public administration, businesses, social agents, the job market, etc. Do we dialogue with these civil and secular entities as equals or do we prefer to take refuge within our own circles which are basically ecclesiastical?

Considering the transnational dimension of this Forum, we shall have to make explicit reference to other international entities. In spite of all the questions or misgivings they may provoke, they also speak, analyse, adopt decisions and formulate concrete responses to the question of youth employment. The United Nations, the International Labour Office and the Youth Employment Network, also offer interesting perspectives. If we observe closely, we see that they give us four fundamental keys that respond to the needs and possibilities of youth work: the 4 “E’s”

- employability
- equal opportunities
- entrepreneurship, and
- employment creation for young people.

Some data that demonstrate the complexity of our theme

There are some numerical data that bring further complications to our topic:

– statistics tell us that, excluding young people who have abandoned all hope of finding decent work, in 1995 a total of 58 million young people were out of work and unemployed; in 2002 this reached 74 million, and in 2005 the figure was 85 million;

– 41% of the unemployed in the world are young people between 15 and 30 years of age;

– youth unemployment figures are three times the general unemployment figures;

– the figures for the demographic growth in the numbers of young people who need a job are far higher than the number of new jobs that can be created in the world.

Or with more specific data we see a constant increase in the rates of youth unemployment given that:

– over the past ten years, the only significant decrease was seen in the Developed Economies and the European Union, while between 1995 and 2005 youth unemployment grew in most regions;

– the largest increase – 85.5% (from 5.2 to 9.7 million) – was seen in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, followed by 34.2% (from 13 to 17.4 million) in Sub-Saharan Africa;

– in Latin America and the Caribbean there was 23% (from 7.7 to 9.5 million), 18.2% (from 7.2 to 8.5 million) in the Middle East and Northern Africa, and 16.1% (from 11.8 to 13.7 million) in South Asia.

In the light of these data, the ILO estimates that in the next 10 years there will be need for 400 million decent and productive employment opportunities – “more and better jobs” – in order to reach the full productive potential of today’s youth. However, at the same time they confirm that:

- despite increased economic growth, the inability of economies to create enough decent and productive jobs is hitting the world’s young especially hard;

- while the youth population grew by 13.2% between 1995 and 2005, employment among young people grew by only 3.8% to reach 548 million;

- higher educational attainments do not guarantee that young people will find employment, in particular decent employment.

- where there is little economic growth or if employment creation is not reflected in the growth, job security often overrules job satisfaction as a motivator for young people;

- youth unemployment rates only show the tip of the iceberg regarding the problems young people face in the labour market and do not give a complete picture of the challenges.

- the discouraged youth and young working poor together outnumber the unemployed.

North – South again?

Here is another reference of particular interest.

When we see that almost 89% of the youth of the world live in developing economies or that the growth in the young labour force continues to be concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and the

Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, we feel particularly concerned about the ILO demand for 400 million new jobs.

The following table is approximate and not absolute, but a reading of the dialectic relation between North and South with reference to the world of work shows us aspects that offer few solutions to the problem of youth employment which is most pressing in those zones:

NORTH	SOUTH
Business	Survival
Developed	Developing
High educational standards	Weak educational systems
Prosperity	Poverty
Mostly urban youth	High numbers of rural youth
Growing social levels	Low social level
Developed business culture	Low business culture
“ Knowledge ” oriented employment	“ Production ” oriented employment
Etc.	Etc.

To this we can add other factors that affect the employment perspectives of young people:

- differences in ideology;
- differences in public employment policies;
- differences in the social commitment among the various social agents;
- situations of political instability;
- etc.

From a faith perspective: 5 points of convergence

Finally, to complete our reading of the theme, we must take into account our perspective of the significance of work and our faith commitment.

In this sense there has been a very useful contribution from the joint meeting of the ILO with the World Council of Churches (22-25 February 2002) in which they discussed several elements of convergence in the “philosophical and spiritual points of view” concerning work. This offers a wider transnational and religious perspective on the theme of youth employment in the world.

Just as a side-note, it is good to remember the five points of view shared by the religious traditions present at that meeting: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., even though we give them our own personal reading:

– *The various traditions positively value work that is based on a divine or ethical foundation where human work is no longer a punishment but is a fundamental component of a person’s dignity.* Through their work, people become the image and likeness of God in the ability to dominate and subdue the earth.

– *Work is a fundamental expression of the dignity that is inherent in each person and that has both spiritual and material dimensions.* This allows work to be centred on the vocational self-fulfilment of each person. If we are people first and workers second, we then realise that work is made for human beings and not human beings made for work. This will condition the circumstances, working hours, remuneration, work plans, etc.

– *Work does not only have a personal dimension (self-fulfilment), but it also has a social dimension (work as a bridge between individuals and society)* that is enriched by the creative contribution of its members. On this depends the good of the person, the importance of the means being at the service of work, the value of life as service that improves the qual-

ity of relations between people, and, for us, the conviction that remunerated work is also a gift from God and cannot be considered only as a private possession but also as a gift for others.

– *In addition to the social dimension of work, religious and spiritual traditions also call attention to its transcendent dimension* in that men and women are managers of God's creation and co-creators by completing creation through their work. This puts us in the perspective of a worldwide human community shaping the world through action motivated by love. The labour market is important, but it continues to be an instrument subordinate to the dignity of the person, for the common good and for peace.

– *Religious, spiritual and humanistic traditions are entirely favourable to the ethical component of work* not based solely on rights and laws but on the basis of human responsibility, the cultivation of moral conscience and a sense of responsibility in the organisation and development of human work that fosters the kind of relations between employers and employees that go beyond legality and the norm. This implies transcending a perspective of human work that functions within a framework of shared values like dignity, trust, impartiality, respect, equitable treatment, responsibility, honesty and solidarity.

It is clear that whatever answer we give as individuals or Church entities to the question of youth employment, we must take the above criteria into consideration in addition to others that are political, economic or productive in nature.

What about young people and their relations with work?

We are speaking about work, but the other half of our topic is young people. Other elements will arise later in this Forum, but meanwhile we can emphasise some comments that are frequently heard on

this question. Depending on places and circumstances, some of the examples we hear are of the following kind:

- Access to education is no longer a problem for young people.*
- As the youth today have a higher level of education, they will have no trouble finding work.*
- Young people prefer to search until they find the best job and, in the short term, they prefer temporary jobs in order to gain experience and to find the most suitable work.*
- The rates of unemployment give an exact picture of the challenges of the youth labour market.*
- Young people are a homogenous group and strategies to deal with the problems of the youth labour market can be applied in all countries.*
- The growing migration of youth towards urban areas reduces the urgent need to respond to the challenges of the labour market for young people living in rural areas.*
- Young people are poor because they do not work.*

All of these assertions provide material for discussion during this Forum.

The concerns of young people and of youth employment policies

This is another aspect that helps us to complete the picture of youth employment in that these policies in the various regions aim to respond to the specific circumstances of young people. Here is a rough sketch to help us identify some indicators that will later serve to channel youth creativity and initiative in a changing labour market.

The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young people

Concerns or points of particular interest in the forming of youth employment policies	Devd. Economies & the EU	Rest of Europe	East Asia	Southeast Asia & the Pacific	South Asia	Latin America and the Caribbean	Middle East & North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
Education								
Improvement in access to education				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Improvement in transition from school to work			Yes					
Young people								
More jobs to match rising population				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Underemployment. Graduate skills not used		Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
The high number of youth neither studying nor working		Yes						
Youth unwilling to enter the private sector				Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Job market difficulties for young women					Yes	Yes	Yes	
Family-work compatibility, especially for women		Yes						
Preference being given to older people				Yes				
Work								
Need for investment and creation of new jobs		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quality of job - salary, contract, working hours	Yes		Yes			Yes	Yes	
Growth in the formal employment sector				Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Balance between flexibility and security of employment	Yes	Yes						
Gender salary differences	Yes							
Lower status of job with growth	Yes							
Mobility								
Emigration and brain-drain		Yes						
Internal migration - rural to urban			Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
Structural elements								
Widespread poverty				Yes				Yes
Disparity between rural and urban development			Yes	Yes				
Improve quality of rural agricultural and non-agricultural employment				Yes	Yes			Yes
Employment security in small and medium- sized businesses			Yes					
How to improve the infrastructure								Yes
Other								
Civil conflict								Yes
Search for work							Yes	
Health - HIV - AIDS								Yes

Looking to the future

Because of the limited time available, it would be best if we take into account all that has been said so far and enter directly into an analysis and focus on some of the prospects for employment of young people at a time of constant change, and the needs and future outlook of the labour market.

The first job: training

Training is a constant in all the information sources on the topic, and we can summarise it as follows:

- in a globalised labour market,
- that is based on recognition of the qualifications that define each professional profile,
- training is the first and foremost task of young people and
- the most important aspect of the job at present and in the future.

Even if we recognise the value of self-employment and informal employment in geographical areas where formal work is not plentiful, it is evident that our society, in general, is going towards growth in the formal sector.

The OECD report entitled “Education at a glance 2006”, when analysing the indicators A8, A9 and C4 that deal with youth employment, jobs and the corresponding remuneration, points out the following:

- in most OECD countries the higher the level of education reached, the higher the rates of employment;
- the differences between rates of employment for men and women are greater between groups with a lower level of education, reaching 23%;

The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young people

- those whose level of education is low have less opportunities to form part of the labour force and are more likely to be unemployed:
- achieving higher levels of education can be considered to be a financial investment that normally results in higher incomes throughout those people's lives;
- we could also assert that a 15-year-old, in addition to the anticipated years of education, can, in the next fifteen years, be employed for six years, be unemployed for a total of 0.9 years and be outside the labour market for 1.3 years.

For this reason the OECD countries consider the second stage of Secondary Education to be the minimum level in order to:

- obtain a satisfactory job in the labour market and
- reduce the proportion of unemployed between the ages of 20 and 24 by an average of 6.4 per cent points.

All of this leads us to think that those of us who long for a better and more just world for our young people, have to take on the following commitment as an effective response to the crucial problem of youth employment: the option for education and training that will strengthen the acquisition of a set of skills and personal and social values in order to help their entry into professional and working careers.

Take into account the trends and growth in different employment sectors

Following agreements reached by international organisations – the “Millennium Goals” (UN), “More and Better Jobs for Young People” (ILO), etc. – countries offer young people guidance and support in forging their professional future. In addition to many of the aspects referred to above, they also give guidelines for another basic aspect: the evolving trends of the labour market and the various job sectors.

They generally seem to confirm the following trends:

– jobs are decreasing in the primary and secondary sectors – agriculture, mining, fishing, manufacture – where competition demands are causing the exponential growth of automated systems and reduction in human labour;

– growth is seen in professions and sectors that are more related to service, especially those related to the following:

- education and health;
- community social services, domestic help;
- care and protection of the environment;
- biotechnology, food, pharmaceutical industry;
- civil security and workplace security;
- nanotechnology, research and development of new materials;
- transport and logistics;
- recreation, tourism, citizen leisure services;
- artistic creativity, design;
- development of communications and the audiovisual industry;
- bank and security services;
- aerospace, aviation and defence industries.

It is immediately noticeable that all of these growing sectors do not bring about increased salaries for the masses, but that they require

- an increase in the elite labour force,
- that have received a higher level of training,
- that have suitable personal and professional skills, and,
- are prepared to continue to receive training throughout their lives.

The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young people

This reinforces, yet again, the perception of training as the first source of employment for young people nowadays looking towards the future.

Good practice

The picture presented so far should be reinforced by a presentation and short commentary on “good practice”, the kind that channels the creativity of youth within the evolving work sector in the world today which, notwithstanding, offers new opportunities for employment.

Orientation and mentoring systems

A key contribution to youth employment is “good practice” in orientation and mentoring for young people entering the world of work, and when speaking of this it is good to remember the following:

- the active employment policies applied in many countries in different parts of the world;
- the promotion of microcredit systems with different levels of return;
- the creation of a mentality of cooperation that produces very different styles of association and business management;
- the promotion, or at least, the acceptance of informal jobs as such;
- activities aimed at fostering empowerment and leadership;
- the promotion of alliances between public administration, society and business;
- activities that foster youth associations of different kinds;
- the so-called business hotbeds where young people have the use of shared facilities in which to open up to the local labour market;
- the creation of services micro-companies associated with professional training services;

- school and university business department enterprises and the orientation and mentoring services offered by the institution;
- training courses in companies being used by students in both formal and informal professional training;
- employment social services promoted by association between parishes, Caritas, town council social services and other entities.
- the creation of social action networks of different kinds: local, regional, neighbourhood, etc.
- etc.

Informal work

Much of what was listed in the previous section is related to the emergence and development of informal work. In various situations it can approach illegality but it creates activities of self-employment and services connected with the following:

- domestic help,
- maintenance and repair of vehicles and installations,
- fast food,
- recreation, tourism and leisure,
- communication and rapid transport, logistics and parcel service,
- repair and maintenance of furniture and domestic appliances, etc.
- private classes, home schooling, etc.
- reprography and rapid printing,
- gardening, fruit-growing and horticulture,
- building,
- street-selling or door-to-door selling,
- local handcrafts,

The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young people

- farming and stock-breeding,
- advertising,
- Internet services,
- informal market of goods and products,
- sheltered workshop,
- employment agencies,
- etc.

As it depends on the specific characteristics of the local market and of each country, and also on the technological and commercial levels attained, it is evident that many of these services and activities remain mostly in survival economies with temporary work and a low level of employment.

Moreover, in the medium term, experience tells us that, as countries become more developed, many of these activities become governed by laws and regulations. This imposes conditions that can be obstacles to autonomy and the initiative of young people, and it places those activities into pockets of a sort of marginalised labour, if not exploitation by stronger entities and businesses.

To this we should add the fact that many of these activities develop according to certain organisational outlines whereby, depending on the skills and qualifications acquired, networks are established for source and supply of production, manufacture, marketing, and distribution of profits with diverse levels of legality and justice.

Connected to this collection of guidance and mentoring practices for young people entering the workforce, specific circumstances can help us to look critically at the reality related to the following:

- the actual effectiveness of microcredit on self-employment,
- the real levels of return that are reached,
- the average survival rate of cooperative organisations of production and marketing of products,

- the levels of maintenance achieved,
- the index of industrial mortality of self-employment activities,
- the impact of these activities on the local economy,
- all that relates to “ fair trade ”,
- etc.

Guidelines for the generation of formal jobs

Happily, we can also speak of experiences in creating “ formal ” jobs. However, we must place emphasis, not only on the young people who develop these industries, but also on the possibility of establishing the goal of generating entities to promote employment in which there are very different social agents like city councils, NGOs, entities of public right, social action or charity organisations, educational centres, etc.

The key is in “ building bridges ” between various entities in order to generate a social fabric where it is possible to establish progressive plans for job creation or for industrialisation.

Among other examples we indicate the following:

- Cisco Internet Networking Technology Training for African Women that provides internet technology training courses for women.
- Harnessing – a youth training scheme for 600,000 young people in Nigeria.
- Global Alliance in South Africa as a subcontracting company for young people with the support of the Government and the World Bank.
- The Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) helps young people to start up businesses and offers the mentoring support of local established companies.
- Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) provides financing and mentoring to young entrepreneurs.

The new professionals and the creativity and initiative of young people

– The California High School Career Academies in the United States that organise courses in career training with the support and presence of industries, and with coordination between the school, the industry and higher education institutions.

– The Luangeni Farming Community Initiative in Zambia, with the support of the government and some universities, helps to create agricultural production companies in rural areas.

– Body Shop in Australia got young people to set up an autonomous company to make shirts and uniforms for their sales-assistants around the world.

– The Thai Business Initiative in Rural Development TBIRD that works to boost the rural economy in Thailand through management of water resources, career training, care of the environment and construction.

– The entrepreneur programmes run by financial and regional entities in Spain.

Behind all these experiences there is always the establishment of bridges between entities committed to fostering youth employment, but always overcoming the following tendencies:

– a philanthropic relationship between doner and receiver,

– the need to respond to demands of social responsibility on the part of some companies,

– a cooperative citizenship on the part of companies that also seek to benefit from their collaboration in the task.

As regards the relationship established between the promoting entities and the young recipients, it should always move within a win-win framework.

TO CONCLUDE

Bertolt Brecht tells us in his poem “A bed for the night”:

I hear that in New York,
at the corner of 26th and Broadway,
A man stands every evening
during the winter months,
And gets beds for the homeless there,
by appealing to passers-by.
It won't change the world.
It won't improve relations among men.
It will not shorten the age of exploitation.
But a few men have a bed for the night.
For a night the wind is kept from them.
The snow meant for them falls on the roadway.
Don't put the book down on reading this, man.
A few people have a bed for the night.
For a night the wind is kept from them.
The snow meant for them falls on the roadway.
But it won't change relations among men.
It will not shorten the age of exploitation.

I do not presume to “change the world”, just to collaborate in the Forum by letting you know that behind every job-seeking youth, there is a personal history of someone whose work can continue God's work of creation. He gave us the earth to “dominate” it and “subdue” it in the service of a “new heaven” and a “new earth”. Together with all these young people who are searching, between us all we can make it possible.

Creating new business ideas

LORENZO CROSTA

President, Solidarietà Nuova Cooperativa Sociale, Italy

I am Lorenzo Crosta, 52 years of age, married to Marcella since 1980, and we have three children, one of whom is married and will make me a grandfather in June. Since 1982, the year when the Solidarity Cooperative was set up, I have been working full time with an employment contract. What led me and my friends to set up a cooperative? It was not established as a social project or to respond to anyone's need to make a livelihood. All those involved in setting it up already had a job and an interesting career. The facts and circumstances, and encounters that took place, made me and the others decide to undertake a business adventure. We had no idea to what extent it could grow or if it would be successful. None of us had business experience or managerial skills. In the mission of the cooperative what we intended to achieve was clearly stated, and that was to offer an opportunity for employment and training to people who are disabled or socially disadvantaged. As we were to deal with people with problems linked to their social condition (prisoners, aids victims, mentally ill and intellectually disabled), you might think that among those who set up the cooperative that there was at least one with teaching or health skills. Well, there was no one. We were poor people moved by the desire to restore dignity to those friends living in disadvantaged conditions. We too are disadvantaged people who meet others who are disadvantaged and who make this apparent point of weakness their strength. Facts and not visions are, in our experience, what moves reason to operate. Faith is a gift to reason, and the certainty that what is promised will fulfil the desire and expectation of good for me and others. I still ask how this option came to me and my

friends. I find the answer in the amazement experienced every day when I see the facts, the people and structures where the power of God fulfils his work. How is it possible that a company that was set up with 55 euro could become what it is today. What ability or skills did we have to do this? It is evident that it was not a case of inventing new ways of doing business, but of responding to circumstances and recognising signs along the way. It was a case of putting aside one's own freedom and of making sure that the indicated way allowed each person to fulfil the desire for happiness and self-fulfilment. How did I become aware of this option? I was happily married, I had an interesting career, an excellent salary, I was content and had no social demands on me to make me sad. On the whole, I was doing fine. I would now like to recount and testify to the circumstances that led me to undertake this work.

After spending years pursuing projects to solve questions of justice, rights and the struggle against poverty, I was involved in trade union arguments or those of a pseudo-revolutionary kind. I always felt a certain disquiet for which I could not find the answer. It so happened that I was arguing with my friend Pippo (not a very uplifting scene), under the church tower in Venegono. The window of the priest's house was thrown open. It was one thirty at night, but that holy priest was not angry. He had overheard our argument, and he asked us quietly if we did not have some common point on which to focus. I did not answer, but Pippo and the priest from that time forward were companions. They never deserted me, and they often came and invited me to be with them. Then it happened that the proposal was explicitly presented to me, that is, to follow my desire to the end, to seriously pose my problem, and this inevitably leads a person to feel helpless and alone. Who do I belong to? To whom do we belong? Why am I alive and who gave me life? In short, they were all the big questions about the meaning of life. This method of taking oneself seriously, recognising that life is something serious, that it requires one's serious commitment in face of reality, a reality that is not created by you but by Another. Conversion is

this surrender, allowing oneself to be possessed by the One who has created all that there is. It is openness to Destiny that knocks and demands an answer. Christ begs for the heart of each one. "Peter, do you love me?". The possible answer is the supplication of the person to Christ. How is it possible to be certain of this? Reality continually breaks through this veneer. It was a wall for me. All of reality cried out and demanded a response by human beings, because reality does not happen by itself. I am baptised and have received the sacraments. I received a Christian education, so what was missing? I should have recognised that what had been missing before was the insistent companionship of Pippo and the priest. Why did they do that, and why did they not give up on me? Was it just because they were good and generous? Certainly this was a factor, but the truth is that they themselves had and experienced the quality of mercy. Charity is the love of God for humankind. We could reduce this to a sentiment, but it is not a sentiment. It is justice. Their friendship, which is the friendship of Jesus, helped me to recognise that the One who is present was communicating through their simplicity, but it was also a judgement. The question of education that was quite clear to them, prompted me to make some gestures, to pray daily, to receive the sacraments frequently and steadfastly, to take part in the life of the Church according to our tradition, and finally mission. Pippo was a member of Communion and Liberation, and thanks to him I am now a member. I am thankful to God for the great gift that He gave the Church through the charism given to a person, Don Giussani. The foundational pillars of the charism are culture, charity and mission. Besides school activities and studying the texts suggested by the Movement, importance is given to the missionary gesture of charity. This gesture is asked of every member of the Movement, because through it each one learns gratuity, for one is always the beneficiary, giving one's own time to caring for others.

I started out with this gesture by accompanying a disabled friend. Tonino is a tetraplegic. When I began to offer him my companionship

he was 17. Now he is 41 and is married with a child. Tonino had a great desire to work, and he always asked me if he could have a job. Looking at him and seeing him with legs and arms that could not move, I did not know how to answer him without disappointing him. His question haunted me. I felt helpless and alone. I had to pass it on to someone else. However, I understood one important thing: keeping him company could not only be the measure of my piety and generosity, because then I would not leave space for a possible answer, as my measure would limit it. I put Tonino's question back to him: what did he mean by wanting to work. The answer was immediate. To want does not mean to have the right. To want is a desire, and through it he could be a person and be happy. I am convinced that his answer was pure grace. Each person has the duty to work. Without work, it is hard to understand the connections with reality. A person without work is without hope. Work cannot be reduced to meaning being occupied. Work is also giving companionship to a disabled person. The best paid job is the one we do for free. We see the truth is this affirmation when we see that the eternal and untiring Worker works for you and me free of charge. Tonino asked this for himself, but he introduced another factor that gives satisfaction to a worker: salary. When I asked him what he would like to be, he said a disc-jockey. I searched for a radio station that would consider this desire, but when Tonino started the job he realised that this did not correspond to his aptitudes and abilities. He ended up breaking discs. The radio people were accommodating about this, but he himself realised that this would not work. I did not throw cold water on his desire, but facts made Tonino realise how things were. After that experience, his request, always full of desire, was: help me to find work. The time we spent together was already work as we spent the time reading articles, poetry, listening to music of all kinds, visiting museums and works of art, and going on excursion into the countryside. One day I asked Tonino to spend the time he was alone in writing. This did not show results as what he wrote was unreadable both to me and to himself. I

realised though that he had written, even though we could not read it. With the help of a friend, we put a computer together, attached a printer, and we fixed up a helmet with a large pen welded onto it. Tonino began to write by banging on the keypad. I will not dwell on this, but the training was not simple and neither were the changes we had to make to the required instruments. Tonino began to produce phrases and they then became stories or poems of a sort. With this work we put a book together and published a limited number, one thousand copies. Every year we used to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes with Tonino, and on that occasion we brought the books with us. On the train, with the approval of the leader of the pilgrimage, I had the chance to speak about this, with the result that we sold them all. We could see what was happening: Tonino and I had unknowingly become entrepreneurs. In 1982 we set up the Solidarity Cooperative of which Tonino is a founder member, even though he has never worked for the cooperative because he continued to write and study. His income comes from his intellectual production. What happened through this charitable gesture was that the impossible became possible. The results reassure our choice of entrepreneurship, affirming our certainty that what has happened is not due to a skill or professionalism, but the promise came true that "for God nothing is impossible". God works through our hands and through our poor selves. Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus said "remember that when you are loving and charitable, it is not you who are charitable and loving, but it is Jesus who is so through you". This quotation is the mandate received from Don Giussani, and that is why we have adopted it. We do not need to invent anything. We need to be aware that the talents given to us are not given to be hidden. When they are allowed to blossom we shall reap in abundance. What happened is an amazing story. There are factories where over 250 people work, all legally employed and paid, and 145 of them are disabled, 22 are prisoners, 17 have AIDS and 15 suffer from mental illness. They work by transforming electric cables into cables for electrodomestic appliances or motorcycles, public and

The frustrations, demands and expectations of young people in poor neighbourhoods

INÈS MININ

President, YCW France

INTRODUCTION

The Young Christian Workers (YCW) is present in 60 countries. It reaches out to young people aged 13 to 30 from the working classes using various different schemes. In France, the youth it reaches are from working-class areas in cities and towns. Many of these areas show quite a diversity of nationalities, cultures and religions. Others, even though they have an urban culture, are situated at a distance from the heavily populated areas.

These young people are either studying at colleges and high schools, or job training or working. Many of them have experienced financial difficulties for varying lengths of time. They may have had small jobs or several small jobs, and they may have been unemployed. Now they long to be independent, start a family, etc. Future uncertainty is putting a stop to their plans. Some of them feel isolated and excluded because of their situation.

I would like first of all to quickly recall the disturbances in the suburbs in 2005. During those riots in October and November, the public were made aware of the conditions of many of the young people with whom we deal. By means of this cry of anger, these young people placed before the eyes of the public and the politicians the failures of city politics and employment policies, and the unacceptable situations that a large part of our society prefer not to look at too closely.

For the YCW and others active in working-class areas, an even louder call is heard. We must continue to be there with them as they

struggle to avoid falling into fatalism. We must work to help them find their dignity. This loss of trust in their future, this despair, does not leave us indifferent. We Christians see this as our challenge as we work with these youth day by day.

1. THE RIOTS IN THE SUBURBS (A QUICK ANALYSIS)

First of all, it is important to point out that the riots of October-November 2005 were not unexpected or new in France. The professionals in touch with the universe of the suburbs, associations, and numerous sociologists, had been alerting the authorities for a long time about an explosive situation that was deteriorating. (Even the rappers noticed...).

For more than 25 years in these districts there have been reactions, cries of anger and outbursts. It was first officially noted in July 1981 in the priority housing zone (ZUP) of Minguettes in Vénissieux on the outskirts of Lyons where almost 200 cars were set on fire that summer. It was only from 1990 that the term “riots” was used. This followed more large-scale incidents (burning of vehicles and buildings, looting of shops, confrontations between hundreds of people leading to injuries) that took place first in the district of Mas du Taureau in Vaulx-en-Velin (a suburb of Lyons) following the death of a young person in a crash between a motorcycle and a police car. Then there was an incident several months later in the district of Val Fourré in Mantes-la-Jolie (a suburb of Paris) after the death of a young man in the custody of the police.

However, the impression that these riots were a new phenomenon was mostly felt by detached observers, and it comes from the combination of two factors:

- on the one hand they had unprecedented media coverage,
- and on the other hand, they lasted for longer (3 weeks) and involved more towns (about 280 districts), including small ones, with respect to the commonplace riots of previous years.

The facts:

Clichy-sous-Bois, 27 October 2005: During the school holidays one afternoon, three adolescents living in Clichy, descended from immigrants, climbed the railings of an electricity transformer. Two of them died by electrocution and the third was seriously burned. Immediately there were two opposing explanations given for the presence of these young people in such a dangerous place:

– The youth of the district had no doubt that the youngsters were obliged to run away to escape from the police who were chasing them for no valid reason. Therefore they “died for nothing”, as was written on the sweat-shirts of those who went on a silent march the following Saturday.

– The ministry of the Interior gave different versions of the facts, exonerating the police of any responsibility. There was an attempted break-in and a theft in a building-site hut, but they insisted that the police did not physically pursue the youngsters.

We can see that since the “urban riots” that took place in 1990 and 1991 in built-up areas of Paris and Lyons, the scene is almost always the same. The trigger for the riots is linked to the death of young people of the district when there has been police intervention (the scenario was the same in the riots of November 2005). It was at a moment of misunderstanding, lack of transparency and incomprehension that the suburban riots in October and November broke out. They lasted for three weeks from 27 October to 17 November, the date on which the Minister of the Interior announced a “return to normal”, that is, the end of confrontations between groups of youths and police, and the reduction to less than one hundred cars burned every night around France.

In the words of the rioters: the reasons for anger

In order to better understand the riots of 2005, I suggest that you briefly take note of the point of view of the rioters. These young people were seldom listened to before, during and after the events.

What do the rioters say?

These are young people we meet and work with wherever we are present, and we try through our presence to reach out to them. However, I would like to emphasise that the YCW members living in those districts did not participate in the riots. Of course all of this made them think and brought a certain amount of tension into their lives as they wondered “ what to think of the rioters ”. Their reaction was to say: “ we understand the reasons for this anger and some of it seems to be legitimate, but at the same time to burn cars or public property is an impulsive reaction, destructive and totally unfair to those who live in these districts ”. In fact, those most penalised by the riots are those who live in these districts and who already pay the price with a negative image in the media, at school, when looking for a job or a place to live...

People sometimes bring up the subject of the drama in Clichy-sous-bois, but mostly to say that the police were involved and that the Minister of the Interior tried to hide that fact. Actually, it was mostly the absence of excuses on the part of the police that gave rise to the revolt. According to the youth, their anger is mainly a revolt against a humiliating situation that many attribute to the schools and others attribute to experiences of discrimination when seeking recruitment. All, however, without exception, consider that the daily source of their feeling of injustice and humiliation is their relationship with the police. Therefore, vengeance against the police could be considered to be the main immediate reason for the riots, especially when the police not only limited themselves to combatting the youth violence but sometimes seemed to

provoke it. It was contacts of force, provocation, violence and vengeance that marked the daily contact of groups of youths and police. For this reason the speech by the Minister of the Interior caused such a reaction by the young people who saw it on television. It only served to harden their feeling of humiliation.

Through dialogue with these young people, other reasons for their anger come to the surface and other kinds of humiliation: academic failure, unemployment, the feeling of being second-class citizens, to be almost “untouchables”. The working-class neighbourhoods where they live are places where the difficulties of French society seem to concentrate. The rates of unemployment are higher (two or three times higher than the rest of the country), there is more academic failure, more petty criminals.. We could list housing conditions, health, discrimination, etc. The root of their revolt is the feeling of injustice, abandonment, a lack of future and cynicism on the part of the rest of society. These things cause an atmosphere of collective victimisation that they use to justify their anger during the riots.

2. THE PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH, A BREATH OF HOPE IN THESE DISTRICTS

This picture might seem to be rather bleak, and for that reason the Church has a new message to give and a very needed presence to offer. For a long time now the Church has been going out to meet the people who live in these districts to help them discover Christ and understand his message. The Church can show them how to recover their dignity as men and women, sons and daughters of God. In fact, during the three weeks of the riots, the Church could be seen to be present in many ways:

– The bishops in the dioceses affected by the riots wrote to the newspapers or wrote letters to their parishioners (the bishops of Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, Evreux...). These bishops denounced the violence and the repression of that violence that often went too far.

They also pointed out the conditions that people in their dioceses were living under, the everyday difficulties of these families who felt isolated in this insecurity and the young people who felt stigmatised and abandoned in their efforts to build their future and attain status in society.

– The Church leaders in those areas (Catholic Action, pastoral ministry committees, etc.) arranged meetings to allow for organised times of sharing. This allowed them the opportunity to express their opinions, anger and fears, and to address their questions to those who could help. These meetings very often led to texts (prayers, words of advice, etc.) being distributed around the district.

– The YCW members in Seine-Saint-Denis organised a meeting for the youth of the area to allow those who had not taken part in the riots to have a voice. Together they discussed the questions: What is our opinion of the rioters? What is our opinion of the role of the media during these events? What position do we wish to take with regard to these events? As Christians, what should our role be?

The national YCW picked up and continued our initiative. This campaign following the riots took on a larger scale, and this helped us to improve the condition of the youth in those neighbourhoods. Through all of this, we could feel the call of the Church to make a daily stand in the service of God's plan for humankind. The YCW, member of the body of the Church feels totally at the service of the life and dignity of the least fortunate. This is why the YCW reaches out to the young people living in working-class neighbourhoods, those in job training, those working and those unemployed. It addresses youth who are not close to the Church and who are not in the care of civil structures. We try to give them the means to take a role in society and to speak out and say what kind of future they want.

We can testify that these young people have much to offer. They have the ability to adapt and return to normal life, contrary to what is

often thought. They long to relate and to make friends, join networks and share moments of fellowship. They are sensitive to injustice and inequality in their country and around the world. They often join together to object to racism and to express international solidarity. They are critical about politics and are sensitive to its impact. They want their lives, society and the world to evolve and they have messages to pass on. Their engagement is different from that of their elders, more selective and more individual.

Although caught up with television, the pub and consumerism, these young people are still critical about the choices presented to them and about the society in which they live. As they lack points of reference, they long to understand. They sometimes testify to a lack of recognition and visibility and to the fact that no one listens to what they are and experience. We could almost speak of “invisible youth” who are accused when there are riots, acts of violence and demonstrations. They are not at ease with adults but they do not hesitate to speak out, to denounce, to act with and for others in order to make this a more just and caring world.

The desire to help these young people to be successful, to develop and become men and women aware of their rights and dignity, is what guides our programmes, actions and demands. When they are with YCW they discover that they have abilities, and they experience success through action and responsibility. Through the practices of YCW (review of life, the call, action..) these young people come to discover that they are beloved by God and little by little they become aware of their dignity.

Since its creation, the apostolic impetus of YCW is seen wherever young workers live. It has diversified in order to adapt to the young people and in consideration of the milieu (suburbs, access to studies, leisure...). Our campaign “Employment for all youth” launched in September 2005 reflects this adaptation and attention to young people today.

This campaign took off just after the riots in the suburbs and it brought a new message and new image to these districts. When there is the impression that fatalism and despair reign, the YCW members living in those areas go out to meet the youth there. They listen to their opinions on the future of France, their own future and their work relations. This initiative made its mark, and to our great surprise, the results of this survey interest many people, associations, representatives, unions, etc., and especially journalists. Many of them contacted YCW after the results of the survey were published. They recalled the events of October and November 2005, and took the opportunity to put forward the views of the youth concerning their circumstances.

The idea for this campaign emerged long before the riots through our interest and concern for the young people. We feel that work is essential for a person's development. It conditions all aspects of life. Besides the material dimension, it allows one to develop, to be valued and also to benefit from the trust of others and to take responsibility. It should ideally develop all their abilities so that they can feel affirmed and be recognised for the service they offer to others and to society at large.

However, nowadays this does not happen. Many young people speak of how their employment does not correspond to their training. They are often obliged to take a job that is far below their qualifications, and this leads to frustration. Precarious employment seems to be the norm, and youth are afraid to speak out at work and socially for fear of losing their job, and because they regard themselves as fortunate to have a permanent contract rather than a short-term contract that young people usually start out with in their professional lives. For this reason, young people are not often present in trade unions and political parties. It is often adults who decide for them or who speak out on their behalf.

Work should leave space for social life to develop. It should not block access to leisure, family life, personal plans and the desire to be involved and useful. It should allow youth from working class areas to be successful and thereby to reduce social inequalities.

Our main concern is not only to know how to change the employment situation of young people but to do everything possible so that the dignity of each one will be recognised. Work is a fundamental right and “it is not only good in the sense that it is useful or something to enjoy; it is also good as being something worthy, that is to say, something that corresponds to a person’s dignity, that expresses this dignity and increases it. (cf. *Laborem exercens*, 9). These are our convictions that inspire our efforts in youth employment. We are convinced that employment is an essential means to allow each one to be recognised socially, to develop and be themselves.

Social inequalities cause the real differences among youth. Those in working class areas come from families who are acquainted with unemployment, financial insecurity, cultural obstacles and scholastic segregation. This makes it clear to us that the possibilities and risks are not the same for everyone. Their origins, their social class and their neighbourhood make a difference. 29% of job seekers experience discrimination.¹ Many youth are victims of discrimination in interviews because of their curriculum vitae, and when they are looking for lodging because of their skin colour or address. In the ZUS (sensitive urban zone) areas, 38% of youth are unemployed. For those from immigrant families it ranges from 37% to 57%, depending on their family origin (cf. CERÉQ survey, *Génération 2001*, 2004). Discrimination affects all of them, with or without qualifications.

As they do not have the same networks of relations, as they have often got into trouble, as they are more subject to inequalities, young people in working class areas need special attention. As they have the same challenges in life as everyone else, the means to help them must be reinforced.

¹ 57% in Seine-Saint-Denis, a deprived suburb. This area is well known in France as a ZUS (sensitive urban zone) that contains all the phenomena associated with this kind of area: high unemployment, low academic attainment, dense public housing, delinquency, etc. (cf. YCW Survey *Enquête JOC-CSA*).

This is why the YCW is speaking on their behalf in the national campaign “Employment for all youth”. It includes a survey of 31,206 young people from around France on employment, guidance and help in entering the workforce.

Based on these results, there were over 120 local discussion sessions on youth employment all over France guided by YCW members. Youth came from the working class areas and met with employment agency officials, youth leaders, local representatives, entrepreneurs and trade union representatives, etc.). Proposals from the young people all over France were gathered. 1200 of these young people met in Paris at the *Etats Généraux* (assembly of representatives) for youth employment from 30 September to 1 October 2006. The debates were between the youth and trade union representatives, experts and institutional leaders. This event was a platform for working class youth who are not usually consulted on questions that affect all of society. Following those meetings, eleven proposals were voted on that aimed to improve youth employment, and a charter was drawn up and signed by representatives of political parties, associations and youth.

The YCW members and the working class youth who took part in this campaign can be proud of their work. It is concrete testimony for them and for society that they have a place there, and that it can be different from what they are being given today in France. They have to dare to participate at their level to work for a more just and caring world. The Church can give them the means to find this courage.

Facing unemployment and crisis situations in professional life

DOMINIQUE PECCOUD

Special Advisor for social-religious affairs at the ILO Geneva

YOUTH are among the greatest assets on this planet. They are the foundation of the future development of their countries. However, youth today are also a very vulnerable group in the world of work. The 15 to 24-year-olds present the greatest challenges for the ILO (International Labour Organisation) strategic goal of decent work for all. Its aim is that every man and woman of working age should have the opportunity for employment that will allow them to express their essential human dignity. The slowdown in employment growth in the world over the past few years, growing unemployment and the resulting under-employment, affect young people, often leading them to despondency. How can we tackle unemployment in the world today?

We shall answer this question in two steps. First of all we must analyse the phenomenon as a whole so that we can be aware of the extent of unemployment among the young. Then we shall try to see what is being done and what could be done to help youth in difficulty.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE

Some alarming statistics

- 89% of youth today live in developing economies;
- The number of young workers is 548 million (2005), 6.6 million more than in 1995. However, the number of young unemployed workers rose from 74 to 85 million between 1995 and 2005 (+14.8%)

because the youth population has grown faster than youth employment. This phenomenon is most noticeable in Sub-Saharan Africa, in South-East Asia, in the Middle East and North Africa, regions where weak economic activity was already causing high youth unemployment and where it is now growing at an alarming pace;

– The rate of employment of young people is 54.7% (2005), which means that roughly one in every two young people is actively employed. The rate of unemployment among young job seekers is 13.5% (2005) compared to a rate of 4.5% for adults. Almost half (43.7%) of the world's unemployed are young people. 31.8% of young people either do not receive remuneration for their work (working at home, housewives, etc.), or they are totally jobless and discouraged from searching for any kind of job, or they continue their studies;

– Among the 548 million employed young workers worldwide, there are presently 300 million poor young workers according to the criterion of less than 2 dollars per day. This is over half the total. It is important to take these poor workers into account. They often work in the informal economy without contract, or under dangerous conditions, in other words, far from decent and productive work. For developing countries, these facts are as important as the unemployment figures in order to understand the challenges for young people on the job market.

TRAINING THAT DOES NOT ALWAYS LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT

First of all we should note that although rates of schooling have increased throughout the world, education is still far from being a universal experience. In Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, over one third of the youth population are unable to read and write (2002). Figures for those reaching higher education are increasing very slowly. This lack of qualifications means that the only opportunities available to them are in unskilled labour or in the informal economy.

Moreover, in many countries, there is a shortfall between a young person's studies and the skills required in their first job. Very often the work does not correspond to the qualifications attained. The youth then either work in a job below their capabilities and qualifications, or their first job is not at all related to their studies. The first case is more frequent in developing countries where the rate of economic development has not followed the improvement in educational levels, and where the educational system has not given youth the skills that are most needed in the economy. That said, for the young people who have found employment, the security that this brings gives them job satisfaction. This happens both in low income countries and in advanced economies (cf. the demonstrations in France in the winter of 2006 against the *Contrat de Première Embauche (CPE)* or First Employment Contract. [It was to be available solely to employees under 26, and would have made it easier for the employer to fire employees by removing the need to provide reasons for dismissal for an initial 'trial period' of two years, in exchange for some financial guarantees for employees]).

Besides, in the present economic situation, the fear of unemployment takes precedence over the desire to learn and it determines the quality and orientation of training. This fear actually generates a rigid and short-term outlook in education. Short training courses that provide instruction for a specific kind of job are too often chosen to the detriment of longer general training courses that provide a wider culture. Because of this, the foundations are often too fragile for the flexibility required today in order to adapt to constant change in the job market. This handicaps young people from the time they set out to earn their livelihood, and the training received so far in their lives is not yet enough to remedy the situation.

Moreover, we are in a world where human operative intelligence is surpassed by artificial intelligence in many production and service domains. At times automatisation is clearly superior to human operations, notably in transport (air, high speed rail and underground trains).

During rush hours at the nodes of the Paris underground train system, automatic pilot takes priority over the line master who has neither the right nor the possibility to touch the command buttons. He is granted this possibility at other times in order to avoid absolute boredom. Similarly, in less than twenty years time, if air traffic continues to develop at the same rate, it will be necessary to completely automatise air traffic control as well as the piloting of planes. These are yet more high level and highly paid jobs that will disappear. More than ever we must admit the importance of the humanities because it is in their terrain that the non-automated jobs of tomorrow will grow.

HARMFUL IMPACTS ON SOCIETY

A job-seeking youth who has sent out hundreds of application letters that have received no response except for negative ones, may feel rejected and sidelined from society. If we take Tony Anatrella's definition of youth as the ages between 12 and 30, years in which they should pass from having an idealistic vision of the world ("the ideal ego") to a vision of the reality of their possible insertion in the world ("the ego ideal") and that this reality is exclusion, how can we not understand that the inability to find a job and enforced inactivity create a feeling of vulnerability and uselessness that lead to a very disturbing increase in the rates of suicide for this age group?

Without reaching this extreme, a situation of unemployment that goes on for too long often causes young people to take courses of action that are detrimental to society both in the future and present:

- A brain drain towards the more developed countries, thus depriving their country of origin of better skills;
- A rural exodus or emigration, sometimes at risk to their lives (examples are the small fishing boats that sink between Africa and the Canary Islands);

Facing unemployment and crisis situations in professional life

- Discouragement (giving up looking for a job);
- Marginalisation and vagrancy;
- Joining the armies of mercenaries or working in unsafe places. In Peru young men accept one thousand dollars per month to go to supervise the oilwells in Iraq so that they can send money home to their families;
- Gangsterism: burglary, drug-dealing, joining gangs and armed or guerilla groups – activities that give them a sense of belonging and a higher income than that obtained through “normal” employment (especially if they are not qualified);
- Fanaticism, which can lead to terrorism. On this point we can wonder if certain confessional organisations that supposedly safeguard the well-being of the population and youth in particular, do not profit from this to recruit them for the sake of a reputable “religious” cause.

Faced with the situation just described, how should we react? What help can be given to this vulnerable generation?

REASONS FOR HOPE

Belonging to a network in order to increase their chances

Nowadays, being alone in a search for employment makes things even more difficult for a young person without work. Training and diplomas are not enough in order to find a job. Belonging to a network or having contacts in high places are often more useful. Entering the workforce allows one to extend and cultivate professional relations and one’s address book. It is a virtuous circle that will always be useful. Nevertheless, we can deplore the fact that young people who are already financially marginalised or victims of discrimination (young women, youth in the housing estates, indigenous peoples) do not always have

access to these networks. Networks then become the antithesis of the notion of equal opportunity and meritocracy.

There are plenty of organisations, and some of the most dynamic are Christian, who gather young people and help them to integrate in the workforce.

The International Organisation of “La Francophonie” has a programme for the mobility of youth that lists the associations that work in the domain of youth in general and youth employment in particular throughout the French-speaking world;

Among the better known and most active Christian organisations on the national or international levels we have the ICYCW (International Coordination of Young Christian Workers, based in Rome) and the IYCW (International Young Christian Workers, based in Brussels) who take part in numerous campaigns for youth employment at a national and international level and ensure effective lobbying at international organisations. We also have the YWCA and YMCA (Christian associations of young men and women). It is significant that these organisations have relations with the International Labour Office: they take part in projects for youth employment and are on the very selective “special list” of NGOs accredited to the ILO [International Labour Organisation]. We also see national and international rural movements like MRJC (a Christian movement for young rural youth), and MIJARC (International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth) who work for access to land and employment for rural youth where unemployment and under-employment are particularly widespread (see below).

IMPROVING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ZONES

The agricultural sector represents over 40% of employment in the world and remains the dominant sector in terms of employment in all of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The rise in revenue and productivity in the rural economy – due to improvements in the quality of infrastructure, the

development of opportunities for sale and exchange of agricultural produce, the introduction of programmes to encourage saving and innovation, the development of the non-agricultural rural sector, etc. – can contribute to fostering a transformation capable of stemming the waves of rural emigration among the youth. The creation of jobs in rural zones has more impact on the reduction of poverty than in urban zones, simply because poverty tends to be concentrated in rural areas. Furthermore, this would have an equal impact on the rates of unemployment in overpopulated urban centres where young rural migrants compete for a limited number of jobs.

AVAILING OF JUDICIAL MECHANISMS AND ILO PROGRAMMES

In June 2005, the International Labour Conference recognised that most international norms concerning work (conventions and recommendations ratified by member states) are important with regard to youth employment. They are a useful tool for countries that seek to integrate young people in the national workforce. Some in particular set the basic conditions for the creation of good quality jobs, while others deal directly with youth employment. International labour standards encompass key subjects like the following:

- Minimum age for admission to employment (Convention 138 and Recommendation 146);
- Forced labour (Conventions 29 and 105);
- Equal remuneration (Convention 100 and Recommendation 90);
- Hours of work (Conventions 1 and 30);
- Night work (Convention 155 and Recommendation 164);
- Medical examination of young persons (Conventions 77 and 78 and Recommendation 79);
- Labour inspection (Convention and Recommendation 81).

The Youth Employment Network directed by the ILO in conjunction with the United Nations and the World Bank, helps countries to develop coordinated action in matters concerning youth employment. Undertakings in this domain encompass:

- Collection of data on the nature and extent of youth employment, unemployment and under-employment;
- Analysis of the effectiveness of national policies and programmes for youth employment, as well as technical assistance in the formulation and setting in motion of action plans for youth employment and the development of tools and training materials;
- Guidance notes to strengthen the capability of governments and organisations of workers and employers;
- Advocacy for decent work, employment opportunities and workers' rights;
- Establishment of strategic partnerships for youth employment in the private and public sectors at the regional, national and international levels;
- Promotion of transnational peer networks in order to share experiences and good practice among ILO members and other concerned parties;
- Collaboration with other international institutions in order to insure coherence in national initiatives concerning policies for youth employment.

Whether it is at the level of training or the availability of jobs, it is not only the young people who are responsible for their unemployment. It is the task of those responsible for policy to reorganise education in such a way that it is given the long-term view that it deserves. Furthermore, unemployment can be a menace to democracy and national and international security. It is important that those responsible for policy understand that social justice implies full productive employment and decent work.

The social doctrine of the Church has always insisted on two essential points concerning work:

– Work does not only have an objective dimension, gauged only by the economy, production or service it provides and its market value. It has an essential subjective dimension that is relative to the way the person who accomplishes the work is transformed by it. They are either happy to form part of a creative community with others, or, unfortunately on the contrary, they are found to be utterly exploited by undignified work or are in despair at being excluded from the human community because of unemployment.

– There should be a virtuous circle between capital and work where capital should above all permit new enterprises to be created and hence work. Productive work in its turn, through the benefits of exchange of products, should permit real growth of capital.

Decent productive work by young people is directed towards concretely putting into action these two principles. It is a major commitment of the Millennium Goals for Development adopted by the United Nations in 2000, to be achieved by 2015. We hope that this multilateral system is receiving the support of all the Christian community networks for the employment of young people.

Thursday 29 March:
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE
APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL

A day of pilgrimage and encounter in Rome

Friday 30 March:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK
IN HUMAN LIFE

Work as a Vocation: Drawing on the Catholic Social Tradition 25 Years after “Laborem exercens”

PROF. MICHAEL J. NAUGHTON

*Professor of Catholic Studies and Theology,
University of St. Thomas, Saint Paul, USA*

It is a great honor to be here with you to explore the theme of *Witnessing to Christ in the World of Work* and in particular the idea of *Work as a Vocation*.

As young people, many of you are in a tough situation. Most of you are poor, you don't have the work that you want, the future is unclear, you are somewhat anxious about the future, most are thinking about who you will marry, so the idea of a vocation or calling may seem a distant reality. You may be tempted to say: “I just want a job so I can pay my bills and pay back my loans. Once I get settled, I will start thinking about a vocation, but for now I have to start my career first”. This is actually a dangerous temptation. To see your work as only a job or career can actually lead you to taking on the wrong kind of work. You are at a stage that is actually forming you more than you know. You are and have been ordering your priorities for a very long time, and this ordering is having a major impact on how you view the world.

The conference organizers were very wise to pick this theme of “Witnessing to Christ in the World of Work”, because you will be spending a large amount of time at work, and you need to bring your **WHOLE** person, body and soul, skill and virtue, reason and faith to your work, if you are to develop as full persons and if you are to make this world a better place.

Each one of us in this room has a view of work, much of which comes from the stories of our lives. This view of work comes from our

parents, our education, where we grew up, etc. These stories have formed us in more ways than we know. Some of these stories are good and others are not, but it is important that we be aware of them. If we are to see our work as a vocation, this spiritual view of our work calls upon us to look at our life more deeply, and particularly at the stories in our lives which reveal to us how we have come to regard our work.

I remember a “not so good” story in my life. When I was teenager, I was leaving the house one evening and my dad, who is from Ireland, said to me, “Michael, you be good now,” “yeh Dad”, I said, and then he said, “but if you can’t be good, be careful”. I mused that maybe he was smarter than I thought (the realistic confidence of a father). Well an unfortunate event happened to me that night, of which I will spare you the details, and my dad had to pick me up from a Chicago police station on the south-side. The first thing he said to me was, “Michael, I think you had better just be good”.

Most of us never would say that money, status, fame, etc. are the goals in our lives, but we find ourselves falling into patterns as if they were. My Dad was a builder, and he was trying to be careful in a very turbulent time of high interest rates – how to be careful, survive, etc. The struggle in our lives is that we work as if being careful, or earning a lot of money, or climbing career success, or achieving fame are central to human happiness. We find ourselves too often compromising human relationships, simple living and prayer, for promotions, status symbols and higher standards of living. Our particular compromises are not usually earth shattering, but we too frequently fall into patterns which we call careerism or consumerism, which often come to full effect near the end of our lives.

DIVIDED LIFE

“The split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age [...] Let

there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one hand, and religious life on the other” (*Gaudium et spes*, 43).

While there are many dimensions to this divided life, I would like to highlight two dimensions:

1. *I am divided*: The human condition, as a result of original sin, is to be divided internally in our will and passions and intellect. Saint Paul said: “For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. [...] The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want” (*Rom 7:15*).

Saint Augustine in “The Confessions” wrote of the tortuous internal conflict between two wills. Neither of them is complete, and what is present in the one is lacking to the other. He wrote: “I, when I was deliberating upon serving the Lord my God now, as I had long purposed, – I it was who willed, I who was unwilling. It was I, even I myself. I neither willed entirely, nor was entirely unwilling” (*The Confessions*, Book VIII, chap. 10)

Saint Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* gives a further insight into this division by describing not between two wills but between the will and the passions.

We need to be aware of our blind hypocrisies and tendency to compromise. The Canadian writer, Douglas Coupland wrote “*Compromise is said to be the way of the world and yet I find myself feeling sick trying to accept what it has done to me*”.

2. *The World is Divided*: When *Gaudium et spes* speaks of this division of space between our faith and our daily lives, it describes it as “among the more serious errors of our age”. This division has always been a problem, but modern culture is presenting us with a further challenge. There is something about our age, our culture, that has made this division worse. Whereas in the past our culture would challenge such a split with claims of hypocrisy, today our culture has created a language that has normalized not just distinctions but separations or walls: pub-

lic/private, faith/work, body/soul, church/state, spirituality/religion, reason/revelation, etc. These divisions have compartmentalized and disconnected the deepest sources of meaning of our lives from the most significant actions in the way we live, and now this split has come to be seen as a normal state of affairs.

In order to overcome this divided life, we need to ask ourselves big questions. If we are to live as if faith matters, if we are to be good, we need to ask ourselves questions that are big enough to open our minds to see what is at stake and open our hearts to embrace what should be loved.

BIG QUESTIONS

1. *What am I Working For?*

As work is such a major part of our lives, we need to ask this question. *Laborem exercens* goes a long way in helping us to answer it. And yet, a good answer will not come from work itself, since our work does not provide us with the height or depth of a good answer. We need to ask a second question – *What am I resting in?*

2. *What am I resting in?*

This is not a normal question for us, but one that we need to take very seriously, since the answer to our work will be found in our leisure. We are made not only to work but also to rest. This is why talking only about *Laborem exercens* in dealing with the problem of the divided life is not enough. This encyclical, like all encyclicals, is not sufficient. Since Pope John Paul II wrote it 25 years ago, he also wrote a document on REST called *Dies Domini (The Lord's Day)*.

“Rest therefore acquires a sacred value: the faithful are called to rest not only as God rested, but to rest in the Lord, bringing the entire creation

to him, in praise and thanksgiving, intimate as a child and friendly as a spouse" (Dies Domini, 16).

3. *What am I living for?*

The important thing here is integration of work and rest/leisure, so the two apostolic letters just mentioned provide us with the basis for the question "what am I living for?" A famous theologian, Karl Rahner, once said that work and leisure are not two periods of time in human life that we hold in balance with each other. They are two moments in a person's self-realization which exist only in their relation with one another and are the primary constituents of human existence itself. This is a question of integration and not of balance. Balance can perpetuate the divide.

You are leaders of work for tomorrow, and this International Youth Forum is asking you to reflect, to pray and to think more deeply about what your future world of work will look like. Will there always be scandals and corruption? Remember that it is not only a question of being good; the moral life by itself too often degenerates into a hardened legalism without a source of the Spirit.

Now we look at different visions of work and leisure and their integration.

WORK AS JOB

"If work is so great how come they pay us to do it" (Mike Royko).

Economic Return is the basic motivation for work as anyone from the "real world" will tell us. However, this extrinsic motivation is not enough. In the United States, an increasing dissatisfaction among lawyers is taking place. One reason for that is that a lawyer's time is increasingly equated with a monetary unit where an hour of law equals \$200 or \$800 or whatever. The dominance of this cash nexus exchange

flattens all work time to a price. The price of a lawyer's time is getting to be the cost-effectiveness for the client, profits for partners, and income for the lawyer. Meanwhile, the more the intrinsic characteristics become more difficult to attend to, such as justice, mentoring younger associates, pro bono work, and so forth. In the case of CEOs (chief executive officers), when they are given multi-million dollar or euro incentives, it is very difficult for them to resist the pressure and temptation not to see their work in terms of price. Doctors and nurses are increasingly concerned about the commodification and the corporatization of medicine.

Dominant values for the Materialist are things that are measurable – efficiency, profitability, consistency, growth, systems, structure, etc. The only things that count are those that are measurable. Numbers show me something. However, the more you measure the more you drive the spirit out of the thing. (The more you test your students and the more you grade them, the more burdensome education gets, and this drives the love of learning out of the student.) Don't get me wrong, measurements are crucial because without them your accountability goes out the window, but there is a downside to them. As Einstein said: Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

There can sometimes be this tendency for bureaucracy in the Church too. John Paul II in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* speaks of "Ecclesialism", i.e. people who fall into the trap of the structures of the Church and fail to let the Holy Spirit work through the Church.

Why do we view work this way? There are lots of reasons, but one of them can be the bad work we have been given.

BAD WORK

"Jobs are not big enough for people...So you absent your spirit from it. My mind has been so divorced from my job, except as a source of income, it's really absurd" (Nora Watson).

There are a lot of bad jobs out in our world. Some are mindless, so numbing, that it is difficult to find any value but economic value. In the kitchen at Al's diner in Minneapolis a sign reads: "There's no fulfillment here". Other forms of work are paid so little, that even economic reward is difficult.

While much more needs to be said about labor markets, public policy, training and development, organizational culture, job design, and so forth, another reason why people see their work as a job has to do with leisure.

LEISURE AS AMUSEMENT

In our "culture of entertainment", leisure becomes the place where "real" living takes place. The highest paid people in our culture are in the entertainment industry.

However, behind much of our entertainment there is a sense of escape. As Billy Joel's song says: "Cause he knows that it's me they've been coming to see, to *forget* about life for a while". Jacques Ellul is more philosophical: "Instead of being the moment when we rediscover ourselves, thinking about who we ought to be, leisure is the moment when amusements succeed to the maximum in making [us].. forget".

The word *amuse* has a very interesting etymological history that reveals a deeper level of our modern problem. It comes from "the Muses," the Greek goddesses who were divine patrons of the liberal arts". The Muses would refresh and re-create people bringing them back to their upright posture. One of the principal roles of the Muses was to "remind" them of who they are. The Muses, then, were a form of re-creation, not a distraction.

A-muse: Once we place the "a" in front of "muse," the "amuse" is a denial of the muses. Amusement no longer recreates us, but as the meaning of the Middle English, from *Old French*, the "amuser" is to

“stupefy” “to stare stupidly,” a rather good description of many TV watchers. Whether it is in the forms of malls and shopping, casinos, TV, movies, concerts, amusement parks, internet, video games or strip joints, as a culture we seek to escape.

The Weekend Getaway sense of leisure was captured in an ad for a chain of hotels which read:

“Weekend Getaway – Your body checks in and your mind checks out”. The caption captures two principal characteristics of modern leisure:

1. Dualism – separating body and mind: This claims that real living is a suppression of our ends and of our selves, not a revelation of our destiny and character. As we seek to escape, we have to repress the mind, the soul and meaning. This is even better captured in Las Vegas’ now infamous tagline: “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas”. The intimation of such a line is that we can act as though we were someone else and get away with it. They should be sued for false advertising, since what happens in Vegas comes right back with you on the plane – the only thing you tend to leave in Vegas is your money.

2. Celebration: When our weekends are increasingly understood as amusements, and increasingly suppress the mind, the soul and meaning, this begins to have an impact on how we CELEBRATE life, especially, how we spend and understand our HOLIDAYS. That is, our celebrations have lost their ability for RE-CREATION and have become merely recreation.

A. HOLIDAY loses the HOLY: We have the commercialization of Christmas, the decadence of Mardi Gras and St. Patrick’s Day (St. Patrick and his merry band of Leprechaun Helpers); the over-sentimentality of Valentine’s Day; the trivialization of Easter; the ghoulishness of Halloween etc. All of these celebrations have lost their soulful and religious character and have at their core acts of consumption.

B. Sunday Loses its Power to Re-create: What is needed is “not just any kind of *interruption* of work, but the *celebration* of the marvels which God has wrought” (*Dies Domini*, 17). John Paul II explains that

“when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a ‘weekend’, it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see ‘the heavens’. Hence, though ready to celebrate, they are really incapable of doing so” (*Dies Domini*, 4). While the weekend is crucial for our rest, without worship we lose sight of authentic celebration, of what is good in the celebration in which we participate.

CONSUMERISM

When leisure is exclusively restricted to entertainment and consumption, it fails to provide the moral and spiritual resources necessary to offer the world a robust notion of the good, and instead settles for a conventional and thin description of the good that neither has the capacity to inspire greatness nor the resources to overcome our impulses for more. The focus of real living takes place outside of work where relationships are largely understood in terms of their consumable character. Our identity tends to be reduced to that of a consumer: patients, students, clients. Even parishioners are now known as consumers only – focused on what they consume, not on anything else. Leisure loses its capacity to go deep. Meanwhile, work is secondary and is understood only in terms of its economic or consumptive considerations. It has lost its power to sanctify. When the focus is on leisure, work is merely an instrument in order to be able to maximize consumption. Commercialized leisure results in a work and spend cycle, where in order to afford one’s leisure spending, people are forced to work more hours and spend less time in leisure.

WORK AS CAREER

Unlike those in a job who tend to see work only as a means to an economic end, the careerists see the inherent value of work. They realize work can be a source of self-esteem, creativity, and personal satisfaction.

The etymology of the word ‘career’: it comes from the word ‘carrier’. Like a car, our career serves as a vehicle to get from here to there – our degrees, scores, grades, achievements, etc. are the vehicles that get us to the next step.

These people are more goal-oriented. There is a love in the work itself. Their values tend to be team work, hard work, innovation, creativity, etc., but such values tend not to reach social or spiritual levels. The careerist mostly sees his or her goals connected to a “track” that is largely determined by his or her own personal preferences.

LEISURE AS FUNCTION

The dominance of work, what one German philosopher, Josef Pieper, called “the total work mentality,” has encroached upon our view of leisure in a way that we increasingly view our leisure primarily in terms of utility. We want to know its instrumental value to our work. This is so dominant that we often do not even know that it is happening. Let me give you 2 examples.

1. Education (1st fourth of our lives)

It has been said that college is just one step on the continual stairway of advancement. Students are always aware that they must get to the next step (law school, medical school, whatever) so that they can continue to progress up the steps in the future. Learning is justified in order to get good scores, to get the school of choice, to get a good career, etc. Education becomes technical training where we learn to be “careful”, skillful, technical and successful. Education is not about shaping Me as a person, nor about contemplating what is real and true in human existence, but rather it is a means to career enhancement. People often ask about the purpose of liberal arts classes because they see no sense in

learning something for its own sake or studying a poem simply because it is beautiful. It is interesting to note that in the past, school was not seen as a form of work, but leisure. The word 'school' comes from a Greek word that means 'leisure, philosophy, lecture-place'. Every semester I tell my students that they are actually at 'leisure'.

2. *Rest*

"Sharpen the saw" is a state of mind that never leaves work. All time is ordered or controlled toward work time. We cannot be at rest without worrying about whether it serves the next moment's work.

You may have heard of Sunday Afternoon Neurosis: – Sandor Ferenczi, a Hungarian disciple of Freud's, reported that he was treating a number of patients, who on Sundays (or, in the case of a Jewish patient, every Saturday), were experiencing depression and at times sickness. Many people often associate this depression with a dread of going back to work. However, Ferenczi argued that they were suffering from the Sabbath itself. Because they did not know how to rest, their attempt at it resulted in boredom, and more tragically, an emptiness, precisely because our rest lacks a spiritual enrichment connected to "contemplation and fraternal communion" (*Dies Domini*, 68). One of the reasons why people find Mass so boring may be because they have lost the capacity for deep rest. They only want rest that allows them to go back to work in a sharpened way. As Josef Pieper said: "If rest is in order to be more productive, our intentionality corrupts the possibility for real rest".

This view of leisure and work moves us to see our identity heavily and increasingly only tied to our achievements. We become careerists where 'doing' takes over from 'being'. We focus on objective achievement at the expense of interior or spiritual maturity. Our identity begins to collapse into being an entrepreneur and only an entrepreneur, with decreasing attention to our role as son, husband, father, citizen, Christian, etc. We

lose sight of other realities besides work. It can be an addiction we use in order to escape reality. Then when we retire, we have nothing. Examples of this can be seen in Lee Iacocca. A couple of years after leaving Chrysler, he was on the front cover of *Fortune* with this caption: 'An economic giant at work, but in retirement a spiritual dwarf'. Retired American president Lyndon Johnson 'in his retirement had spent so many years in pursuit of work, power and individual success that he had absolutely no psychic or emotional resources left to commit himself to anything once the presidency was taken from him' (Doris Kearns Goodwin). Years of concentration solely on work meant that in his retirement he could find no solace in recreation, sports, or hobbies.

SUBJECTIVE DIMENSION OF WORK

In Catholic social tradition, it is not productivity of work that gives dignity; rather it is the fact that it is a human being who is doing the work. *Laborem exercens* tells us that "we must concentrate our attention on work in the subjective sense". In section 6 it says about the human person that "as a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfill the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity". John Ruskin once said that "the highest reward [or punishment] for one's work is not what one gets from it, but what one becomes by it".

VOCATION

In order to understand work as a vocation, we need to see our vocation first in terms of our universal call to be human and in terms of our state of life. These two vocations capture the moral and spiritual foundations of our vocation to give.

The word ‘vocation’ comes from the Latin *vocare* meaning ‘to call’. In particular it is a call to GIVE. Our first call is not to work, but to be fully human, to be who we were created to be (God’s call). While our work “belongs to the vocation of every person”, work does not exhaust this vocation. Thus when we speak of vocation, unlike career, our first thought is the whole of our humanity, not just our work. The second dimension of our call is to a state of life, which the Church describes in terms of the religious, priestly and lay states. This is our state of belonging, and it determines the primary community that has certain claims on us. As Catholics, all of us should pray about the state of life God wants for us.

However, vocation is not only to marriage, or the religious or single life. It is the primary, but not the only commitment in our lives. Our work is also a vocation. Our vocation to work is not principally to a particular kind of work, but to the way of doing the work – our work is a gift. By animating one’s work as giving, one humanizes the world, as well as oneself. Moreover, work enables us to overcome our inborn egocentricity by joining with other people in a common task, and to bring forth the goods and services needed by all of us for a decent existence. A society is alienated if its forms of work make it difficult for work to be seen as a gift of self and for communities of work to be established. This notion of work as a call to give of our talents to others is an essential dimension of a Catholic understanding of work.

WORK AS GIVING – CATHOLIC SOCIAL PRINCIPLES AT WORK

When Native Americans encountered Europeans and presented them with gifts, they were baffled by the Europeans’ possessiveness in relation to the gifts given to them. Native Americans expected their white visitors to give back their gifts so as to keep them moving. This idea of setting gifts in motion equally baffled Westerners negatively

characterizing Native Americans as “Indian givers”. Yet, what Native Americans understood, and what we should take heed of, is that when a gift is not shared, it corrupts the holder.

In *Laborem exercens*, John Paul explains that people enter into two inheritances when they work: 1) that which is given by the Creator in terms of natural resources and 2) that which is given by others through all that has been already developed on the basis of those natural resources. We are indebted, even before we start to work, to both the Creator and human beings who provide the tools and opportunities to share in the goods of creation.

In the Catholic social tradition, people are not instruments for our advancement. They are created in the image of God, destined for the Kingdom, and therefore we are to treat them with dignity.

In Western culture, we tend to see property as a so-called private matter: “So long as it does not hurt anyone, I have the right to do whatever I like with what is mine”. St. Augustine pointed out that the word private comes from “privation,” a certain loss of meaning or substance. To understand our property, our choices and our religion only in private terms is to refuse to recognize its inherent “giftedness”.

According to Josef Pieper, in order to foster a vocation of work, people at work must be in right relationship with each other (justice in Latin is *iustus* which means right). This means that they should be paid a living wage to acquire property and in particular productive property – the means of production. It also means that the state should be limited in its power over their lives.

If one only sees a problem in its technical or economic dimension, one is often overlooking the complexity and the fundamental humanness of the problem. To see things whole is to overcome the inner impoverishment of the individual.

Yet, as profound and as meaningful our vocation to give at work is, we still have a problem. Or at least, I have a problem. When I give of myself at work or at home for that matter, I often experience certain

dysfunctional characteristics. I become resentful in my giving. I find myself whining “why am I doing all the work, why am I doing all the sacrificing in this relationship, why aren’t they giving as much as I am giving, why is this an 80-20 relationship”, etc. I often feel unappreciated wondering why my colleagues do not recognize my contributions. I feel a heavy duty that has lost a generous spirit, and this tends to lead to a victimization syndrome. This victimization then leads to resentment, which not only neutralizes the power of giving, but actually works against me by producing exhaustion, burnout and ultimately cynicism. My work is no longer a place of development and sanctification, but of dis-formation.

What we find is that we cannot give what we have not received. As the Latin proverb puts it, *nemo dat quod non habet* “nobody gives what he does not have”. In other words, in order for us to give rightly, we need to be able to receive rightly.

In order to get work right, we need to get leisure right, but leisure not as amusement, but as contemplation, as receptivity. We not only need to know how to give at work, to understand our vocation to work, but we need to know how to receive the world and God.

LEISURE AS CONTEMPLATION

Leisure as contemplation is a different kind of activity from work. Its structure is not an “achievement” on our part, but a “receiving” where we lay ourselves bare to accept what God wants of us. Benedict XVI explains that the person “comes in the profoundest sense to himself not through what he does but through what he accepts” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 2004, 267), not through what he achieves but what he receives. We can describe leisure in terms of **habits** of receptivity, of “receiving”.

1. The first is the habit of solitude, of silence, not only external noiselessness, but an internal ceasing of our emotional tapes that have been playing for years, where we can hear again the wisdom that “deafens every fool”. A common experience for most people is that we become scattered as we move into the world and we lose a certain center which causes within us a loss of sight of who we are. Our activity from our work, our families, our community, and so forth, no matter how good they are, can cause a diffusion of the self. The scattering generates a whole series of emotional tapes: of the illusions of grandeur of who I think I am; the feelings of the unappreciated genius; the debate scenarios with one’s nemesis; the award speeches for recognition; the pretend heroism, etc. Our emotional tapes, as Thomas Keating calls them, mask the conditions of our reality and create a false image of ourselves. It is often our tapes, our endless monologues, that prevent us from a deep rest, since it is the tape that perpetuates the restlessness of the restless heart. When we stop our tapes, we create the conditions that allow the freedom of God’s Word to speak its full force to us. It is here that we see the deepest form of silence and its most profound fruit is prayer – a silence that stills the mind and heart and opens the person to God.

2. The second habit is celebration of the Sabbath. If we don’t get the Sabbath right we will never get work right. The Sabbath is not merely a day at the end of the week, the weekend, nor is it the “mop up” day in which to complete unfinished projects from the week, but it is “a holy day,” God’s day, where we receive through Word, sacrament, leisure, rest, silence, etc. the meaning of our existence including our work activity. The Sabbath is still one of the most powerful signs in our market economy that production and consumption do not own us, because it provides one of the few times and spaces in which the person is not defined principally as a worker or a consumer, but as human, as created and redeemed. Actually to be only a worker or consumer is an eventual process of dehumanization, since by themselves working and

consuming preoccupy us with limited ends. The Sabbath is necessary for our own humanization, if it is characterized by a celebratory dimension of a festival in which we receive and affirm our end. John Paul II wrote, "Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ!" He explained that we are in special need of rediscovering the Sabbath, and in particular, the Lord's Day, "not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human" (*Dies Domini*, 7).

3. The third habit, service, seems more like work than leisure, yet to be with those who on the surface cannot do anything for us, can actually be a most profound experience of receptivity. Jean Vanier explains that "if we remain at the level of 'doing' something for people, we can stay behind our barriers of superiority". We share most deeply with people when we are "with" them, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. To be with those who to all appearances cannot do anything for us are precisely those who can do more for us than we can for them. As Benedict XVI explains, "Those who are in a position to help others will realize that in doing so they themselves receive help; being able to help others is no merit or achievement of their own. This duty is grace" (*Deus caritas est*, 35). The habit of service, of going to the margins, is intimately tied to the habit of the Sabbath. In Matthew chapter 12 we see how Jesus gets into trouble with the Pharisees for healing on the Sabbath. In *Dies Domini* 69-73, John Paul II makes the powerful link between Eucharist and service. "Sunday should also give the faithful an opportunity to devote themselves to works of mercy, charity and apostolate" and "Lived in this way, not only the Sunday Eucharist but the whole of Sunday becomes a great school of charity, justice and peace".

These habits of leisure are not means to escape the world (like we

find in amusements), but to better see the world as it is. We remember Mother Teresa of Calcutta's 'business card':

The fruit of SILENCE is Prayer

The fruit of PRAYER is Faith

The fruit of FAITH is Love

The fruit of LOVE is Service

The fruit of SERVICE is Peace

The key points are: she starts in silence: in receptivity, in openness, in a disposition to receive; first we receive, first we are loved; then we respond; and then we receive yet again, peace. Such a business card enables us to see in a simple and profound way the world as a whole: to take in the whole and to affirm the whole. This leads us to what our Vocation is all about: INTEGRITY.

INTEGRITY

When we can see our work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation we have the ingredients for real integrity, where the roots of its meaning are exposed. In Latin, integrity comes from *integritas*, where we get the word "integer", a whole number. Integrity is about being whole, the ability to order the parts of our lives as whole human beings. It is not only about balancing work and leisure. Actually balancing the two often perpetuates and even strengthens the divisions and gaps in our lives, because balancing lures us into believing that we are solving our own hypocrisies. Without real integration, balance serves as a therapeutic device that offers a cheap version of integrity.

With regard to integration, *Laborem exercens* speaks of the Catholic principle of Incarnation/ Sacramentality: "Since work in its subjective

aspect is always a personal action, an *actus personae*, it follows that the whole person, body and spirit, participates in it, whether it is manual or intellectual work. It is also to the whole person that the word of the living God is directed, the evangelical message of salvation, in which we find many points which concern human work and which throw particular light on it. These points need to be properly assimilated: an inner effort on the part of the human spirit, guided by faith, hope and charity, is needed in order that through these points the work of the individual human being may be given the meaning which it has in the eyes of God and by means of which work enters into the salvation process on a par with the other ordinary yet particularly important components of its texture" (*Laborem exercens*, 24).

What is needed are not just doers or contemplatives, but contemplative practitioners, people who can first experience their being as receivers of creation, redemption, grace, and who then see their work as a form of giving (cf. David Schindler, "Christology and the Imago dei: Interpreting Gaudium et spes" *Communio* 23 Spring 1996: 179). This integration of work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation has an interesting connection with Jim Collins' work on leadership. Collins is one of the more insightful business theorists and consultants today. In the *Harvard Business Review*, he wrote about five levels of leadership and at the fifth level, where he places a small number of great leaders of American business, he explains two important characteristics. The first is resolve. These leaders work hard, they don't give up, they are tough, industrious, creative, diligent and they are ready to make great sacrifices. This quality is actually shared with those on the fourth level. What makes the fifth level different is their "humility". Humility for these leaders did not come from their work, but for many of them from their leisure. Collins explains that many of these fifth level leaders had significant non-work experiences that informed their notion of work, of leadership. For some it was the forced leisure of life-threatening sickness. After his near-death experience with cancer, Darwin Smith, CEO of

move toward work as vocation and leisure as contemplation, we have to realize that integrity is a life long project and all of us should be hesitant to claim such integrity too quickly or superficially or smugly. This integrated view of work and leisure that John Paul presents us with is the mature Christian, a maturity that is ultimately found only in the Kingdom. In this world we are not there yet. Overcoming our own divisions and hypocrisies, this constant gap between what we are and who we were created to be, never leaves us. The principal danger of our division and our hypocrisy is failing to address it openly and trying to hide it.

And yet, we need to be cautious of being too distant about where integrity takes place. It is not simply in the occasional heroic acts of our lives, but in the ordinary and mundane affairs that integrity begins to take root. When I was in college, during the summers I would work for my dad in his remodeling business. One house we had to remodel had a major fire in it, and we had to clear it out. The work was filthy and we were covered with silt and cinder less than an hour into the job. When my father stopped by to check on our progress, we started complaining to him about the dirt we were enduring, and he said in his thick Irish accent, “ Ah boys, but that’s honest dirt. That’s not bad dirt you have, but it’s good dirt ”.

Our lives in the ordinary day-to-day existence is full of muck. It doesn’t necessarily feel as though we are experiencing great moments of integrity, but in fact it is through this relationship between work and leisure that great connections can be made. This is seen most clearly in the concreteness of St. Benedict’s Rule. The Rule is not only about moral and spiritual principles, but also about these principles and insights in the concrete ordinary activities of the monks. It is about the bursar (Chapter 31), the kitchen servers (Chapter 35), the porter at the gate (Chapter 66) and how these ordinary, and at first glance, unspectacular encounters confront us with God’s presence.

As a continuation of Benedict’s Rule, John Paul’s writings provide us with a profound vision of what this integrity looks like, an integrity of

Prof. Michael J. Naughton

work as a vocation and leisure as contemplation. But even more profoundly, it was John Paul's life that witnessed such integrity, a profound sense of his own work and a deep spiritual life of receptivity. His ability to teach this vision was not only found in his encyclical and talks, but also it was communicated in his own witness of a man of great work and deep prayer. May we ourselves be such witnesses to the people with whom we live and work.

God created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission – I never may know it fully in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow, I am necessary to His purposes... I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught (John Henry Newman).

Panel discussion:
Work at the service of the person and the person's growth

Using our talents in the choice and exercise of our profession

MARGUERITE CHEVREUL
Human resources consultant, France

How do we choose our profession? In the past, people usually followed the same trade as their father. Today, there is more choice and we can build our own professional career. Many, however, are content to take the first job that comes along without question. This is for financial reasons, and mainly for fear of unemployment. For others, the only criterion for their choice is their academic achievement. For yet others, the decision is based on the image of social success and the advantages to be found in certain professions.

These professional choices made for external reasons often lead to great disappointment, and may even lead to serious depression later on. Many suffer in their professional lives because they have the impression that they are simply working for survival in an uninteresting job, that they are under-employed, that their gifts are not being used, and that life is passing them by.

In fact, in order to be happy at work, we know that it is not enough to take into account only certain material elements like remuneration, working conditions and status. There are other important elements like team spirit, the goals of the company, and the contents of the job position. However, there is another essential element: the use of our talents. It is this criterion, one that is not external to us but that is based on what we are, that should help us to choose a career that suits us and where we can flourish and be productive. This is a crucial dimension in

all our professional choices, and it should be taken into account from the time we set out on our professional career.

We shall now take a look at

- how to base our professional options on awareness of our talents;
- and how to develop them throughout our professional careers.

1. BASING OUR PROFESSIONAL OPTIONS ON AWARENESS OF OUR TALENTS

For any task of evaluation and reflection on the direction we should take, it is important to start from what we are. This is not a new idea. The ancient Greeks insisted on the need to “know thyself”.

We all have talents that we do not recognise

The more we clearly see our deficiencies and faults, the more difficulty we have in identifying our talents, even if we generally recognise those of others quite well.

Some of us may even think that we have not received any. We forget that we have all been created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore we have received a share, perhaps a very small one, but yet a real share of God’s talents. The talents we each have become special aptitudes for all our activities. They establish our personal identity and differentiate us one from the other and make us unique. We repeat psalm 139 “You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! ”.

We should not be afraid to love ourselves. Saint Anthony of Padua said, “Love yourself as God created you, God who loves you” (*Sermons, 15th Sunday after Pentecost*).

Why is it so difficult to recognise our talents?

Perhaps it is because our vision of ourselves has been obscured by an education that was a bit too perfectionist and that placed more

emphasis on our faults and too little on our qualities. We received a negative image that may have been reinforced by comparisons or failures, particularly at school.

We might also have been pushed to develop aptitudes that do not really correspond to our talents. This could be because of a false hierarchy of talents that is very common in our world today and that emphasises certain gifts, particularly the intellectual ones, and neglects others that include relational skills and manual and artistic abilities.

How to really know our talents

Let us first ask the Holy Spirit to help us get to know ourselves better. The Holy Spirit knows us intimately and can help us to have a true measure of ourselves, a notion spoken of by Saint Paul in Romans 12:3.

Let us also ask ourselves about our strengths. What are the activities and projects in which we were successful and that we liked? It might have been at school, but it could also have been in all kinds of activities, volunteering, hobbies, etc. In listing our successes in this way, we find that the same talents are underlying them all.

So if you have a talent for organising, it is reasonable to suppose that you use it as much in the organisation of a school outing, a pilgrimage or a family holiday as in your family life. If your talent is listening and compassion, you surely enjoy helping and comforting those near you, whether in your voluntary work or at school or university.

Let us think about the services requested of us by our friends and those around us. They generally identify our talents and constantly have recourse to them.

If you are the one always asked by your friends to be in charge of the holiday budget, then it is obvious that your talent for administration has been identified. If you are always put in charge of reception at the parish, then that must be your talent. The same holds if you are always put in charge of decorating at family reunions. If your friends phone you

every evening to ask your advice, it is because they know that you are good at listening.

Talents and choice of profession

Once we have identified our talents, it is important that we use them when choosing a profession. In this way we shall find the most suitable profession that will allow us to flourish and be productive.

In order to do this we must make a connection between our talents and the exercise of one or more occupations. One talent does not equal a profession. It is a combination of our talents that will guide us towards corresponding occupations, and so there will be several fields of work from which to choose.

If I take the example of a talent for listening and giving advice, there are several possible professions: psychologist, social worker, business person, doctor or consultant. In order to decide, you must find out what training and experience is necessary to enter these professions and be aware of the limitations of each. The fact that we know that these professions correspond to what we are deep down, our real talents, can help us to put greater effort into acquiring the training and experience required.

We might find that our talents could be used in occupations that require less rigorous training. If we go back to the talent for listening and giving advice, a taxi driver or hairdresser can use these and other skills too.

It is also advisable to make specific enquiries about the skills needed and the conditions for entry to a profession by speaking to people working in those areas. This will confirm our professional plans when we see if they are realistic with respect to the job market and suited to our potential. We must gather information with confidence and remain open-minded, for there may be possibilities out there that we had not imagined. Nowadays, access to certain professions differ according to

country. Studies in medicine or physiotherapy are easier in Belgium than in France, for example.

While basing our plans for future employment on our talents, we can still opt to have intermediate stages and make short and long-term projects to guide us gradually towards our dream profession. A future entrepreneur could begin by working in a bank that advises small and medium-sized enterprises before launching into the creation of a new venture.

This can help us build our own professional plans that correspond to what we really are deep down, to our talents and our real desires. They express God's will for us, and not that of other people. Sometimes our parents and teachers can direct us towards choices that are really theirs for us. They transfer to us their desire for success and ambitions, without really taking into account where our talents lie. The film "Billy Elliott" tells the story of following one's dream profession.

2. DEVELOPING OUR TALENTS THROUGH OUR PROFESSION

Developing our talents gives us joy. In the parable about the talents, the servant who buries his talent is thrown out into the darkness and the one who multiplies his talents "enters into the joy of his master" (cf. *Mt* 25:14ff).

Our talents are evidently factors in professional success. The more we use our talents, the greater our success.

In fact, the use of talents is a natural virtuous circle: the more we use them, the more we succeed, and the more we succeed, the more we love what we are doing, and as we love our work, we improve even further and gain more success.

On the other hand, when we find great difficulty we might begin to hate what we are doing. Then we fail and find ourselves with more problems, and then we dislike it all the more.

At a time of flexibility of employment, we need to realise that our resources help us to adapt. We can turn our talents into skills that are sought by employers.

This does not exclude our talents being taken together with our limitations

Of course we all have talents, but not all the talents possible and not always the ones we wish to have. This shows us that we all need to benefit from the talents of others, a solidarity that allows collective talents to flourish in our professional lives. It is like an orchestra where all the instruments are needed, including the triangle as much as the bass drum and the first violin.

Moreover, each talent has its limits and its reverse, just like our qualities and faults. If I am creative, it is likely that I am not well organised. If I am very meticulous, I may not be very creative. If I am fast, perhaps I am superficial, and if I am a perfectionist, maybe I am slow. Only God is perfect.

Neither should we think that because we have identified our talent that everything will be easier and that it will be obvious how this talent should be used. Using our talents will not be without difficulties for most of us. Using our talents may be the easiest course of action, but they are not always simple to use. They do not save us from setbacks and challenges. An author can have writer's block, and a comedian can suffer from stage fright, etc.

These limitations to our talents restrain us from the pride we might be tempted to feel if we regard ourselves as exceptionally gifted. We must remember that we are God's creatures and simply unworthy servants. The Cross is also present in our talents. These difficulties and setbacks provide us with a measure of ourselves, of our will to bounce back, of our ability to use our talents to the full. They test us as gold is tested by fire.

We therefore need to work on our talents

Sometimes we need to choose from among our talents depending on their purpose: for me alone or for others, talents for leisure or talents for my profession or mission, talents for pleasure or talents that are really needed and can be used. If we have lots of talents, there is a risk that none of them will be developed and that we could remain “amateurish” in everything.

In order to expand our talent, we often have to sacrifice something like time so that we can work at our talent, or to renounce one activity for the sake of another. This can involve sacrifice. We think of how dancers and footballers have to train. The fact that they are talented does not mean that they do not have to work hard!

This allows our talents to be purified. We allow the Lord to prune our talents so that they may grow, like the vine in the parable: “Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (Jn 15:2).

Our talents flourish in our professions

In this way our talents can become recognised skills in our professional careers. The Europass Curriculum Vitae in Europe is not built on the basis of our diplomas but on the skills that emerge from professional experience.

In order to help them grow, we use the means at our disposal in our professions.

First of all, with regard to the professional training provided throughout our lives and that is extremely important nowadays, instead of simply accepting the training provided, we should choose the courses that are best for the development of our talents.

Next, we should take every opportunity to use our abilities to the full, especially by accepting responsibilities offered to us, even if they

are demanding. It can often be tempting to avoid responsibility because it exposes us to scrutiny, involves risk, takes much of our time, and requires effort. We sometimes prefer to escape from our talents (like the bad servant in the parable), to hide it, to keep it out of sight for fear someone will ask us for something. This is false humility. We should trust the judgement of others.

We also think of the development of the talents of those who work with us in our professions. Especially in our management roles, Christian officials have the responsibility to think of developing the talents of those in their team, individual talents that contribute to the collective talent of a company.

Finally, as a career progresses, together with opportunities or technical or economic advances, we may have the chance to discover new talents. Some talents might even show themselves quite late, or take time to come together, especially when economic decisions have obliged us to accept more difficult periods in our careers. However, there is always time. We remember Mother Teresa or Saint Teresa of Avila whose talents were fully revealed when they were in their forties.

We pray to the Lord especially that he may help us to develop our talents. Let me quote the end of the parable of the vine from John 15:5: "Whoever remains in me and I in them will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing".

Let us remember that the source of our talents is not in ourselves but in God. The more we develop our talents, the more we reinforce our own self-esteem and our ability to act and to succeed – and also to face our limitations and failures – the more God helps us to be productive. The end of the parable about the talents says: "For to every one who has will more be given" (*Mt 25:29*).

CONCLUSION

In point of fact, these talents were not given to us for our own personal satisfaction but in order to accomplish our specific mission which gives meaning to our lives. Each of us has a particular mission which expresses God's will for us. This mission takes form and is carried out throughout our lives by means of our activities, particularly in our professions, without being necessarily identified with any particular trade or profession.

In his first homily, Benedict XVI said: "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary" (Saint Peter's Square, 24 April 2005).

Work as a place for human relations and solidarity

BUNITA KÖHLER

National Coordinator, Kolping Society of South Africa

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I bring you all warm greetings from the most southern tip of Africa – South Africa. It is a great privilege and honour to be part of this gathering and to be able to contribute towards the theme: “Witnessing to Christ in the world of work”.

The topic I was asked to address during this session is: “Work as a place for human relations and solidarity”.

For all of us but in particular for the young people of today this is a big challenge. How do we ensure that our work spaces are not only spaces to earn an income but rather an opportunity to build human relationships and solidarity?

This is easier said than done – especially since we find ourselves in an era where materialism, consumerism and personal self fulfilment have become the major drive behind most human beings. The one that manages to drive the latest sports car, that wears the best designer clothes and lacks nothing materially, is seen as the most successful. This is the model our young people tend to emulate.

If this is what our young people aspire for – we stand the risk of creating a society where young people will close themselves within their own world and cut themselves off from the problems and concerns of the rest of the world. We are in danger of creating a society where individualism, vanity, self-absorption, egotism, selfishness, conceit and self importance is rampant.

How do we get the balance right – to earn a living which is crucial for any individual but at the same time using our talents and gifts to fulfil our role as Christians and to the benefit of others.

The theme: “Work as a place for human relations and solidarity” conveys the idea that every individual is geared towards community and in relationship with others.

Proof of this we already find on the first pages of the Bible: “It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him” (*Gen 2:18*). For me this text of the bible means that an individual requires a personal counterpart in order to grow, develop, expand and mature.

“Individuals recognized their selfhood through relating to the personhood of others” (German philosopher, Martin Buber).

In South Africa we embrace the concept of Ubuntu – which means we are what we are because of others. The cardinal belief of Ubuntu is that a person can only be a person through the help of others.

To be human is understood and put into practice through being together with others and being there for others.

We are all linked together by necessity like a chain – we need each other more or less and although one might want to fight it, joy and sorrow remains something we have in common.

The theme: “Work as a place for human relations and solidarity”, touches our humanness directly. At the same time it challenges each and every one directly. It describes the reality that we are dependent on one another, on the one hand, but on the other hand it expresses the consequences resulting from this dependency, to care for and accept responsibility for one another.

The theme further shows us the connection between life and work under the concept of solidarity. Living and working belong together like the links of a chain. They are mutually dependent on each other. They develop their purpose and meaning by serving each other. Work enables a person to develop his/her full potential. It serves life and provides the livelihood of the individual as well as contributing to the common good. More importantly it brings people together in a shared responsibility.

This link is at the very heart of the movement I represent today, the Kolping Society. The Kolping logo links the processes of living and working like the links of a chain. At the same time it demonstrates that the Kolping Society as a Catholic Organization concerned with social issues, seeks specifically to emphasize the social character of life and work. Just as the right to life, so also is the right to work a social basic right. Today this right has a universal dimension. As an international organization the Kolping Society has done much for the enforcement of the right to work and the promotion of global solidarity. In the words of Pope Paul VI, the goal is a universal “Civilization of Love”, in which people live and work in solidarity together.

What do we mean by solidarity and how do we put the principle of solidarity in practice?

If one were asked to summarize the social teachings of the Church in one word, we could adopt Pope John Paul II’s favourite term, “solidarity”.

The dictionary defines solidarity as “agreement of all elements or individuals”; or as “unity of a group or class that is based on community or interests, objectives, and standards”; or as “mutual dependence”.

However we wish to define the concept solidarity, the following four dimensions are highlighted:

- the intrinsic social nature of the human person;
- equality of all persons in dignity and rights;
- the common path taken by individuals and peoples towards an even more committed unity;
- and the bond of interdependence between individuals and people.

From this perspective solidarity would be opposed to individualism, class conflict, imperialism, isolationism as well as any form of dictatorship. It is based on the dignity of every person and of all persons in human society.

Solidarity as a social principle and a moral virtue: The relationships

of interdependence, particularly in a globalized world, impel us towards genuine ethical-social solidarity. As one of the key principles of the social teachings of the church, solidarity becomes the starting-point for our conduct in society.

As a moral virtue, solidarity disposes us to determine the order of institutions – i.e., from “structures of sin” to “structures of solidarity”. In this regard, it is helpful to keep in mind how the Church defines virtue in the first place.

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of her or himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

It is in this light that Pope John Paul II defines solidarity as a “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the *common good*. That is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all”.

Solidarity as a Christian virtue: Solidarity, as a recurring theme in the social teaching of the Church, has been expressed in various terms, such as “friendship” by Pope Leo XIII, “social charity” by Pope Pius XI, the process of “socialization” by Pope John XXIII, and “a civilization of love” by Pope Paul VI. It also refers to the “preferential option for the poor” which Pope John Paul II defines as a “special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity”.

The bottom line is that as Christians we need to be interested and concerned about other people’s needs and problems as we are about our own. We must make the needs and problems of others our own. This is solidarity. Solidarity is not feeling sorry for people and feeling that we would like to help them in some vague way. Solidarity is about joining together with other people and working with a deep commitment for the common good. Solidarity teaches us to stand together with other people, to make their needs and problems our own and to work together with them for the common good.

If you allow me I would like to share with you our humble attempt at building human relations and solidarity through our work at the Kolping Society in South Africa.

The programme is called the Work Opportunity Programme (WOP). The motto of the programme reads: “Helping people to help themselves”.

The programme is geared at unemployed high school drop outs between the ages of 18 – 30, that have completed at least a grade 10 at school, who come from poor disadvantage families, but do not have the adequate skills to find a job.

In South Africa we are still confronted with a very high unemployment rate of up to 30% and in some of the poorer areas where we work as high as 40%.

The WOP programme consists of five phases:

- Phase 1: Life Skills Programme – 10 days of building self esteem – motivation, communication skills, values and attitudes and preparing them for the world of work.

- Phase 2: Vocational training: Hard skills – go to college or institution to study a skill – e.g. Hairdressing, carpentry, Chef’s training. – Varies 3 months – one year.

- Phase 3: In-service placement: Students are placed with companies for a period of 3 months to gain experience in their field of study.

- Phase 4: Job placement or support with starting their own businesses.

- Phase 5: Joining the Kolping Family. The Kolping units operate at parish level and essentially become structures for building solidarity. We call these units Kolping families. Students who have completed their course are offered after-care support by the Kolping family. The student is then encouraged to become an active member involved in the social programme of the family. In this way they fulfil their social responsibility towards their own immediate family and community.

CONCLUSION

The call to holiness extends beyond our private life commitment and church allegiance into all spheres of daily activities. Religion fully lived is a round-the-clock endeavour, an in-the-workplace task. Everywhere there are people, there is work. And where there is work there is the Church.

As Christians we need to take along into our places of work a priority of values, colouring every activity with inspiring goodness and truth that will contribute to the building of a more just society that will show respect and concern for everyone, especially the marginalized and exploited.

REFERENCES

BUBER, MARTIN, *Between Man and Man* (trans. Ronald G. Smith (New York Macmillan, 1967), p. 110.

Dialogue: The International Kolping Society's Journal for the Leadership. (Published by International Kolping Society, Germany 2005, 01/05 and 02/05).

MBIGI, L. and MAREE, J., *Ubuntu – The Spirit of African Transformation Management*, (1995).

POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Laborem Exercens*, Encyclical on Human Work promulgated 14 September 1981.

Work, free time, consumerism and use of money

CAMILO CORONEL ESCOBAR

IYCW President

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

A foreigner was standing on the quays of a village in the Caribbean when a boat arrived with just one fisherman. In the boat there were quite a lot of good-sized yellow tuna fish.

The foreigner praised the fisherman for the quality of his catch and asked him how long it had taken him to bring all of these in. The fisherman replied that it only took a short time.

The foreigner then asked him why he had not stayed out longer in order to catch more fish. The fisherman said that he had caught enough to satisfy the immediate needs of his family. The foreigner then asked him what he did with the rest of his time.

The fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my kids, take a siesta with my wife Mary, I go into town every evening to drink wine and play the guitar with my friends. I have an agreeable and well-filled time".

The foreigner replied, "I am an expert in company management and I could help you. You ought to spend more time fishing and with the income you could buy a larger boat. With the income from the larger boat you could buy more boats, and eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling fish to an intermediary you could sell it directly to a processing plant, and later you could open your own processing plant. You should control the production, processing and distribution. You should leave this tiny village and go to the Capital where you could oversee the expansion of your business. The fisherman asked, "But how long would this all take?" The foreigner replied, "Between 15 and 20 years". "And then what?"

The foreigner laughed and said that here comes the best part. “When the time comes you should sell the shares of the business. You will be rich. You will have millions”. “Millions... and then what?” The foreigner said, “Then you can retire. You can move to a village on the coast where you can sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta with your wife, go to the town every night to drink wine and play the guitar with your friends”.

The fisherman replied, “Is that not what I have already?”

INTRODUCTION

I think that the message in this story makes a clear comment on our use of money and free time, and they are intimately related to work. I shall try to give some ideas by looking at the everyday lives of young people and how we spend our free time, with what criteria we consume and in what way we use our money.

I shall refer to some of the testimonies that were received during an action campaign by the Young Christian Workers of Italy on youth and consumerism that was entitled “*All the rest*”, and some parts of the global analysis of an International Survey undertaken by the ICYCW (International Coordination of Young Christian Workers) in 60 countries called, “*Youth and work in a context of globalisation*”.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FREE TIME AND CONSUMERISM

Let us listen to what young people say about free time:

TESTIMONY

“My friends all have different consumer habits and ways of spending their free time. There is one who goes out to dinner every evening,

another who drinks alcohol from morning till night, another takes drugs, another consumes nothing and therefore spends nothing, but he misses out a bit on going out with friends because he has no social life”.

Rodolfo, 23, Italian, shop assistant

Free time is associated with what society offers young people: to go out with friends, go out somewhere, dance, drink alcohol, cinema, etc., just like Rodolfo’s friends. They are needs created by the system that follow the consumer logic, and life is spent doing only that. This can be seen on a larger scale in cities and on a smaller scale in towns. According to the results of the Italian YCW survey, the percentage of young people who spend free time with their boy/girlfriend is 65%, watching TV is 70%, internet or bars is 35%, and only 10% spend their free time doing voluntary work.

TESTIMONY

“I work at making shoes in my father’s workshop together with other youngsters. I live in the town of Ypacarai in the interior of Paraguay. Our team did a revision of life where we discussed our free time and we asked what the youth of our town do after work and school. We realised that there are not many answers to this question”.

Iván, 26, Paraguayan, shoemaker

The culture of free time is something that does not exist all over the world. For some, like Rudolfo’s friends, the consumer society has built a privileged place for young people and their free time and called it “commercial centres”. Millions of other young people are waiting in hope for community initiatives because the conditions of hardship, poverty and exclusion obliges them to live in confined and outlying spaces. They have barely enough to eat and survive, and even fewer alternatives for their free time, as happens with Ivan’s friends. *According*

Work, free time, consumerism and use of money

to our international survey, in Africa 47.1% of young people said that they do not take part in any associated activity, in Asia 63.8%, in Latin America 69.4% and in Europe 53%.

CONSUMERISM (WE WORK TO CONSUME)

Through consumer logic we can sometimes see how some workers dedicate their free time consuming things that are not actually necessary, and how a majority of workers take on another job in order to have more money so they can consume more. *The data from our international survey reflect this fact. The percentage who take on a second job in Africa is 23.3%, Asia 11.3%, Latin America 17.6% and Europe 18.4%.*

With regard to consumerism, the survey by the Italian YCW shows that young people spend their money on topping up their mobile credit 62.8%, on clothes 62.7%, on petrol 58.6%, on gifts 43.8%, on cigarettes 32%, and on videos and music 25.2%, among other things.

TESTIMONY

“Work is important most of all because it gives me financial independence. In fact, I can live with the money I save now, but I would like to have more. However, I would not accept an undignified job in order to have more money. I think that when I have a family I will feel the need to consume. I get fed up saving, and it irritates and angers me that I cannot buy things I want”.

Giada, 20, agricultural worker

When work goes from being a way to human fulfilment to being simply a means of acquiring money to be able to consume, this creates a reduced vision and concept of the real significance of work. Our international survey brings to light *the percentage of young people who work all year round without taking holidays, in Africa 60%, Asia 60.4%, Latin America 59.4% and Europe 71.7%.*

– **How do we interpret all of this**, how do we give it light and from where? We believe it is necessary to be able to illumine it from the Gospel.

– Jesus invites us to follow a specific style of life in which sharing and the common good are essential elements.

– Jesus points us to what should be our priorities in life, and indicates that structures and laws should be at the service of people and not that people should be at the service of laws.

We declare that this situation is totally inconsistent with the life Project that Jesus has for each of us. **What can we do in view of this situation? How should we proceed? With whom?**

Tomorrow we shall be discussing how to proclaim the Gospel of Work in our times. However, I would like to give two concrete examples of how to react to consumerism in the light of the Gospel.

TESTIMONY

“We would like to return to my country and we are thinking of studying and saving to buy a house in Chile and to become, above all, rich in our hearts. I feel that our way of consuming is poor yet rich in the bank of the soul. My husband has his own way of consuming. He buys a used damaged bicycle and fixes it, for example. He is a spiritually rich person and I feel fortunate. In other things he is more austere and even before buying a shirt for only 50 cents he always asks himself if it is necessary”.

Francisca, 25, Chilean, waitress

I hope I have been able to show that in the world we inhabit there is strong pressure on us all but especially on young people to follow the fashion. Consumerism reaches us through publicity and is easily accepted by most of us. It is hard to go against the tide. We need the

greater strength that is to be found in fraternal solidarity around Jesus, in the teaching of values that will remain with us, in celebrating a simpler life, in spiritual liberation from harmful addictions, and in the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom of God that is close by and present among all of us young workers.

TESTIMONY

“My way of spending has changed a lot in recent years. I remember when I was in college I would only buy brand trousers. I used to spend 50 euros for one pair of jeans, something that would not occur to me today. The jeans I have cost less than 20 euro. I would not buy the kind that cost more. Now I see a different significance in the money I earn.

When I began to work and saw the amount of money I was earning, I began to save a little and even managed to buy myself something more important.

Raquel, 27, nutritionist

I want to thank all the young workers who are doing revision of life and are proposing a new style of life. They are the ones who struggle against the current of the system.

I thank Francisca because she is making plans without being conditioned by her work, and Raquel because she tries to save in order to buy things that are really important.

These small initiatives show us in practice that it is possible to make a difference.

Saturday 31 March:
PROCLAIMING THE “GOSPEL OF WORK”
TODAY

Panel discussion: *Christian witness in the workplace*

Pastoral ministry of workers today

MSGR. PAOLO TARCHI

Director, Italian Bishops' Conference Office for Social Issues and Labour

JESUS THE WORKMAN

“... **T**he mystery of Nazareth never ceases to amaze us! Why did the Son of God who came to earth want to spend such a long time subjected to the hard exhaustion of work? What did this experience mean for him? What does it mean for us?

[...] Jesus was a man of work and work enabled him to develop his humanity, to learn to plan with creativity, to work with courage and tenacity, to contribute to the support of the family, to be open to the wider social circle through conscious, concrete solidarity.

His work in Nazareth was also for Jesus a way to dedicate himself to the ‘affairs of the Father’ (*Lk 9:25*).

[...] But work, Christ teaches us, is a value that has been profaned by sin and contaminated by egoism and because of this, as is true of all human reality, it needs to be redeemed. It must be rescued from the logic of profit, from the lack of solidarity, from the fever of earning ever more, from the desire to accumulate and consume.

[...] What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself? (*Lk 9:25*).¹

These words by Pope John Paul II draw our attention to the value of work, but they also raise the question: does workplace ministry serve any purpose?

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Message for the prayer vigil by Catholic Action in Italy, St. Peter's Square, 30 April 2004.

DOES WORKPLACE MINISTRY SERVE ANY PURPOSE?

The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church reminds us that work belongs to the original human condition. The Old Testament presents God as the omnipotent Creator (cf. *Gen* 2:2; *Job* 38-41; *Ps* 104; *Ps* 147) who fashions humankind in his image and invites them to work the soil (cf. *Gen* 2:5-6), and cultivate and care for the garden of Eden in which he has placed them (cf. *Gen* 2:15) [CSDC 255]. [...] In his preaching, Jesus teaches that we should not be enslaved by work [...] Gaining the whole world is not the purpose of our lives (cf. *Mk* 8:36) [CSDC 260].

We can gather from these few ideas that the world of work is also in need of the light of the Gospel. As the Christian conception of humankind and human destiny bases the transcendent value of the human person on God, and as it presents Jesus Christ as Son of God incarnate and Redeemer of humankind from sin and death, it provides exceptional insight into work and social problems in general. It is a powerful force not only for the life of believers but also for the renewal of all of society.

When economic, social, political and cultural endeavours encounter the transcendence of the human person, they reveal their underlying relativity.

In the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict reminds us of the essential link between work and holiday: “[...] it is particularly urgent nowadays to remember that the day of the Lord is also a day of rest from work. It is greatly to be hoped that this fact will also be recognized by civil society, so that individuals can be permitted to refrain from work without being penalized. Christians, not without reference to the meaning of the Sabbath in the Jewish tradition, have seen in the Lord’s Day a day of rest from their daily exertions. This is highly significant, for it puts work into perspective in relation to the human person: work is for man and not man for work ”.²

² BENEDICT XVI, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* n. 74.

The crisis of Sunday as a holiday – celebrating family, community and faith – is closely connected with the crisis of interpersonal relations. The poverty being increasingly experienced by opulent societies is not a poverty of goods but of relationships. For too many years we were convinced that an increase in financial well-being would translate into general well-being. Nowadays we know, in part thanks to studies in economics, that this is not true. What a person really needs above all, in addition to material goods, are relationships. In order to achieve a new quality of life, we must face cultural challenges and place the meaning of life in time right back at the centre and break the cycle of work-consume-work. It is not enough to relax and then return to work feeling renewed, nor to fill up your free time with time for consuming. There is a need to celebrate, because celebration helps give meaning to time and life.

The crisis of free time has thus become a crisis for humanity, a crisis concerning the sense of time, a “crisis of meaning”. For God, alternating work with repose is a fact – *otium* (contemplation) and *non-otium* (exchange), the Bible tells us –, but in humankind it needs to be controlled. The ten Commandments outline relationship with God and neighbour, and we note that the first one on the first tablet (relationship with God) and the first on the second tablet (relations with our neighbour) are joined together by the reminder to keep holy the Sabbath day, so that our time on earth can always be understood as a relationship with God and others. When people pay little heed to this commandment they lose awareness of the relationship with God and neighbour and hence with themselves. The commandment that reminds us to keep the Sabbath holy, asks us to interrupt ordinary time and to place ourselves in extraordinary time, a time of relationship that saves and consoles. However, this “obligation” needs to be commanded because it is not self-evident. On the contrary, people can be easily convinced of the opposite. They can think that time is theirs, that it is their right to arrange it as they believe and please. In this way, though, they forfeit the

opportunity to relate not only with God, but also with themselves and with others.³

We understand, then, that workplace ministry takes place in the context of evangelisation.

Why evangelise the world of work?

The encyclical letter *Laborem Exercens* reminds us that the Christian community, from the beginning of the industrial age, has been striving to help the world of work to emerge from the materialistic and economic rationale. In this rationale they were navigating, so to speak, between two rocks: one which reduced humankind to just one dimension – that of work, and the other which tended to reduce work to a circumscribed sector separated from human existence. In order to avoid being shipwrecked on either rock, the encyclical *Laborem exercens* points out the compass to use: the preeminence of humankind over work, the preeminence of work over capital and the preeminence of the universal destination of goods over private property.

In today's world marked by the great changes of the post-industrial era, the Christian community perceives the narrow limits of an economic culture that is held in the frantic pursuit of profit. They are also guided by reflection that goes beyond standard procedures and takes new paths that widen horizons. Here I would like to quote some useful ideas for our work of evangelisation from some economists who have for several decades been relating income and the well-being of people, economic well-being and happiness (the paradox of happiness). I would particularly like to point out some suggestions from recent studies by an Italian economist, Luigino Bruni.

Professor Bruni posed the question: what has the encyclical *Deus*

³ TARCHI P.- MAZZA C. (edd.), *La domenica e giorni dell'uomo* [Sunday and the days of mankind], Ed. S. Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Mi) 2005.

caritas est, a discourse on love by Pope Benedict XVI, got to do with economics? If we think of the area of economics as a place that functions without love, then can you imagine anything more distant? In fact, according to the professor, there is a strong and very relevant connection. If we delve deeper, we realise that there is a strong analogy between economics and the three kinds of love (eros, philia and agape) that are discussed in the Encyclical.

There is an analogy between eros and contract. Erotic love is born of a poverty or privation that one wants to fill through the other. Similarly with the contract: the contractual relationship is born because of a need, when I lack something. It is a “mutually advantageous” relationship that arises from the attempt to satisfy one’s own requirements or pleasure.

Economics also has a relationship with philia, especially as mutuality: the whole cooperative movement and the associations, yesterday and today, were conceived around the foundational principles of mutuality and friendship.

In economic science, however, agape has been, and still is, the absent element. Modern economics are characterised by a strong tendency to only see the first two kinds of love in action in the economic sphere (contract and friendship).

The message of *Deus caritas est* to the world of economics today is to go decisively beyond a dichotomous vision where on the one hand there is economics where only contracts count, and maybe friendship, and on the other, private life where agape has its place. The presence of agape opens up and elevates love-eros and love-philia. In that way the presence of agape-gratuity in the economic and civil sphere allows the contract to become an instrument of freedom and equality, and friendship to flourish in universal fellowship. Agape is like leaven or salt: if it is absent, everything loses taste.⁴

⁴ LUIGINO BRUNI, *Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa e civilizzazione dell'economia* [Social doctrine of the Church and the civilisation of economics], proceedings of the preparatory seminar for the centenary social weeks of Italian Catholicism, Treviso 20 January 2007, ed. Dehoniane.

The instrument for workplace ministry

An indispensable instrument used in evangelisation is the social doctrine of the Church. Ignorance of the social magisterium of the Church causes insecurity and confusion among many Christians and Christian communities, and it is sometimes the cause of pastoral silence. In a special way it is necessary to have more than a superficial knowledge of the documents of the Social Doctrine of the Church (SDC). This is not so much through duty as a way to acquire correct perceptions and suitable methodology, personally and as a community. The purpose of the SDC is not to give Catholics the solutions to social, economic and political problems, but, as we are told in the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* “to lead people to respond, with the support also of rational reflection and of the human sciences, to their vocation as responsible builders of earthly society” (n. 1).

“With her social teaching the Church seeks to proclaim the Gospel and make it present in the complex network of social relations. It is not simply a matter of reaching out to humankind in society – the human person as the recipient of the proclamation of the Gospel – but of enriching and permeating society itself with the Gospel”.⁵

Social doctrine is an integral part of the ministry of evangelisation in the church. Everything that refers to the human community – situations and problems related to life, family, justice, freedom, development, relations between peoples, peace – are not unrelated to evangelisation. It would not be complete if it did not take into account the ongoing reciprocal call between the Gospel and the personal and social life of the human person. Between evangelisation and human advancement there are deep links: “These include links of an anthropological order, because the person who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological

⁵ CSDC (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church) 62.

order, since one cannot disassociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combatted and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of humankind? ”⁶

Who is reached by workplace ministry

All pastoral ministry, and hence workplace ministry, reaches out to the Christian community, firstly the dioceses, and then the parishes. This means that the whole Church, the community of believers, should be involved with interest and passion for social issues, work problems and the people concerned. It is not something that can be only delegated to highly prepared or active people.

If we say that workplace ministry reaches out to the whole Christian community, this means and implies that attention to the social sphere is inserted directly in the life of the community.

It seems evident that workplace ministry is not a sector of pastoral ministry, but simply a dimension of ministry. It is like a colour that runs through all the expressions of the life and activity of the community. Workplace ministry cannot be less than ordinary pastoral ministry, because it is only through the daily path of evangelisation, through a transversal line of pastoral themes, that we can reach the people of the community where they are, and offer them the Gospel so that it becomes a culture that inspires their lives and work.

What is involved in workplace ministry

The first task is study and awareness of the reality of work, not only from a sociological point of view, but also ethical, theological and pastoral.

⁶ CSDC 66.

This includes close reference with the social doctrine of the Church, moral theology and the social sciences.

It also encompasses the drawing up of documents, taking of positions and declarations. The obligation to study is even stronger at times of great change – like the present times.

A second task is to bring the Gospel of work to all areas of pastoral ministry to reach out to all those involved.

The third very important task in workplace ministry is the religious instruction of Christian workers.

Workplace ministry must specifically evangelise those who work. For this reason, in addition to evangelisation programmes for entrepreneurs and managers, workers, public employees, craftspeople, those in cooperatives and rural workers, workplace ministry is in the ecclesial community as a point of reference and support for the varied world of associations and movements. Within their specific charisms and methods, they are a flourishing area of witness and evangelisation in the world of work.

A significant experience: the Policoro Project

Initiated in December 1995 immediately after the 3rd ecclesial convention of the Italian Church in Palermo, the Policoro Project was an original experiment of a new way of carrying out workplace ministry. It was a new missionary drive by the Church for the youth of the southern dioceses in Italy (particularly for the unemployed or those in irregular work).

This evangelising effort helped many young people to be aware that they should not live a life of resignation or just responding to emergencies, but in fidelity to the Lord who calls them to rise up to every situation.

Since then, the Project has helped youth to have a new mentality with regard to work, inspired by the human and Christian values of responsibility, legality, solidarity and cooperation.

“He went out early; he went to the marketplace”

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’” (*Mt 20:1-7*).

In the story of the householder, we feel called to contemplate the love of God towards all of humanity – the whole cosmos. The parable points out more than once that the householder “went out”. He leaves his house and his comfort and he goes... God goes out to meet his people. We can contemplate God going out if we look at Jesus. He left the Father to enter our world and take the last position, that of a servant. In this going out he paid the ultimate price of his life. God cares for us by “emptying himself”, “losing himself” (*Phil 2:6*) so that we may have life.

Not only does God go out from his house, but he enters into the places where people are to be found. The marketplace was the place of business, trade, administration of justice, encounters and relations, arguments and planning. This all took place in the marketplace in ancient times.

God goes out and enters the marketplace of human life. He does not remain outside problems, nor enclosed in spiritualism, but goes right into the complexity of human life, and assumes it fully. This is the model for our pastoral ministry.

The role of Catholic associations

AGNÈS ADJAHO AVOGNON, *Cotonou, Benin*
President, Francophone International Book Association,
Director of the Catholic Book Agency, Cotonou, Benin

The path we have been travelling together over the past three days has been enhanced with all those helpful testimonies and clarifications on the situation of young people in the world of work and on the meaning of work for human life, and it has led us naturally to meditate today on the “Gospel of Work”.

When we look at the state of our planet today, we come to realise that the critical situation of young people in the world of work is actually one of the best illustrations of the uniformity brought about by globalisation. Under the skies of north and south, east and west, young people and families with working age children all take part in the same anguish, hopes and frustrations in the face of what has become an impasse for many. The concept of work is limited to having remunerated employment, but the most common status in which young people find themselves is what we call “precarious”. A person who has a job does not know how long it will last, and those without jobs do not know when they will manage to find one. Employers and employees share a double anxiety: on one side of the coin, the life of the Company itself which is vulnerable to fluctuations in the state of the economy and the rules of the marketplace; and on the other, how to maintain self-confidence when faced with competition in the area of human resources, and with the obsession to surpass in order to keep one’s job. However, it is work that keeps the world progressing and as an old African adage says, “work is the human person”.

As the notion of work is confused with this state of competitiveness,

we have a need to be “ supported ” by a group in order to share, to find encouragement, to rediscover and give meaning to work, and to lift our eyes to the horizon. The need for a group becomes necessary and crucial.

This human need is as old as the world and it is becoming more marked everywhere: to create the power to withstand, to be in a group or association in order to exist, to be recognised, to have a collective word to say. The objective is always to build the best for oneself and for the corporation.

People everywhere long for more freedom and more opportunities for expression, and they want to understand why daily life has become more difficult and complicated. This has opened up spaces for freedom of association and expression all over the world, in spite of the repression that occurs in a number of countries.

Opportunities to join in association are certainly not lacking nowadays, especially for young people. In fact, the choice is almost too big. The vitality of life in association gives one more confidence in questions connected with respect for the law and justice at work and also in so many initiatives and activities that generate profit. Here we can find all kinds of stimulations: humanitarian, philanthropic, social, Christian, elitist, etc.

1. *The vocation of Catholic associations when there is such a wide choice of alternatives*

A justification that I have heard many times explaining the drop in numbers of members of Catholic associations and movements is the huge number of other groups and the attraction of other leisure-time activities, especially television and new technologies.

It is a fact that Catholic associations have always gathered young Catholic workers, but today they no longer have the monopoly. Questions concerning bureaucracy, law, entrepreneurship opportunities and their citizen rights and duties have always been taken in hand by

Catholic associations, but now others have gradually come along to occupy that terrain. They look after those questions, and in some cases more competently.

When I was working with young Christian workers in Cotonou until a few years ago, the path of conversion they followed encouraged analysis of situations. There was meditation, listening to the Word of God, and the desire for a different order where injustice would no longer reign, the rights of apprentices would be honoured and employers would respect the law. After some years of this process, and seeing themselves passed over by the employers, these young people realised that their dreams could not come true unless they themselves tried to change the conditions for young apprentices and workers. Meanwhile, they were helped to acquire their work tools, to start up a little business to be managed as a cooperative, where the fruits of work are shared. They continued to meet and think about it together. However, reality gradually began to take the upper hand and the group realised that you have to struggle to get ahead, find clients, offer services of carpentry, welding, masonry, and most importantly, be paid, and be paid within a reasonable time frame. What a worry it all was! There was the omnipresent risk of them giving up. What do they have today? They have a group spirit that prevents arrivisme; they are “different” in the value they accord to work as they follow the old adage “there is no such thing as insignificant work”; and they continue in fidelity to place Jesus Christ at the heart of their daily lives.

In a world where “having” and social status are the measures of success for most people, if we continue to be “different” and do not give in, if everything we achieve is done through hard work, it means that we have deliberately chosen to be the leaven hidden in the dough; we know that the dough cannot rise without the leaven: “Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened” (1 Cor 5:7).

When people speak of work, they are referring to employers as well

as employees. An example from the other side of the coin is this: for several years a group of Catholic company managers and executives used to have meetings to discuss the relationship between their faith and the life of their companies, to analyse the economic and social situation, and to learn to know Jesus Christ better and the demands of being his followers. Prayer, Mass and time of recollection played an important part in their meetings. Their aims were to try to be better employers, and to be more honest and more attentive to the human dimension of their companies. On the whole, they aimed to be “more ethical” in applying the law, to keep away from the scourge of corruption, and “to make a difference”.

Another group of young Catholic executives in public administration and private companies chose to follow a path of conversion in a community of fellowship based on prayer, sharing and transforming action at individual and collective level. Their main target was to fight corruption and to be attentive in their care and attention to clients and users of public services. They even identified themselves at work by wearing badges to show that the client at their desk would receive due service without a need for bribery. “Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong (1 Cor 1:26-27).

Throughout their twenty years of existence, this group has never attracted the media in the way many elitist groups have done. For those groups today, action without visibility is nothing. However, as leaven in the dough of administration, the prayerful presence of this group continues to call the attention of people who come into contact with them.

In all of these cases, their commitment to personal conversion is sustained by the will to have a role, one that is in accordance with the will of God the Creator who calls us to embellish creation with small gestures, and also with great actions that people often prove to be capable of doing. It gives them the courage to bring along their own little contri-

bution, no matter how small it is, to awaken consciences to the need to build a society that is structurally free from injustice and the evils that block the harmonious development of societies.

It is not always easy to see signs of change, or efforts to make changes, and we feel that we cannot see results. It is at those times that we call to mind what Jesus said regarding peace, “*my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give it to you*” (*John 14:27*).

It is also evident that Catholic associations no longer have a specific monopoly in efforts to establish a new order in the world of work. The unions work in this field, there are organisations that fight against corruption, and many associations find job opportunities for young people. Here we see the point of what Jesus meant when he said, “not as the world”.

2. So what path leads to a “Gospel of Work”?

The value of work is largely defended in traditional societies in which those who prefer to be idle are regarded with disdain and seen as parasites. Some politicians make it part of their campaign to put people to work. Nowadays, as unemployment is imposed, it inspires very different reactions of compassion, revolt and a sense of injustice.

Work is the peasant farmer pulling up weeds, the workman screwing bolts, the executive drawing up reports, the proprietor with eyes focussed on the accounts, the politician traversing hills and dales to persuade voters, the mother at home with numerous essential tasks to do for the family, the seller displaying his wares, the guard on duty in front of a monument, the schoolchild at her desk, the sculptor moulding the clay, the artist painting, the poet sculpting words... Creation is perpetually renewing its charm.

Our perception of work comes from the act of creation itself, when God fashioned the world in “seven days” in rhythm with contemplation and the seventh day reserved for rest (cf. *Gn 2:1-3*).

On the meaning of work and the Christian approach to work, John

Paul II left us his far-ranging teachings on this subject in chapter four of *Laborem Exercens*. Work, then, is a value that God gave us from the very beginning, not as an end in itself, but as a symphony in which we should all add our ever new melodies (cf. *Gn* 1:28). It is the worth of creation that gives meaning to our work.

The Gospel of Work can be seen as a welcome to creation that continues to spring forth from our hands towards work, even the most insignificant task. Life, results, success and newness all direct us to the new life of God planted in us through Baptism when the Holy Spirit makes us his children.

The recent post-synodal apostolic exhortation by Pope Benedict XVI on the Sacrament of Love, the Holy Eucharist, places Jesus Christ our only Saviour at the centre. “The mystery of the Eucharist, believed in and celebrated, demands a constant catechesis on the need for all to engage in a missionary effort centred on the proclamation of Jesus as the one Saviour. This will help to avoid a reductive and purely sociological understanding of the vital work of human advancement present in every authentic process of evangelization” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 86).

This missionary work is to be carried out by all lay people in every dimension of our lives: professional, family and associative. The Lord calls us to fulfil our mission wherever we are, in spite of a price that can sometimes be high because “so great is the office for which God has appointed them, and which it is not lawful for them to decline” (Letter to Diognetes, 6:10 – cited by John Paul II at the WYD Vigil in Paris 23 August 1997).

3. *Catholic associations are not a destination or a refuge. They are a place of anchorage and resource to permit total availability to the mission to which God calls us in all things and throughout our lives*

The disciples, including the twelve, were all workers, and they left their tools behind and followed Jesus. They are an example for us. They

were at work earning their livelihood when they were “snatched” to go out and “learn” who the Christ was. They were fishermen (*Lk* 5:1-11) and tax collectors (*Lk* 1:27-28) and others (*Lk* 6:12-16).

I have not come to describe a model Catholic association, but to interpret what I have found and experienced in life. This is a School of Faith and Hope, a school of solidarity, a school that has set out to see how the Word of God is present in all aspects of our lives, a school that makes us listen to the voice of God that asks “where is your brother?”, a school that teaches that the essential feature of a life of faith is total availability to whatever God calls us to, even in our dreams as happened to Joseph, the humble carpenter of Nazareth (*Mt* 1:20; 2:13; 2:18).

This is where I have found:

– a place that has helped me to understand my identity as a baptised person, to learn to call God Father, to welcome the cross into my life and to understand its meaning. This new identity in Jesus Christ makes us free from every attachment that separates us from the love of Jesus. It does not distance us from the world, but rather makes us more able to share in the joys and hopes of people today and to make our contribution to the construction of a harmonious society, and to greater attention to justice and people’s dignity. Like Saint Paul, we become aware that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (*Gal* 2:20).

– a place where we learn to observe where the world is going, to understand the evils that disfigure creation, especially the way the human person, created in the image of God, is oppressed, humiliated and injured by injustice.

– a place where we find reasons for action, and that helps us discern what should be done either individually or collectively with those who search in truth. These actions can be carried out by citizens or trade unions, they can be humanitarian or political, and they can be carried out through synergy or simply by reaching out to others through the influence of love. “Changing the World: an Agenda for the

Churches” is the title of a book written by the Dominican Vincent Cosmao in the 1970s in which he attempted to explain the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* by Pope Paul VI. Catholic associations are places where one learns to “change the world”.

– a place where we find meaning together in our action so that we can be vigilant and not fall into useless activism.

– a place where we find the quotation from Saint Irenaeus “the glory of God is a human being fully alive” to have special resonance in our lives and in the way we view others.

– a place where we learn that through baptism we have become temples of the Holy Spirit, and that consequently we are Church-Mystery. “Hold fast to Christ. For you He became temporal, that you might become eternal” (Saint Augustine, *Homily 2 on the First Epistle of John*, 10).

This identity can inspire in us the duty to intervene in the temporal organisation of the Church to point out the shades that prevent the world from perceiving the Mystery of salvation that it enfolds. I am thinking of our sister from the Caribbean who said yesterday that her employer, the local Church, preaches social justice without applying it to Church employees.

– a place of celebration and where we offer all that is good, beautiful and true on the road to the conversion of the world to Christ and people of goodwill who work to enhance creation.

– a place where we pray and learn to be vigilant in a world where ready-made thoughts and consumerism can manage to dull our conscience.

– a place where we learn fidelity to the Church of Jesus Christ. We come to discover that in our lives the question will not always be: how can I do better than others. It will be: how can I always be ready to act

differently, because at those moments we are fully aware that Christ is calling us to give a response that does not follow the norm: “not as the world gives do I give it to you”.

We cannot always foresee when we need to be ready. However, if we are always ready, when the moment comes when we have to give a response that does not follow the norm, the light that prayer and closeness to Jesus Christ gives to our lives makes us witnesses, light and hope for others, although we are unaware of this for the most part: “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (*1 Pet 3:15*).

This is the role of all Catholic associations: to be a place of apprenticeship of how to be leaven in the dough, a place to accompany others as they approach Jesus, a place of departure for each person to the Mission.

Whatever their fields of apostolate, all associations are called to be places that will, in the end, form one alone, places that show the way in which the beatitudes are built.

































Christians in trade unions

SAVINO PEZZOTTA

President of CIR (Italian Refugee Council)

and the Fondazione per il Sud

This is not the first time that I have been asked how one can be a committed Christian and also be involved in trade unionism. What I shall say today then is a reprocessing and deepening of my reflections. Over the course of my forty years of trade union engagement and commitment (from activist to secretary general) – my adhesion to the CISL (Confederation of Italian Trade Unions) goes back to 1963 –, I have often thought of the subject matter of today's talk. Being deeply involved in the trade union and trying to keep the Gospel in mind has been very demanding, yet captivating and joyful. It is demanding because even when we are led by the light of the Gospel we are never free from passions, defects and temptations. It is captivating because when there are difficulties you know that there is Someone who loves you in spite of everything. It is joyful because the Gospel is joy and happiness.

Throughout trade union history there have been many Christian trade unionists. We just have to look back at trade union events to find that from the beginning there have been Christians involved in unions and Christians founding unions. In our country (Italy) we have the history of the "white leagues" and the CIL (Italian Workers' Confederation). In the aftermath of the Second World War, Christian workers took part first of all in the creation of a unified trade union. Later, after the emergence of the unified CGIL (General labour Confederation) in opposition to the social-communist predominance that tended to use trade unions as a means of transmission for the reference parties, they started the LCGIL

(Free General Work Confederation) a trade union that was strongly confessional. Later, they joined with the FIL (Italian Workers' Federation), a secular and social democratic trade union, and CISL (Confederation of Italian Trade Unions), a secular and non-confessional trade union with a strong Catholic presence.

There have been many workers trying to live their faith while taking part in trade unions, and they have attempted in this way to respond to the needs of modernity with the problems of industrial society and the need to find specific answers to the "worker question". Theirs was surely an important experience that should never be forgotten.

Nowadays we state the issue in different terms. It is no longer a case of confronting the problems of society and work from the standpoint of Christianity and hence from the need to avoid de-christianising society and the working masses. Modern society is deeply secularised and it is difficult to think that it could be brought back to a Christian context. Besides, trade unions themselves have changed very much. They have gone from being instruments of emancipation to being more and more instruments of participation and advisory services for members and workers.

Within trade unionism the cultural features that used to guide them are being changed, and there is a tendency, dangerous in my opinion, to a kind of pragmatism, an emphasis on technicalities and a collection of services more intended to help and protect interests than to profess values.

Trade unionism is increasingly more secularised and seems to want to do away with old ideal narratives.

The most evident sign of this change is in the ethos of trade union leaders. If ethos means "style of life", it is clear that the present style of life of trade unionists is very different from the heroism of past years. In fact, the idea that being a trade unionist could entail personal risks has been eliminated by the conquest of union rights and is refuted right from the start. Many times in a trade union they talk a lot about career paths and roles, and it is more about these questions than political dif-

ferences that tensions arise, friendships are formed and relationships are broken.

However, we should remember that in spite of tensions due to increasing bureaucracy and the “job” that involves the managing groups, a trade union is composed of a multiplicity of people who are freely, idealistically and voluntarily engaged in their work places and areas of responsibility.

I am convinced that this strong presence is a sure guarantee and a strength that prevents trade unionism from losing sight of the meaning of its existence.

In this process of evolution from the heroic to normality, there are positive factors that show that trade unionism is coming out from the margins. There are negative elements that must be contained, even though I must say, to be honest and speaking from experience, trade unionism and its management is still a hard and onerous commitment.

Nowadays trade unionism is asked to represent more on the level of interests than on that of values.

In this new framework, to speak of Christian trade unionism has no more sense. It would be more correct to ask how a Christian can and should live the trade union experience and how one can remain in a trade union as a Christian.

BEING CHRISTIAN IN A TRADE UNION

Christianity is not an ideology nor a culture nor a political, social and economic project. It is a life that is lived in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. This is the point of departure. I say this because many times I have the impression that Christianity is confused with philanthropy, good works and doing good. All of these things are a consequence, not the principle as Saint Paul tells us with his usual frankness: “even if I hand over my body...” (1 Cor 13:3).

Our point of departure is Christ who died and rose again. He is the living person that we should follow. Our aim is not to create a just society, but the Kingdom of God. Of course I must do my best for the sake of humankind and for my town, but I must do so knowing that my aim is to go beyond this and tend towards completion.

When we read the Gospel we realise that it contains no theories, mythologies or philosophies, but that it tells the story of a life. Jesus, unlike philosophers and founders of religions, does not build or present a conceptual system or a collection of norms and rules. On the contrary, at times he asks us to relax the rules and norms in favour of freedom. He illustrates a life and lives his mission to its fulfilment.

The Gospel is the narrative of how the Kingdom is present among us and of how we have been saved.

This is why we should transfer our attention from “doing” to “being”, that is, how we live and how we follow Him. The central issue for a Christian is not social action or political engagement, but to have met Jesus. This is a meeting for which we do not receive merit, but only responsibility and happiness.

The merit of this grace is His alone and through it we have the Church. We do not reach Jesus through study or by other means. It is He who comes to us, both as individuals – he has counted the hairs on our head – when we least expect it, and through the witness of his Church. Theology, reflection, meditation and study of the Scriptures are important and necessary in order to reinforce and consolidate this encounter.

Here the question arises: how can we live all of this out in our trade union involvement?

To this question we must try to build a response. Our involvement in a trade union should be taken on as a call. A trade union is not a privileged place. It is one of the places in which we are called to give witness to the fact that we are followers of Jesus. We are aware that we follow Jesus as sinners and therefore without pride, but with the same humility

that brought Mary to exclaim “I am the servant of the Lord”. To respond to a call means to be servants of the Lord and our neighbours wherever we are. To follow him means to go at his pace.

We have been taught that Jesus is good, and always ready to forgive (seventy times seven), but he is also demanding, as are all of those who love.

There is a verse from the Bible that can help us to build up an answer to our question. I am taking it from Luke’s Gospel.

The evangelist tells us that when Jesus was walking from Galilee to Jerusalem, he had to pass through Samaria where the inhabitants were hostile to Jews. Jesus sent messengers ahead to announce his arrival. When they arrived in a village, instead of being welcomed, they were chased out. The Samaritans refused to welcome Jesus because they knew that he was heading for Jerusalem, the alternative temple to the one they had on Mount Mizar.

Ideological prejudice stopped them from extending a welcome, and from dialogue and listening. If he is going to Jerusalem he is not one of us.

James and John are irritated: “how dare they not receive us?” They ask Jesus to punish them. They should, whether willingly or unwillingly, receive the Lord.

Jesus listens to them but then he rebukes them because he never imposes force. Jesus’ behaviour is a response to all those who on facing disasters, sorrow and evil, ask: “Where is God?” He is here among us sharing our humanity. It is for this reason that he does not punish the Samaritans but continues on his journey.

He has to go to Jerusalem.

The good bit comes next. We shall let Luke tell the story:

“As they were going along the road, a man said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head’. To another he said, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father’. But he said to him, ‘Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’”

Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (*Luke 9:57-62*).

You must wonder what trade unions have to do with all of this!

The words we have taken from the Gospel are very clear, very hard, and put into question all the versions of a "sugary good" Jesus. He knows how to be hard, and as we would say today, he is not politically correct. He leaves no way for escape. He nails you to the wall. This clear talking frightens us and seems far from the circumlocution we normally use.

As we have seen, Jesus is rejected by the Samaritans, but he does not turn back. The temptations to return to Galilee were many.

He continues on, knowing well what was in store for him.

He does not abandon his destiny, but follows it and wants to accomplish it. Should my attitude be like the Lord's? Maybe we turn back because we are disheartened when we see the difficulties, misunderstandings and so many things that we do not like. We tend to compromise in order to live in peace or for the sake of our careers. Jesus is aware of his mission and he wants to carry it through.

He keeps going.

This fidelity to the mission is what allows us to meet other people. The Gospel tells us "As they were going along the road".

They are not on their own road, but on the road that belongs to everyone because it is there that they meet others. When you go along your own road you miss out on the opportunity to meet people. It is an example of being there on the road of the people because it is there that you have the opportunity to find your way.

"They were going along the road", the Gospel tells us, and they met three people. "They were going"... it could have said "he was going". This use of the plural is significant because it tells us that we cannot go alone. When we go with Jesus we go in company. Today this means to go with the Church.

It is not only Jesus who meets the three people. It is also the com-

munity of disciples. Jesus asks questions and gives indications. The disciples memorise, listen, receive and transmit.

Let us see who they meet.

There are three people, and Luke, unlike Matthew, omits to say who they are, as if to point out that there were several people from outside the circle of apostles and disciples who want to “go along the road”, behind and with Him. The first person puts no conditions: “I will follow you wherever you go”. The second and third put conditions before they are willing to go.

The first person’s words are really powerful: “I will follow you wherever you go”. He did not say “I will follow if...” This kind of trust is unfamiliar to our mentality which has become very calculating. It is not by chance that a great Christian like Pascal posed the “Wager” question. Think about it and decide on what it would be best to wager.

At this point we would expect an enthusiastic response from Jesus. That is not the case, because he is on another level. He does not complicate things and he does not make promises. On the contrary, he presents all the difficulties involved in making that choice: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head”. We have two contradictory images: on the one hand we have home, rest and quiet, and on the other it seems as if Jesus is saying you will have nothing if you follow Him. You just have to set out on the road, accept your insecurity, have trust and give of yourself.

His answer to the second person is equally precise, and this person only asked to be allowed bury his father.

Who would not have given him an extension?

Who would not have said: shall I expect you tomorrow?

Jesus is clear: he sets the world of the dead who bury their dead, where there is no hope, a world of things that are consumed, against a world of the living who set out on the road and look towards birth and not death. We remember the words said after the Resurrection: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”.

We do not know what those three people decided to do because the Gospel does not tell us. However, the story is clear, and it is so clear it disturbs us.

To follow Jesus and to be Christians requires the ability to break away radically.

It is precisely this that we should reflect on with much attention and freedom of heart.

Those of us who for various reasons have decided to devote ourselves to social and political activity, how should we behave before such a strong demand for exclusivity?

We have many temptations. We ask ourselves if and how we should follow Jesus.

Nowadays, and maybe it started some time back, we are faced with a great temptation: to think that we become full Christians through social and political activity. I think that this is the way that leads to a distortion of Christian consciousness. We are situated on a very delicate precipice. The risk we run is that of reversing the call to the Kingdom of God as we strive to build only the earthly kingdom. We exhaust the meaning of going along the road with Jesus with social action.

The decisive issue for us is therefore on a different level and it is spiritually deeper. In practice, we are called to choose how, while following Jesus, we enter into social and trade union activities. Our heartfelt concern hears this call and leads us to ways, actions and attitudes that may not always be perceived as appropriate for the demands that political management and practice sometimes require.

The basic problem is how to resist the almost absolute "follow me" that politics or political and social roles impose. Power – trade union power also exists – is seductive by nature, and it captivates the human consciousness. Many times in the last hundred years it has required total adhesion to the idols of race, class, nation, and as we experience it today, to market forces, success and power.

In this context we must acknowledge that there is a distance that can-

not be transposed between the demanding call of Christ that should move our experience of faith, and the rights and duties that unite us with the goals of social community. Here the art of politics or exercise of social and trade union action, in the light of the intellectual virtue of prudence, tries to achieve the difficult task of reconciling the possible with the best.

The decline in this balance happens, in my modest opinion, when social and political action is put on a pinnacle and is entrusted with the implementation of Christianity. This path leads to territory that brings us beyond secularisation itself, and it could be termed "the new face of atheism". When I read the interventions, in many ways attractive, of the so-called "devout atheists" or "theocons" I get worried, because they reduce Christianity to culture, western culture, and this ends up by emptying Christianity of what is essential: a real concrete encounter with Christ. In fact, to instil all the energy of the Christian life, with its religious and ethical demands, into the relativity of the social and political, is the most efficacious way of dissolving it into historical immanence. I am convinced that this is a price that has already been paid and from which we need to be able to move away, even if it is hard.

When salvation is sought, or if we think we have achieved it in political or social action, this is a precarious precipice for a Christian.

This all brings us to the demands of a presence that testifies the sense and meaning of our faith. Faith is not a theory or social action, but a way of life. It is life.

We are asking how we should be Christians in the world and how our first task is to set out and follow Jesus. This choice implies direct reverberations in the confrontation between us and the world and therefore on the ways in which we exercise our political and social activity.

Jesus represents, in the most fulfilled way, the design of God on humankind, his concern for our development and fulfilment of our future. In this dynamic of love and participation by God we should place our commitment. God is not disinterested, but is deeply involved in the history of humankind.

This conviction moves us to advance some concluding observations:

Trade union involvement by a Christian cannot simply arise from the sociological circumstances (being a worker), and even less from a reaction to injustice, exploitation, misery or demands for rescue or emancipation. It should arise from freedom that we have found in accepting Jesus Christ as our only Lord, for He would not accept situations like this. To follow Him means to prepare to work towards eliminating those circumstances that limit human growth and to do so because of the hope that comes from the Gospel. For a Christian, trade union involvement is essentially a commitment for the sake of others. This is in the plan of salvation that God, through Jesus Christ, has given us on behalf of humankind.

For a Christian it is not possible to choose between commitment and lack of commitment. "Going along the road" with Jesus compels us to commitment towards others and social and political involvement, especially wherever the dignity of human beings is denied. We can never forget that the human person was created in the image of God. Lack of commitment would be to return to bury the father, to take one's leave of the relatives and look back, while on the other hand, responding to the call means taking on a responsibility before God and the community of humankind who need to see witnesses of life that are a sign and a reference.

These two observations imply that each one of us, when we look at reality, should put into practice a continually renewed interpretative process of faith, of the mystery of Christ, of baptismal and sacramental existence.

We read in the letter to Diognetus: "For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. For they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own..."¹ This is why we have the duty to show in our trade union involvement a style of Christianity that does not put itself on a superior level but that operates through the virtue of humility. To be humble does not mean to be

subservient. It is awareness of being a penitent always in need of love, hope and renewal of faith.

The theme of lifestyle should be seen as an existential tonality that tones up and directs our actions. The themes on which we should reflect in order to construct this tonality could be the following:

1. **Idealism in commitment.** This idealism should not be confused with the verbal proclamation of values, but in the mature conviction that is built by means of social or political involvement for the sake of others and not for oneself. It also means to know that the roles and functions that we are called to discharge come within the area of service. To serve, to be available, to take on responsibilities, are criteria to keep with you so that seeking a role or career does not become the central motive of our commitment. Having this attitude does not mean you cannot have ambitions. It just means that you should know how to direct them. Ambition should be at the service of that which we must carry out and not the opposite. When we work well and with love towards those we are representing, even if we do it from the back benches, it is important. It could happen that we are then invited to take the first row. The longing for a leading role and the power it brings is a temptation that we should resist. Besides, it takes up energy and time from the main task which is to represent the workers;

2. **Professionalism and competence.** These are two important elements of the style of life that we must try to build up. These are not presented to us but require effort, dedication and constancy. We cannot be trade unionists without day by day enriching our awareness, our knowledge and techniques of this job and function. To rely on our political instincts and on knowing people is not enough. Our knowledge must come from within us and be built up with the effort of study, observation, research, listening and experimentation.

3. **Passion.** It is a case of remaining constant and alert in active and enthusiastic participation to the conditions we want to represent and, in

particular, to maintain contact with the weaker people who find it hard to get things done. As well as professionalism and competence, you need a lot of creativity and social imagination, and this can only come from inner freedom. A trade unionist cannot live without tenderness. I do not like it when trade unionists only do accounts and are like bookkeepers watching the internal and external balance sheets. We must act from the heart as God did when he created humankind. A trade unionist is called to love those he/she represents and to be available to take risks for them and with them.

4. To maintain and nourish a critical and alert conscience. A Christian in a trade union should maintain a strong critical awareness and keep watch and evaluate with precision, a practice that many times tends to centre on oneself. In practice, we should try hard to reveal the source of the “structures of sin” that are at the origin of injustice, oppression and lack of respect that come from the economic, social and political circumstances that surround us. However, this is not enough. There are times and situations in which a trade unionist could fall into the trap of producing these same “structures of sin” and to lower his/her sense of “structure of solidarity and equality”. This happens when we leave space for structural selfishness that impedes the just distribution of goods and inhibits processes of innovation, or when we allow corporatism to happen or the proliferation of the desire for success, image and power. A strong commitment to maintain the trade union in its dimension of “structure of solidarity” is another element that constitutes this lifestyle that we have discussed.

The path to follow is being slowly traced, but it cannot yet be said to be finalised. Recently I read, with interest and pleasure, a very interesting book on the topic of “tenderness” and the theology that should derive from it. At a certain point in the book it is written that we need to choose between two models: that of the Logos, understood as the

absolute dominance of reason, and that of Logo-Pathos, in other words, the equal interweaving of reason and sentiment.

This is a decision for trade unionists to make.

Reason should be part of our way of being. The late John Paul II called us to reason several times, but it should not be the sole owner of our being. It must be accompanied by faith, and in all we do, it must be accompanied by tenderness, with love for people, life, reciprocation, the wonder of encounter and a path trodden or yet to be undertaken.

A trade union should be seen as a meeting place of comradeship that is open to gift, welcome and sharing, without ever forgetting the negotiations, social conflict and participation.

All of this does not arise of itself. It must be nourished. The first thing that a committed Christian must do is to always give thanks for the gift of faith, through love for the Church. The second thing is to live the experience of the sacraments with intensity because they are the signs of our faith.

A Christian should receive nourishment through prayer, and if possible and if granted, reach contemplation. This is something we need and for which we should strive.

I realise that I have written things that are unusual for us, but personally speaking I cannot find another way. On this path of seeking, I trust in the help of Our Lady, sign of hope and source of consolation.

¹ For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. For they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practise an extraordinary kind of life. Nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious men, nor are they masters of any human dogma as some are. But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and follow the

native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvellous, and confessedly contradicts expectation.

They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign.

They marry like all other people and they beget children; but they do not cast away their offspring.

They have their meals in common, but not their wives.

They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh.

Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.

They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives.

They love all people, and they are persecuted by all.

They are ignored, and yet they are condemned.

They are put to death, and yet they are endued with life.

They are in beggary, and yet they make many rich.

They are in want of all things, and yet they abound in all things.

They are dishonoured, and yet they are glorified in their dishonour.

They are evil spoken of, and yet they are vindicated.

They are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted, and they respect.

Doing good they are punished as evil-doers;

being punished they rejoice, as if they were thereby quickened by life.

War is waged against them as aliens by the Jews,

and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks,

and yet those that hate them cannot tell the reason of their hostility.

In a word, what the soul is in a body, this the Christians are in the world.

“Ora et labora”: The Unity of prayer and work

MOST REV. GREGOR M. HANKE OSB

Bishop of Eichstätt – Bavaria

1. INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS

How can I, as a believer, combine the world of work and daily routine with a spiritual life? Do we not experience the modern work world and the realm of leisure often as opposites?

The Rule of St. Benedict of Nursia (who died approximately 550 A.D.) sets monks the task of uniting spiritual life and work – *ora et labora* – into a symphony. Although the monk must seek God, still, Benedict does not want to see him freed from the burden and labour of everyday life. It is not ecstasy, or the experience of a religious high, that the monk should desire. On the contrary, the place of encounter with God is the simple, daily routine, in which prayer and work unite and become fruitful. In this Symphony, work receives its true value.

Everyday routine as the place of encounter with God

One might argue that the monastery has its own spiritual system, with work assignments that easily can be attuned to the spiritual level, and that furthermore, its work should take place within the monastery walls, so that therefore, the monastery offers a basic framework within which the union of *ora et labora* can succeed more easily than outside in the world. This appraisal cannot entirely be denied out of hand, particularly since Benedict does, in fact, require that the work normally be done within the monastery walls, and, therefore, under monastic conditions.

The monastery should, if possible be so constructed that within it all necessities, such as water, mill and garden are contained, and various crafts are practiced. Then there will be no need for the monks to roam outside, because this is not at all good for their souls (RB 66:6-7).

Nevertheless we should not forget that in its origins, monastic spirituality is spirituality of the laity and of everyday life, a spirituality of decidedly being a Christian, and a spirituality that strongly orients itself to the Holy Scriptures.

The first monks were people who simply took the Gospel seriously. In the same way, the Christian in the world can also obtain inspiration from the Rule of St. Benedict.

Benedict on the Relationship between Prayer and Work

Both prayer and work must be united in the life of the monk. The life of prayer is composed of the *opus dei*, which means the regularly celebrated Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist, as well as personal prayer and *lectio divina*, spiritual reading. A broad spectrum of work stands alongside these, ranging from the routine household services rendered for the community, handicrafts and manual work in the fields, the reception of guests, to educational assignments. However, Benedict emphasizes giving priority to *ora* (prayer).

Indeed, nothing is to be preferred to the work of God (RB 43:3).

On hearing the signal for an hour of the divine office the monk will immediately set aside what he has in hand, and go with utmost speed... (to prayer) (RB 43:1).

On the other hand, from the perspective of time invested, work takes up more of the daily schedule in the monastery.

Idleness is the enemy of the soul (RB 48:1).

That is why, at specific times, all the monks have to apply themselves to work. Work is necessary for a balanced spiritual life!

“Ora et labora”: joining our professional life with our Christian life

Spiritual life and work often enter into a state of tension, and this knowledge of the tension between spiritual life on the one hand, and the work and worry about the economic base of the monastery on the other hand, appears in Benedict’s Rule for monks. The tension can settle into the life and behaviour and attitude of the individual monk, but also into the community of monks as a whole.

Life in the Presence of God

The key that the Rule of Benedict puts into our hands, for the good connection between *ora et labora*, is the “*presence of God*”: to live always in the presence of God. That means that everything is transparent to God, to Christ: seeing Christ in the abbot, in the confrere, in the guest. Indeed, even in the practical objects of the monastery and its possessions, which should be regarded as if they were holy vessels for the altar (RB 31:10). Not in the context of his remarks on prayer and liturgy, but rather in the chapter concerning the artisans of the monastery do we find the well-known and frequently quoted sentence from Benedict’s Rule:

– *Ut in omnibus glorificetur deus – so that in all things God may be glorified* (RB 57:9).

Later, Ignatius of Loyola would build upon this to formulate his motto:
– *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.*

If the work is performed in the awareness of the presence of God, then it serves to glorify God.

2. THE SPIRITUAL GOAL OF MONASTICISM

First, in order to comprehend the significance of work in the Rule of Benedict, a few spiritual fundamentals of monastic life must be discussed.

Seeking God as the Return to God

The Rule of Benedict defines the spiritual goal of monasticism as seeking God. The second verse of the Prologue to the Rule describes the way of seeking God as being a return to God, since man, through his disobedience, removed himself from God. In the monk's obedience to God, and to God's call, lies the essence of the movement of return. The return begins with listening. The first verses of the Prologue, which speak of man's return to God, are reminiscent of the loss of Paradise. Yet the return must not be merely protologically interpreted, which means it should not be merely a return out of yearning for that lost Paradise.

Return as the Entrance into the Future of the Paschal Mystery

Rather, according to Benedict the return of the monk stands under an eschatological sign. In Chapter 49, regarding the season of Lent, the Rule assumes that all of life should resemble a Lenten penitential season. Consequently, in Benedict's view, the life of the monk stands under the mystery of the risen and glorified Lord. The turning away from God by the old Adam, is redeemed by the new Adam, through His obedience unto death on the cross. Protology and eschatology belong together. Eschatology is always a belief in creation that is also turned to the future. One who believes in the God who created existence – the world – out of nothing, is one who also believes in the God who gives life to the dead. In the Paschal mystery, the eschatological history of the new creation, the new Paradise, begins. It is therefore fitting that the Risen Christ met Mary Magdalene in a garden, and that she thought he was the gardener. From the face of the risen Messiah, the coming glory already shines forth into the world. An Easter existence means that one becomes conscious of the messianic vocation and lets oneself be led to configuration with Jesus Christ.

Hence, both the monastic rule and the monastic life stand – just like any other form of Christian life – under the sign leading to the new creation. Every spiritual and practical activity should serve the realization of the new creation. In the monastery, with its spiritual and exterior rules, *the hidden presence of the future* is germinating. Benedict applies this theological view in his Rule by means of practical steps for everyday life. Even the passages of the Rule dealing with labour and/or handicrafts are placed into the service of this great goal, not least of which are such areas of activity that we understand today as types of productivity and of acquisition, which are a type of management. The working life in the monastery is no secondary matter. Like the needle on a compass, everything is oriented toward this main goal. The monk tackles the issue of his return and his future when he accepts the many practical instructions of the Rule and applies them to his daily life. These instructions are like mosaic stones, which will finally, one day, yield the great picture of the new future.

3. WORK IN THE BIBLE AND IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Because monasticism is formed according to the Holy Scriptures, a brief look at the topic, ‘Work in the Bible’, is worthwhile.

In the Old Testament, Work is Part of the Reality of Creation

In the Old Testament, human labour was a self-evident reality, which is why it seems almost artificial to want to develop a Biblical theory of work. Work belongs to the basic mandate given by the Creator to His creature. It is a divine order and law of creation. By no means is work punishment for the original sin. Humans were already obliged to work in Paradise, certainly without experiencing this as burden or toil. The human beings that God placed in the Garden of Eden were told to cultivate (*abad*), conserve, and protect it. Thus the Old Testament gives

evidence that work is centered upon creation, which was entrusted to human beings by God. Because God Himself creates and works, work, analogous to man, also can be viewed as the image and likeness of God. Work is oriented toward creation and directs us, so to speak, toward God the creator.

Work in the New Testament: Preaching the Kingdom of God and Providing Support for the Service of Preaching

The oldest statements about work contained in the New Testament (Q) are related to a belief in an imminent Second Coming. Most notably, this can be sensed in the mission discourses. Here, work is understood, not in the Old Testament sense as an organization of creation and building up of culture, but rather as contributing to the coming kingdom of God. In these early texts of the New Testament, the term *work* is limited to the service of preaching the kingdom of God and to making it possible to provide this service. Work means: to heal and to preach. This is the basis of the right of the preacher to receive material sustenance, in order to be able to render this service.

The labourer deserves his keep... Without cost you have received, without cost you are to give (Matthew 10:8,10).

Work for the Kingdom of God and Provision of Support

In the Gospel of Matthew, the provision of living costs is particularly emphasized, although the coming of the kingdom of God has still priority. In the hierarchy of values, this concern for the material becomes clearly subordinate to the expectation of the reign of God. The warning against overcharging for work is accompanied by the integration of work into the larger context of love of God and love of neighbour. God's activity, and not man's, takes the first place. The labour itself does not give one entitlement to the kingdom of God.

"Ora et labora": joining our professional life with our Christian life

Work as a Sign of Thanksgiving for being Called into the Church and Called to Love

A further content-related nuance regarding work can be seen in those references in the New Testament that witness to the development of the Church. Christian work is linked to a thanksgiving motif. Work is an expression of thanks for the call into the kingdom of God. Through work, the Christian is in the position to practice charity and to preserve the social structure. At the same time, in a community that follows such a work ethic, the Christian knows himself to be supported by the community. An altruistic sentiment (*quid pro quo*) is still insufficient for this ethic. The essential point is to do good.

Do to others as you would have them do to you (Matthew 7:12).

Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful (Luke 6:31-36).

Indeed, the ideal is a one-sided generosity that does not count the cost. Such generosity requires the means, which are obtained through work. The community has to prove itself day by day by imitating the love of God. Work is therefore, united to the love for God, which, in turn, proves itself to be well founded through charity in everyday life. With St. Paul, this attitude becomes concrete. Paul relinquished the privilege of an apostle to be economically supported and, instead,

worked with his own hands. Paul then testified that preaching and gainful employment are not mutually exclusive. Through his work ethic, he adjusted to the conditions of the socio-cultural environment where he was propagating the gospel. In contrast to cynical, itinerant preachers, Paul established by example that one who is truly wise accepts no money and that is how his wisdom becomes evident.

Admittedly, work is not granted a very high position. In the exhortation passed down to us in First Thessalonians Chapter 4, (verses 11 and 12) the summons to work appears only third on the list: to aspire to *a*) lead a tranquil life; *b*) to mind your own affairs; and *c*) to work with your own hands, as we instructed you.

The work takes place in order to avoid burdening the community, as well as for the community to present authentic lifestyle to the outside world. One harms the community by inactivity.

We instruct you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to shun any brother who conducts himself in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition they received from us. For you know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you. Not that we do not have the right. Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you, so that you might imitate us. In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat. We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of others. Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food. But you, brothers, do not be remiss in doing good (Second Thessalonians 3: 6-13).

“Ora et labora”: joining our professional life with our Christian life

The Work Ethic and Hospitality in the Early Church

In the early Church the necessity of work was joined to the idea of hospitality. Work and gainful employment created the basis of being able to offer hospitality. Writings that testify to this include the Didache (second century) and, later in the fourth century, the *Apostolic Constitutions* Chapter 13, Verse 1, as well as the writings of Saint Basil.

4. WORK IN THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT AND THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

According to the concept of the *Regula Benedicti* (Rule of Benedict), the creation of an economic base through work is the platform for the external sustenance of the monastic community. The maxim reads as follows: *Do not beg, but instead, work.*

Only then they are truly monks, if they live by the work of their hands, as our fathers and the Apostle did (RB 48, 8).

Moreover, the beginning of this chapter reads:

Otiositas est inimica animae – Idleness is the enemy of the soul.

On the one hand, the Benedictine Rule recognizes the tension between work/management and the spiritual orientation of monasticism. One must struggle, over and over again, for balance. On the other hand, a spiritual opportunity is connected to the work of the monk.

The Toil of Work – the Practice of Patience

Benedict knows very well that the spiritual way of life and the search for God does not prevent work from being experienced as toil (RB 39, 6: arduous work).

He knows, too, that work can be distasteful, even to people who are spiritually striving – indeed, that work can be physically and psychologically overwhelming.

(See in addition RB 68 if a brother is asked to do something impossible).

These situations are an invitation to *embrace patience* (RB 7, 35), which means to internalise patience. According to Benedict, precisely in such situations the practice of patience requires one to assume the presence of God, and to endure the perhaps incomprehensible Lord. In his description of such tribulation in life, the monastic father cites in his Rule an abundance of scriptural quotations, in order to be able to interpret such situations as tests and challenges. One therefore attains the attitude of patience by interpreting such hardships according to Scripture as a learning exercise. God is my coach for this work!

Work as Glorification of God

According to RB Chapter 57, *The Artisans In The Monastery*, the work of the artisans serves to support the monastery, because the products made in the monastery can be sold. However, maximum profit is not the goal. On the contrary, all products are to be offered more cheaply than people in the world would do, so that *in all things God will be glorified*. In the world of work, even in business and profit, the monk has to be oriented to the order of God. Consequently, the ultimate purpose of the work is the glorification of God. Then both the product and the achievement of the worker are clearly in the service of God. This requires the attitude of letting go of oneself, as well as objectivity toward oneself. According to Benedict, the individual monk may not become proud and arrogant because of his good work. If such a case should arise, one should take his work away. Work and success are not to be held as a private account, but are de-privatized, so to speak, and must be in keeping with God's order. Therefore, it is also obvious that in the monastery all possessions are held in common (RB Chapter 33: *Whether the Monks may have Property*). Because it has to do with God's order in the world of work, the monk must deal carefully with material goods, as

well as with the property of the monastery, treating these like vessels of the holy altar (RB Chapter 31, Verse 10).

In a certain way, the performance of the work demands a similar attitude to that which is necessary for worship. Indeed, work, in terms of the interior attitude of the monk, represents the continuation of the worship service. Work, like worship, is performed in the presence of God. Precisely for that reason, certain customs developed in monasteries to consecrate the work (Prayer before Beginning Work) and unceasing prayer while working. Psalm verses or short repetitive prayers are prayed quietly and continuously during the work, so that also the mind can stay focused on God throughout the work time. The work is subordinate to the expectation of the coming of God’s kingdom: The abbot chapter RB 2, 36 offers the actual theological framework, the so-called eschatological view of these partial aspects: Before all material concerns, the primary concern must be the kingdom of God. Through our activity and work, we have to make room for the kingdom of God and the new creation.

Work as spiritual therapy

For the individual monk, work can also have therapeutic significance. This is brought out in Chapter 48 of the Rule, Verse 1, where idleness is called the enemy of the soul and, therefore, all brothers must engage in manual work at given times. This work can contribute to my interior purification. By the same token, Benedict requires lazy monks, who do not want to do their spiritual reading (Verse 23), to at least do some work.

In conclusion:

Work is a part of monastic life, for the sake of securing financial support. For the monk, it is a spiritual tool in two senses of the word: It has therapeutic value as means against idleness (*otiositas*) and, secondly

against spiritual laziness (*Akedia*). It is the invitation to participate in God's work of creation, because the glorification of God and serving to glorify God (*gloria dei*) refers back to the reality of creation. Work takes place in the consciousness of the presence of God. Considering the eschatological view of the coming kingdom of God, all possessions become secondary. One could summarize it this way: Work – Yes! – But to serve a spiritual goal. Primarily, work must be a matter of the kingdom of God.

5. SYNTHESIS OF THE BIBLICAL CRITERIA, WITH THE STATEMENTS FROM THE RB ABOUT WORK

Work belongs to the very essence of the monk and is rooted in his relationship to God: in God's creation and the new creation.

Work in the monastery covers a broad spectrum of manual labour and has, quite differently from that in the older theological levels of the New Testament, a certain value in itself.

Ut in omnibus glorificetur deus: The work of the monk stands in the context of the divine work of creation. Because glorifying God (*gloria dei*) necessarily includes the creation motif. As the image of God, human beings reflect the glory of creation. They should, after all, become like unto God, and then God's glory, itself, will be drawn into creation. In the glorification of God, creatures find the fulfilment of their very being. Therefore the monk must guard himself against false pride regarding his work, since otherwise, he would step into competition with the Creator. It is the Creator God, who works through him. (To St. Augustine, work is the continuation of God's work of creation, and, therefore, a reason for joy.) This also applies to exclude every form of greed.

Work is to be seen not only in a protological, but also in an eschatological context through the Paschal Mystery. This mystery determines

the whole life of the monk. The work and its economic profit are, therefore, a relative matter to the monastery and to the monk. Rather than the work itself, the absolute preference is for the coming kingdom of God, which we are meant to be seeking. Therefore, the work is subject to the principle of moderation. Therefore, nothing is to be preferred to the service of God. The principle of being grounded in reality/creativity: according to Benedict, the artisans are to exercise their service in humility: *humilitas* – groundedness in reality.

In search of the spirituality of work

Experiences of a young worker

IDY BALBERAN, *Philippines*

Hello everybody

I am Idy E Balberan from the Philippines. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanksgiving to God, to the Archbishop, reverend fathers, fellow young workers around the world and to the Pontifical Council for the Laity for giving me a chance to be part of this International Youth Forum.

My first experience of work was when I was in my 2nd year in nursing college. I got a job as an assistant in a hairdressing salon to help me to pay for my studies and for my personal allowance. This meant leaving the college at break time, at lunch time and in the evening after class at 7pm to go to work. As well as studying I was doing 5 to 6 hours work every day cleaning up, shampooing and rinsing hair.

As a Christian I try to bring Christ into my workplace first by doing my job well, by being honest, treating customers politely, being calm and patient with people and then by treating my co-workers as friends, as my brothers and sisters. And then I try not to be afraid of speaking about my faith.

For example: my parents had brought me up to go to Mass regularly on a Sunday and also sometimes during the week. Even though I started college and work I tried to keep up this practice of going to Mass on Sunday at 7 pm, (a workers' Mass) and also every Tuesday and Thursday at 12 noon.

I noticed however that my co-workers in the salon don't have time

to attend a Mass even on Sunday. When I asked one of them about this they said “we are busy”. One day I tried to speak to one of them and asked her “Do you want to attend Mass this Sunday?” She said: “No, I’m busy”. I tried to talk to her and I said: “I know and you know what I’m doing now. I work, I go to school and at the same time I have group responsibilities but still I can attend Mass on the Sunday evening and she said, “You know I pray every night before going to bed”. I explained to her the difference between personal prayer and taking part in a Mass. I said personal prayer is good but the Mass is the highest form of prayer because in the Mass we can receive the body of Christ which strengthens and purifies our hearts and spirit in a special way and draws us close to God like no other prayer.

On that occasion she kept silent. But the next day she said to me “I attended the Mass this morning”. This made me happy because even in my little way I helped her realize how important it is to attend Mass.

I learnt this way of not being afraid to speak about my faith through the young Christian workers. I was part of a group which met each week to do the review of life in which we spoke about our life and work and our relationships with the other people around us in the light of the teaching of Jesus. It helped me build my faith in God and my confidence to speak about it.

I had a 2nd experience of work when I stopped schooling. I decided to move from my own city of Butuan and travel to find work in Davao which is 8 hours journey. I found a job there as a house helper. I worked from 5.30 in the morning to 7pm in the evening. I cooked breakfast, lunch and dinner, cleaned the house from Monday morning to Saturday afternoon. What I observed was that my co-workers in the house (the gardener, the driver, the laundry person) always talked to me even though I was the youngest but they never had the courage to speak up for their rights to our employer.

These workers kept complaining about their salary for example – because they received it late, but our employer didn’t know about that

problem. They were just always telling me and not our employer. I knew why they were not able to tell our employer because they are afraid that our employer would get angry with them. When the laundry lady complained on one occasion I told her how to explain the problem to our employer. I said “ You have to take action on that situation and explain it to her nicely. I know she will understand ”. In my personal way I tried to build up her self-confidence.

Sometimes in the afternoon my employer went to her garden to have some coffee and sometimes she wanted to talk to me. She shared with me the story about her life when she was still young and also I shared with her some of my experiences in life. Upon doing that I also tried to tell our employer nicely the situations and the needs of the workers in the house. I learned this when we had a review of life sharing some experiences of how to find ways to explain things nicely but firmly and clearly in every situation that you encounter so as to avoid unnecessary problems.

I then found a job as a crew in a fast food restaurant. I work 6 hours every day usually on the counter serving customers. As in my 1st and 2nd jobs many of the workers don't attend Mass, because they always say that they are busy and they don't have time.

I always say to them that God doesn't need 12 hours to attend his Mass, only one hour. But they just keep silent. I have observed that the higher paid workers give donations to the Church but they never have time to really participate in any activities. The ordinary workers also contribute through their work in building and maintaining the Church but they too do not have time to share in the life of the community.

The work in the fast food restaurant is always very busy because we have a target time of 60 seconds only to serve a customer. We need to meet this deadline so that our manager will not get angry with us. The new trainees are not yet fast. That is why the other workers and the manager always say “ hassle up! ”. Many of the trainees wanted to resign and one of these is my friend. She really wanted to leave this work

because she said “I can’t do what they want me to do”. What I did was to explain to her why they are like that and that sometimes our co-workers have personal problems so just be patient with them. We also have different working times and so it makes it difficult to get to know the other workers. It is a challenge to find ways to talk to the experienced workers about the feelings of my co-trainees but I managed to raise the matter. They told me: “We are very sorry. We don’t intent to hurt anybody. It is just that we forget; we just focus on our work”. I said “yes it is good that you do your work better but try to be patient with them. It is not good that you are hurting someone – it could make them lose their confidence and their job”.

These may seem small things but for me it’s something practical I can do to bring Christ into the world of work.

Being a member of the YCW influences me to SEE, to take note of the situations and the people around me, then to JUDGE, to be open to God’s way of seeing things and finally I ask God to help me so I can ACT in every problem I may encounter at work, at college, in the neighbourhood and at home. It helped me realize that as a Christian it is my vocation to share and spread the goodness of God all the time in every situation by my words and actions.

Joseph Cardijn, the founder of the YCW said “Each young worker is worth more than all the gold in the world because he/she is a son/daughter of God”. This encourages me to believe how important we are to God, that each worker has a place in His heart and that I can help them discover this.

The happiness and hardships in life and all the difficulties that I encountered helped me to become a better person in my life. Following God is not easy for me but knowing Him helps me to reflect that every struggle in life bears fruit in goodness, respect for others, doing the right thing and being willing to share with others.

Experiences of a young professional

Laura Vargas Villalobos, *Costa Rica*

I have been asked to share with you my experiences and thoughts as a young professional who tries to live out her Christian life with an everyday spirituality. My name is Laura, I am 28 and I am from a small country in Central America called Costa Rica. 10 years ago I was introduced to how the Christian life is the only way that I could respond to the basic longings that I found in my young adult life. It is authentic freedom, leaving a mark on the world, doing something that gives meaning to my existence, increasing and making use of the talents so unworthily received from God. Since that time I have belonged to the Christian Life Movement and I live the spirituality of the *Sodalite*.

While I was studying psychology at university I discovered the need for a correct anthropological vision that would really respond to what goes on within a person and would show them the way towards a unifying reconciliation. In the tough academic work of my specialisation, in my professional undertaking and in the reverent admiration that I discovered on entering into the mystery of the human person, my Christian experience was strengthened and it unified my existence in a life of prayer and everyday work. I began to live the spirituality of action that has allowed me to get to know the Lord Jesus and the Plan of Love that God has for me. Parallel to my studies I was working, and I had the opportunity to work in two of the human dimensions of a private firm: two and a half years in human resources and two years in company social outreach, managing human development projects that aimed to improve the lives of children and youth of Costa Rica. I am presently finishing a master's degree in Education Science in Spain and I hope to return home to collaborate in projects of this kind when I finish my studies.

During this Forum we have looked together at the various impediments and challenges that we face in today's globalised society when trying to make of each person's job a real opportunity for self-fulfilment. We have just heard the concerns of young people from different parts of the world. There are many obstacles and there are no easy answers, and feelings of frustration and despair can arise as a result. To this world that was so perfectly created through the superabundant love of God, human beings introduced sin by using their freedom badly thus rejecting the divine plan that promised full eternal happiness. Pope John Paul II said that today we are sad witnesses of "the distressing perplexity of a man who often no longer knows who he is, whence he comes and where he is going".¹ We are all in the midst of what this Pope called "anti-culture" or "the culture of death". As Christians we discover the urgent need to put all our effort into rectifying the many deficiencies that stand in the way of a humanising kind of work that responds wholly to the plan of love that God holds for each person. An understanding of reality should arise from a vision of a unified Church that brings about the embodiment of the Gospel everywhere, guided by the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

God created human beings in his image and likeness, and gave them a nature of great dignity that is perfectible and that thirsts for the infinite. Through the incredible loving design of God the Father, this nature is raised and redeemed by the mystery of the Annunciation and Incarnation of Jesus in his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the mysteries of the Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven of Our Lord Jesus. This should fill us with immense gratitude and hope and, from a perspective of dramatic optimism, to analyse reality and search effectively for the means to transform it.

Because of this relationship through resemblance, human beings are essential co-workers in God's Plan as they respond to the Creator's call

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 84.

to rule and subdue the earth. Pope John Paul II pointed out in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* that the real meaning of work is not found in what we young professionals do (we produce, we heal, we administer, we research, we facilitate or we analyse) but in what this action contributes to our inner selves. As we use our gifts to the best of our ability and possibilities, we not only transform and control the world around us by making it more human, but we discover who we are. We learn the skills to respond correctly to our own inherent energy, and to our deepest desires in which we find our happiness when they are satisfied.

It is not an easy task. You too have all experienced how the magnitude of our tasks goes beyond our possibilities. We face many challenges like doubts and insecurity when choosing our profession; hard work in completing our studies (which many of us have to pay for by working at the same time in jobs that this Forum calls precarious or occasional); the anguish of unemployment; the frustration of having to discharge functions that do not immediately satisfy us due to the remuneration and the nature of the environment, and that also imply foregoing many things; the sacrifices made in order to keep a job; moral dilemmas that have no easy answers; daily life in environments where the profound relativism could weaken our Christian option. For me, the greatest impediment is time. Time to work hard and be competent in my work (which often goes beyond working hours into overtime), time for a quality spiritual life that nourishes my daily work, time to read and place deep Christian roots into my vision of the world, time for apostolic activities and projects in which I am fulfilled and give something of myself, quality time to share with my boyfriend, family and friends. And, of course, time to relax! We have a huge challenge to get to know ourselves and respond to the unified reality we discover within ourselves, to carry out our daily work irradiating what we are on the world of the things we produce and place at the service of ourselves and those around us.

John Paul II in his encyclical on human work, emphasised that “awareness that human work is a participation in God’s activity ought

to permeate, as the Council teaches, even ‘the most ordinary everyday activities’. For, while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labour they are unfolding the Creator’s work, consulting the advantages of their brothers and sisters, and contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan”.² At the start of this Forum, Archbishop Rylko spoke of the intrinsic Eucharistic nature that can characterise daily life if we manage to embody *Ora et Labora*.

I am convinced that the way to achieve this is “to make our Christian life our daily life”, and to take seriously the gift of our Baptism and make our lives a daily striving for holiness. There is a saying that always shows me the way: “prayer for life and apostolate, life and apostolate become prayer”. Essential elements are those daily moments of intense prayer (living the rest of the day in the presence of God) and making each daily effort, small and big, of each conversation or meeting, of each decision, an opportunity to benefit my conversion and that of those near me, by fulfilling this particular mission to which I have been called by God. Archbishop Rylko also said that our workplaces are Areopagi for the evangelisation of culture. Each person can contribute a little to resolve the conflicts that we young people experience nowadays in our work. With our personal witness at work, with a deep and coherent Christian life, we are ready to respond to what God asks of each one of us. Pope Benedict XVI urges us to respond in this way in his Message for the 22nd World Youth Day “Dear young friends, cultivate your talents, not only to obtain a social position, but also to help others to ‘grow’. Develop your capacities, not only in order to become more ‘competitive’ and ‘productive’, but to be ‘witnesses of charity’. [...] May the Holy Spirit make you creative in charity, persever-

² JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter *Laborem exercens*, no. 25.

ing in your commitments, and brave in your initiatives, so that you will be able to offer your contribution to the building up of the 'civilisation of love'. The horizon of love is truly boundless: it is the whole world! ”³ This mandate touches me very deeply and encourages me towards greater conversion and commitment. I am sure you feel the same way.

³ BENEDICT XVI, *Message to the youth of the world on the occasion of the 22nd World Youth Day, 2007.*

Experiences of a young entrepreneur

EARNE BENTLEY, USA

My name is Earne Bentley. I am from the United States, the city of Atlanta in the state of Georgia. I am thirty years old and have been married to my wife Elizabeth for four and a half years. We love spending time with our two children, Caroline who is three years old and Alexander, who is one.

I am honored and excited for the chance to speak with you today about this important topic of integrating our work life with our faith. From what I have seen in the U.S., the concept of the “spirituality of work” would typically come across as an oxymoron...it just doesn’t seem to fit. It is so easy to boil work down to a simple, mundane way to earn enough money to “make it” in life and avoid as many of life’s struggles and miseries as possible. The thinking is: the more money I have, the easier my life will be; therefore, I should do everything that I can in order to make the most money. So, how is there room for my faith when working towards this goal?

In my years since graduating from college, I have found that though we all may work in different industries and capacities, there are many common obstacles and struggles that we all have in common. No matter what we may do for work, one factor that we have to take into account is the *human* factor. Dealing with people and introducing human nature into the competitive arena of commerce provides for numerous challenges, whether they are manipulation for ulterior motives, prejudice, resistance to change, or any other of the multitudes of human characteristics. By facing these obstacles, I have discovered that these present great difficulties, but they are also great opportunities.

When working towards a business goal and dealing with the human

failings of ourselves and others, we are given the opportunity to strengthen our will and grow in virtue. Quite simply, to live virtue is contrary to our human failings. By exercising our will and choosing to live humility, charity, patience or understanding in the face of difficulties makes our life more human, more Christian.

I own and operate two real estate investment companies. These are mid and long term investments. In order to be successful, to make these investments grow, I am always searching for opportunities that add value. Making a good investment is recognizing a hidden value, of seeing an opportunity where others see nothing or only a problem or limitation. Making a good investment is knowing how to overcome skepticism and doubt, especially in other people. My human nature craves that other people agree with my decisions and have faith in me, but a key aspect of being an entrepreneur is contrary to this. An entrepreneur sees value that no one else sees.

The greatest entrepreneur of all was Our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ saw value and opportunity in everyone and every situation. His public ministry was only three years long, so the greatest currency that he had to invest was his time. If we look at the people in whom Christ invested the most time to carry out his plan of salvation, we can see that he was able to identify hidden talents where they were not evident. Our very first pope was not an influential business leader or religious leader. Christ saw the characteristics on which to build his church in a fisherman...and here we stand today, two thousand years later! He was able to identify these hidden talents and use human problems and limitations (even death!) – all as a part of his plan to redeem humankind.

Throughout the gospels we see time and time again people trying to back Christ into a corner, whether it was the scribes and Pharisees or Pilate himself. In all of this, Christ saw opportunities. For example, we only have to look at the events of the Passion: the Lord's suffering and death appears like a total catastrophe. But he uses it to show his great love for us. Every gesture of his passion is a lesson in virtue, especially in

the value of redemptive suffering, of patience, and of the true nature of love.

In my work life, I have found my faith in Christ as a great source of strength when overcoming human limitations, doubt and other challenges, first in myself and then in relation to working with others. In looking to Christ as an example, I quickly realize that my focus should not be on myself or simply the bottom line, but on other people – on doing what I can through my attitudes, example and words to bring them into contact with Christ. In seeking what is good for others and viewing myself as a servant to others who is called to be an example. I have to readjust all of my focus in dealing with other people to live the greatest gospel value of all: charity. It is only in seeking what is good for others (encouraging, coaching, training, giving personal attention and truly caring for others) that I will be successful. It does not matter what industry I am in or what widget I am trying to sell more of, if my focus is on the people that I am working with, I will succeed in my goals. Christ has taught me to redefine the meaning of success – to see success like God sees it rather than what today's materialistic viewpoint sees or thinks.

Like every other part of our society, the work place is a very difficult arena in which to be an active, faithful Catholic. Quite simply, if we don't actively evangelize the work place through our actions and words, the work place will evangelize us. So often I fall victim to the profit at all cost attitude that is so eager to sacrifice the good of people. After all, I am surrounded by it all day. If you and I don't make a conscious effort to bring Christ into the office, no one else will. I am convinced that steadfast Catholics in the workplace can effect true change and the true transformation of our society. By choosing gospel virtue as the guidelines for our actions and decisions, the effect that Christ can have will be tremendous.

Concluding address

A gift that becomes mission...

Archbishop STANISŁAW RYŁKO
Pontifical Council for the Laity

1. **T**he 9th International Youth Forum is drawing to a close. As I take my leave of you, I think of how beautiful it is to be Church, and how beautiful it is to be Christians, disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Master. These days that we have spent together have been a great gift, a fascinating experience of the Church communion in which we see that we are united notwithstanding our cultural, social and character differences. We have really experienced being of one body only and one mind only.

Work has been the centre of our reflection, a question of vital importance in a person's life. As we looked at the epoch-making transformations in the labour market of our times that mostly penalise the younger generations, we asked how Christians can live out their work commitments in a globalised world that is changing so rapidly and so much; how they can retrieve the true meaning of their daily toil so that it will not become mere routine and degenerate into activism that has no end beyond itself and that parches the spirit; how they can live in situations of "precarity" or unemployment that are so common today and cause such hardship; if the "Gospel of work" proclaimed by the Church is heard in the world of work of our times, so conditioned by inflexible market laws and ruthless competition, and if it still has a word to say to our contemporaries and above all to the youth; how to witness to Christ in workplaces that are totally disconnected from the logic of faith. The Forum has been a time of passionate searching for answers to

Concluding address

these questions by treasuring the lessons that were heard, by listening to the views offered in the panel discussions, by the dialogue and exchange of each one's direct experience, and also through the moments of prayer and recollection before the Lord present in the Eucharist. Step by step, a huge mosaic of global reach has been built up with the work experiences of the youth, a sort of living manual from which to learn to relate to one's own work in an increasingly mature way from the human and Christian point of view.

2. As we close this Forum, we shall try to broadly summarise what it means concretely for a young person to be a witness to Christ in the world of work. Our starting point can be a basic statement that was beautifully put by the psalmist: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain" (*Ps* 127:1). With this introduction – too often forgotten in our times, even by Christians – the inspired author touches on the weak point of all human activity. Benedict XVI explained with great insight: "It is a matter of the centrality of God, and not just any god but the God with the Face of Jesus Christ. Today, this is crucial. There are so many problems one could list that must be solved, but none of them can be solved unless God is put at the centre, if God does not become once again visible to the world, if he does not become the determining factor in our lives and also enter the world in a decisive way through us. In this, I believe that the future of the world in this dramatic situation is decided today: whether God – the God of Jesus Christ – exists and is recognized as such, or whether he disappears".¹ The dramatic incident of the builders of the Tower of Babel narrated in the Book of Genesis (cf. *Gen* 11:1-9) is there to confirm that, from the beginning of history, pride has incited humankind to set themselves in competition with their Creator. This is an error that people continue to perpetrate

¹ BENEDICT XVI, Holy Mass with the Members of the Bishops' Conference of Switzerland, 7 November 2006.

with tragic results, because to build without God is to destroy, and most of all to destroy oneself. To contend with this foolish and senseless arrogance, Christians have to proclaim God as the supreme guarantor of the meaning and dignity of human work. This truth is wonderfully summarised in the Benedictine maxim "*Ora et labora*". Every Sunday, the day of the Lord, it recalls us to the essentials of life.

3. If witnessing to Christ is to be persuasive and effective, it must reflect a clear and strong Christian identity. This is very much put to the test by postmodern culture that does everything to dilute, confuse and neutralise the presence of Christians. The rapid spread of the "dictatorship of relativism" and of "weak thought" erodes the faith of so many and also generates personalities among the baptised that are fragmented, fragile and inconsistent. These are men and women "of the thousand faces" that are often contradictory, according to circumstances and context (family, work, friendship, parish). In order to emphasise the extent of the Christian identity and to reawaken the awareness of the baptised, Benedict XVI probes into the roots and brings the nucleus out into the light. He writes in his first encyclical: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction".² For Christians, the ultimate key is the reality and person of Christ. He is the gravitational centre of our existence, our Way, our Truth, our Life (cf. *Jn* 14:6). We must be witnesses to the newness of life in Christ communicated to us in Baptism. It is a fascinating newness that should be transparent also in the way in which we relate to our work, from the most humble to the most prestigious. For Christians, the world of work is also a field of mission, today's "Areopagus" where there is more need than ever for the Lord and for apostles who can proclaim the Lord with conviction and courage that come from a deep and coherent unity between faith and life.

² BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter *Deus caritas est*, no. 1.

Concluding address

The pressure towards standardisation imposed by the dominant culture constantly challenges the capabilities of Christians, especially young Christians, to defend and safeguard their own identity. This happens most of all in an “atomised” and individualistic society in which people are more and more alone and isolated. It is not by chance that in this Forum we have heard the call for help that in that sense can come from the “new era of group endeavours of the lay faithful”.³ Membership of a movement, an association, a Christian community, gives wonderful support to a path of faith as we are enriched by the friendship and company of all who share an ideal and the choices in life that it entails.

4. The reality of sin of which all creation carries the mark does not spare the world of work which is scarred by injustice, precarious working conditions, exploitation and unemployment. These are dramatic situations before which Christians are called to take a position, drawing inspiration from the social doctrine of the Church. “Today, more than ever, it is necessary and urgent to proclaim ‘the Gospel of Work’, to live as Christians in the world of work and become apostles among workers”,⁴ Pope Benedict XVI wrote to us in his message. The Gospel of work, of which the Servant of God John Paul II spoke so often, places the dignity of the person at the centre. Work is for people. It is not the other way around. A person does not work only to “have more” but to “be more”. The personalist norm confers meaning and dignity to work, and faith opens up boundless horizons. Human activity, as participation in the work of Creation and Redemption, also has a doxological function (*ad maiorem Dei gloriam!*) and in the life of the lay faithful it becomes – together with the family – the ordinary way to holiness. For a Christian, in fact, to find fulfilment in work means above all to journey towards the vast and fascinating horizon of holiness that Christ opens

³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, no. 29.

⁴ BENEDICT XVI, *Message to the participants of the 9th International Youth Forum*.

up to human activity. Of course, in a cultural context marked by the idolatry of money, unrestrained consumerism and the yearning for success at all costs, to speak of the “gospel of work” sounds like a challenge. Therefore, there is a need for Christians who are able to go against the current because they are genuinely convinced that this is not a utopian idea but a possible and beautiful life programme. As the Pope wrote to us, “It is not simply a question of becoming more ‘competitive’ and ‘productive’, but it is necessary to be ‘witnesses of charity’. It is only in this way that young people – with the support of their respective parishes, movements and communities, in which it is possible to experience the greatness and vitality of the Church – will be able to experience work as a vocation and true mission”.⁵ This is an explicit call to the Christian spirituality of work which for many of us is a treasure yet to be discovered.

5. Witnessing to Christ in the world of work should be a bearer of hope, a source of pure-hearted joy in the midst of life’s difficulties. Young people are the ones who pay the price of changes in the labour market through precarious work situations and unemployment. What they need most is hope, a hope founded on the rock of faith that allows them to gaze into the distance, and that helps them to avoid the sense of uselessness and inevitability that can shake their confidence in their future. It is a hope that helps them live with dignity, even in situations of great hardship. I shall never forget a meeting I had with a very poor family in the *favelas* of Sao Paulo in Brazil and something the father said. He used to leave the house every day at four in the morning to go to work and he would get home at eleven at night. He said: “From the moment I discovered that God loved me, my life changed completely, because then I realised that I am ‘someone’ and not ‘something’”. In

⁵ *Ibidem.*

appearance everything continued to be the same. His life was the same and he continued to live under those terrible conditions, but in fact everything had changed. He had become another person. In taking the words Peter said to the cripple in the Acts of the Apostles: "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk" (*Acts 3:6*), a young Italian entrepreneur said: "The Gospel is not a remedy of consolation, but rather it listens to the needs and aspirations of unemployed youth; it is an invitation to acquire dignity, to lift your head up high, not to be resigned, to live even moments of difficulty in a new perspective. This undoubtedly has a role to play in solving material problems in life. To welcome the Word of God into our daily lives means commitment to moral principles, to solidarity and to personal responsibility".⁶

6. The Forum is drawing to a close and you will soon return to your countries and to your normal routine. However, I am certain that after these days spent together you will return home different. This is of fundamental importance because it is in this way, through people changing, that the world will change, even the world of work! Treasure the questions we have been asking ourselves about the meaning of work and the responses that we have all attempted to provide together. May the spirit of solidarity you have experienced during the Forum never be extinguished in you. Do not be discouraged when you find that you are a small minority and you feel as if you are a small drop in an immense ocean, as Mother Teresa of Calcutta used to say. The ocean is made up of so many small drops, and Benedict XVI often stresses the decisive role for the world's future played by the "creative minority" (Arnold Toynbee). See yourselves as being included in their number! If our world that is so torn apart by countless contradictions and sufferings is to change, it needs every one of you to play your part.

⁶ *I Care*, n. 16, April 2007, p. 75.

Once you return to your countries, transform your participation in the Forum into mission. Share it with your friends and transmit to them all that you have experienced and learned here. Be intrepid apostles of the Gospel of work in your workplaces. You are not alone. The Church is with you with its social doctrine, a point of reference and dependable counsel. It is there with you in your bishops and priests who accompany you with great affection and pastoral wisdom. It is with you in the person of Pope Benedict XVI whose personal message to the Forum gives yet another eloquent sign of the paternal attention with which he follows youth issues. Tomorrow, Palm Sunday, we shall have the joy of being in Saint Peter's Square to experience the culminating moment of the 9th International Youth Forum: the celebration of the 22nd World Youth Day. This will open the final stage of the journey of the youth of the world towards the world meeting that will take place in Sydney, Australia, in July 2008.

7. We take our farewell with hearts overflowing with joy and gratitude to the Lord – the good Teacher, faithful Friend, Lord of history – who gathered us here and filled the days with his presence. Thank you to all who have contributed to the success of this important event. To you, dear young people, who were the major players and who made this Forum one of the best so far for its atmosphere of participation and involvement. To the speakers and moderators who guided our reflection on work. To Pamela Fabiano and Leen den Blawen of the San Lorenzo International Youth Centre, Philip Milligan, Father Martin Lagacé and all the young people of the Emmanuel School of Mission, who generously helped with welcoming, liturgy and animation. To the group of volunteers led by Fabio Donegà who undertook with great efficiency the service of transport. To Luigi Marchitelli, who took care of communications with the media. To Emanuele Gualtieri whose objective was to capture the most significant moments of the Forum on camera so that we can relive them as we look through the photograph album that we

Concluding address

intend to publish. Thank you to the John Paul II Foundation for Youth and its President, Marcello Bedeschi. To the interpreters for a job very well done. To Father Jean Pisu, Father Sergio Zirattu and all the staff of the Centro Mondo Migliore where this Forum is being held. Finally, a special word of gratitude to the staff of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and in particular to the Youth Section led by Monsignor Francis Kohn who have worked for many months with intelligence and dedication in organising the Forum. Thank you to Giovanna Guerrieri, Elizabeth Hawkins, Pilar Mendieta, Giovanni Runco and Rafael Nava. To all of you, goodbye until we meet in Sydney!

APPENDIX

Countries and territories represented at the 9th International Youth Forum

Argentina	Italy	Russian Federation
Australia	Jordan	Rwanda
Austria	Kazakistan	Scotland
Bangladesh	Korea	Serbia
Belgium	Latvia	Seychelles
Benin	Lebanon	Slovakia
Bolivia	Lithuania	Slovenia
Bosnia Herzegovina	Luxembourg	Spain
Brazil	Macedonia	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Madagascar	South Africa
Congo Brazzaville	Malawi	Sudan
Costa Rica	Mali	Sweden
Cuba	Malta	Switzerland
Cyprus	Mongolia	Taiwan
Czech Republic	Netherlands	Tanzania
Dominica	New Zealand	Trinidad and Tobago
Dominican Republic	Nicaragua	Uganda
England & Wales	Nigeria	United Arab Emirates
Ethiopia	Norway	United States
France	Pakistan	Uzbekistan
Germany	Palestine	Venezuela
Ghana	Paraguay	Vietnam
Haiti	Philippines	Zambia
Hungary	Poland	
India	Portugal	
Ireland	Puerto Rico	
Israel	Qatar	(Total: 77)

Movements, Associations and Communities

Christian Life Movement
Communion and Liberation
Cooperators of *Opus Dei*
CVX – Christian Life Community
Emmanuel Community
Franciscan Youth
Giovani delle ACLI (Italian Young Christian Workers' Associations)
ICCG – International Catholic Conference of Guiding
ICCRS – International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services
ICYCW – International Coordination of Young Christian Workers
IMCS-Pax Romana – International Movement of Catholic Students
IYCS – International Young Catholic Students
JICI – International Independent Christian Youth
Kolping International
MIAMSI – International Movement of Apostolate in the Independent
Social Milieux
MIJARC – International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural
Youth
Mouvement Chrétien des Cadres et Dirigeants
Movimento Cristiano Lavoratori (Italian Young Christian Workers
Movement)
OMAAEEC Youth – World Organisation of Former Pupils of Catholic
Education
Regnum Christi Apostolic Movement
Salesian Youth Movement
Sant'Egidio Community
Schoenstatt Movement
Shalom Catholic Community
Teresian Association

Movements, Associations and Communities

UIGSE – International Union of the Guides and Scouts of Europe

UNIAPAC – International Christian Union of Business Executives

Work of Nazareth

Youth for a United World (Focolare Movement)

Youth Teams of Our Lady

(Total: 30)

€ 15,00

