



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD CONGRESS OF ACCOUNTANTS

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Friday, 14 November 2014*

[Multimedia]

Good morning everyone!

I address a cordial welcome to you on the occasion of your World Congress, and I thank the President of the International Federation for her words of introduction. You have met in order to focus on a shared vision for the future, comparing the different experiences in your countries of origin. It is an important moment, both to confront the problematic issues which challenge your profession today, and to renew awareness of the fact that it is also a service to the community. And, within your Congress, you wished to include this moment, which calls you back to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as the perennial source of inspiration for personal and social renewal.

Employment is a pressing issue in the current socioeconomic context. The issue of employment is the key point. From your professional observation you are well aware of the grim reality of so many people who have precarious employment, or who have lost their job; of so many families who are paying the consequences; of so many young people seeking first-time employment and dignified work. There are numerous people, especially immigrants, who, compelled to work “under the table”, lack the most basic juridical and economic guarantees.

In this context there is a stronger temptation to defend one’s interest without concern for the common good, without paying much heed to justice and legality. For this reason everyone, especially those who practise a profession which deals with the proper functioning of a country’s economic life, is asked to play a positive, constructive role in performing their daily work, knowing that behind every file, there is a story, there are faces. This task which, as we have said, requires everyone’s cooperation. The Christian professional draws every day from prayer and from the Word of God the strength, above all, to do his duty well, with competence and wisdom; and then to “go beyond”, which means to go to meet the person in difficulty; to exercise that creativity which

enables one to find solutions to an impasse; to invoke reasons of human dignity in facing the rigidity of bureaucracy.

Economy and finance are dimensions of human activity and can be occasions of encounter, of dialogue, of cooperation, of recognized rights and of services rendered, of dignity affirmed in work. But in order for this it is necessary to always place man with his dignity at the centre, countering the dynamics that tend to homologize everything and place money at the apex. When money becomes the end and the motive of every activity and of every venture, then the utilitarian perspective and brute logic — which do not respect people — prevail, resulting in the widespread collapse of the values of solidarity and respect for the human being. Those working in various capacities in economy and finance are called to make choices that promote the social and economic wellbeing of the whole of humanity, offering everyone the opportunity to pursue his/her own development.

In your work, you accountants support businesses, but also single families, by offering your economic and financial advice. I encourage you to always work responsibly, fostering relationships of loyalty, justice, if possible, of fraternity, bravely confronting especially the problems of the weakest and of the poorest. It is not enough to give practical answers to economic and material questions. It is necessary to generate and cultivate ethics of economy, of finance and of employment; it is necessary to maintain the value of solidarity — this word which today risks being taken out of the dictionary — solidarity as a moral approach, an expression of attention to others in all their legitimate needs.

If we want to deliver to future generations an improved environmental, economic, cultural and social patrimony, which we inherited, we are called to assume the responsibility of working for the globalization of solidarity. Solidarity is a demand that arises from the same network of interconnections which develop with globalization. The social doctrine of the Church teaches us that the principle of solidarity is implemented in harmony with that of subsidiarity. Thanks to the effect of these two principles, the processes are at the service of man, and justice is growing. Without justice there can be no true and lasting peace.

While I offer you these simple points to ponder, I entrust each one of you and your work to the protection of the Virgin Mary. I bless you from my heart and I ask you to please pray for me. Thank you.