



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES
OF THE BANCA DI ROMA**

Saturday, 11 November 2000

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

1. I am pleased to extend a cordial greeting to you today as you come on pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul to celebrate the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. Welcome!

I thank Mr Cesare Geronzi, President of the Banca di Roma, for his kind words expressing, in everyone's name, the sentiments that brought you to this meeting. I am also pleased to take this occasion to express my sincere appreciation to the entire Board of Directors, the managers, the department heads and all who form your community of work and activity.

In addition to my appreciation, I also wish to express my sincere gratitude for the cooperation provided by your worthy business to the Central Committee of the Great Jubilee and especially for the active contribution offered during World Youth Day. Your interventions are proof of how a structure with specific aims such as yours can usefully participate in civil society with initiatives inspired by a broader vision, which is another way to promote the common good.

2. The aim of a credit institute such as yours is the shrewd management of the resources entrusted to it, in order to support the financial activities of the families, businesses, institutions and organizations that turn to it for assistance. Seen in this perspective, your work acquires an important social value in support of the nation's vital forces, which can thus pursue necessary goals in the area of economic security, business growth, honest management of the fruit of one's labour, the protection of savings and access to credit.

Here we see the importance of the banking system, but also the responsibility of those who

manage it towards the individuals, families and social groups that turn to it. In fact, even while pursuing its institutional aims, a bank must respect the ethical values that preside over the various aspects of human conduct. If a bank aims only at pursuing maximum profit for itself, while not considering these higher principles, it no longer appears as a means of growth and development for the community, but rather as a burden and impediment.

3. The Church's teaching affirms the priority of the human factor over the financial and credit aims of any banking institution. In the rapid development of today's economic dynamics, there are many people who do not know how to use the various kinds of services offered by the banking system and sometimes find difficulty in making decisions to protect the honest savings they have acquired.

The professionalism of credit workers, together with a keen sense of fairness and justice, can increase the peace of mind of those who need advice and assistance.

Unfortunately we cannot ignore the fact that even today there are deviant forms of credit that can endanger not only business activities or family possessions, but the very lives of people who have fallen into this perverse spiral. On other occasions I have already emphasized the difficulties and hardships encountered by the victims of speculation linked to illicit forms of credit. A responsible bank, by virtue of its ability to listen to and dialogue with civil society, can certainly do a great deal in this area. I firmly hope that, by continuing on the path already undertaken, your institute will continue to offer solid support to all the serious initiatives that benefit people in difficulty, young adults and voluntary service. In this way, you will effectively meet the expectations of those individuals and social groups who regard your activity as a fundamental support for their legitimate need of financial and economic services.

4. Dear ladies and gentlemen, your visit offers you the opportunity to make a useful pause for reflection. For those of you who are believers, this is a providential occasion for examining your lives and activities in the light of Christ's word.

Passing through the Holy Door is one of the principal moments of your Jubilee pilgrimage. It is a profoundly spiritual act, by which you intend to renew your close adherence to Christ and to reaffirm your determination to bear witness to him in your families and in the society to which you belong. In a special way you can be his witnesses in your workplace, if you are always inspired by his teachings. May the Gospel of justice and charity be the constant standard of your decisions and actions. May love for others, especially the needy, inspire all your projects. You will thus be builders of a human community marked by greater freedom and solidarity.

May the intercession of Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, to whom I entrust you and your families, accompany you. With these sentiments, I sincerely bless you all.

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