

**MEETING WITH POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CIVIC LEADERS**  
**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER**  
*San Francisco Church, Quito (Ecuador)*

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[Link](#)

[...] Migration, overcrowded cities, consumerism, crises in the family, unemployment and pockets of poverty: all these factors create uncertainty and tensions which threaten social harmony. Laws and regulations, as well as social planning, need to aim at inclusion, create opportunities for dialogue and encounter, while leaving behind all forms of repression, excessive control or loss of freedom as painful past memories. Hoping in a better future calls for offering real opportunities to people, especially young people, creating employment, and ensuring an economic growth which is shared by all (rather than simply existing on paper, in macroeconomic statistics), and promoting a sustainable development capable of generating a solid and cohesive social fabric. If there is no solidarity then all this will be impossible to implement. I referred to young people and I referred to the lack of employment. This is alarming on a worldwide level. European countries, who were at the forefront years ago, are now suffering in terms of youth: among those who are under twenty-five years of age there is forty, fifty percent unemployment. Without solidarity there can be no solution. I told the Salesians: "Don Bosco founded you in order to educate others; today emergency education is needed for the young who are out of work!" Why? Emergency training is needed to prepare young people to work, even if only limited opportunities exist, so that they can have the dignity of being able to take bread home. To such unemployed young persons who we call the "neither nor" - neither study nor work - what possibilities are left? Addictions, sadness, depression, suicide (and comprehensive statistics are never published concerning juvenile suicide), or getting involved in social projects which at least offer an ideal? In a special way and with a spirit of solidarity, today we are called to care for this third sector of exclusion in a culture of waste. The first sector is made up of children, either because they are not loved (and there are developed countries that have an almost zero percent birth rate) or they are so unwanted that they are killed before being born. Secondly come the elderly, who are abandoned, not cared for, and forgotten as the legacy of wisdom and memory of their people. They are discarded. And now it is the turn of young people. Which other group is left? Those who promote selfishness, those who serve the god of mammon, who is at the center of a system that is crushing us all. [...]