

SEMINAR ON THE THEME: "NEW FORMS OF SOLIDARITY FRATERNITY,  
INCLUSION, INTEGRATION AND INNOVATION"  
ORGANIZED BY THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS  
**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS**

Casina Pio IV  
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[Link](#)

*Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.*

I wish to express my gratitude to you for this meeting. We are taking advantage of this new beginning of the year to build bridges, bridges that foster the development of a look of solidarity starting from banks, finances, governments and economic decisions. We need many voices capable of thinking, from a multifaceted perspective, the different dimensions of a global problem affecting our peoples and our democracies.

I would like to start with a fact. The world is rich and yet the poor are growing around us. According to official reports, this year's world income will be nearly \$ 12,000 per capita. Yet hundreds of millions of people are still plunged into extreme poverty and lack food, housing, medical care, schools, electricity, drinking water and adequate and indispensable health services. An estimated five million children under the age of 5 will die this year from poverty. Another 260 million will not receive education due to lack of resources, wars and migrations. This in a rich world, because the world is rich.

This situation has led millions of people to be victims of trafficking and new forms of slavery, such as forced labor, prostitution and organ trafficking. They do not enjoy any rights and guarantees; they can't even enjoy friendship or family. These realities should not be a reason for despair, but for action. They are realities that push us to do something.

The main message of hope that I wish to share with you is precisely this: these are solvable problems and not lack of resources. There is no determinism that condemns us to universal iniquity. Let me repeat it: we are not condemned to universal iniquity. This makes possible a new way of dealing with events, which allows you to find and generate creative answers in the face of the avoidable suffering of so many innocent people; which implies accepting that, in many situations, we are faced with a lack of will and decision to change things and mainly priorities. We are asked for the ability to let ourselves be consulted and to let the scales fall from the eyes and to see these realities with a new light, a light that pushes us to action.

A rich world and a vibrant economy can and must end poverty. Dynamics capable of including, feeding, caring for and dressing the least in society can be generated and promoted instead of excluding them. We have to choose what and

to whom to give priority: whether to favor humanizing socio-economic mechanisms for the whole of society or, on the contrary, foment a system that ends up justifying certain practices that do nothing but increase the level of injustice and violence social. The level of wealth and technique accumulated by humanity, as well as the importance and value that human rights have acquired, no longer allow excuses. We must be aware that we are all responsible. This does not mean that we are all guilty, no; we are all responsible for doing something.

If extreme poverty exists in the midst of wealth - in turn extreme - it is because we have allowed the gap to widen to become the largest in history. These are almost official figures: the fifty richest people in the world have an equity equivalent to 2.2 trillion dollars. These fifty people alone could finance the medical care and education of every poor child in the world, either through taxes or through philanthropic initiatives, or both. These fifty people could save millions of lives every year.

The globalization of indifference has called it "inaction". St. John Paul II called it: structures of sin. These structures find a favorable climate for their expansion every time the common good is reduced or limited to certain sectors or, in the case that brings us together here, when the economy and finance become ends in themselves. It is the idolatry of money, greed and speculation. It is this reality, now added to the exponential technological vertigo, which increases, at steps never seen before, the speed of transactions and the possibility of producing concentrated earnings without these are related to production processes and not even to the real economy. Virtual communication favors this type of thing.

Aristotle celebrates the invention of money and its use, but firmly condemns financial speculation because in it "money itself becomes productive, losing its true purpose which is to facilitate trade and production" (Politics I, 10, 1258 b).

In a similar way, and following the reason illuminated by faith, the Church's social doctrine celebrates the forms of government and the banks - many times created to protect it: it is interesting to see the history of the pawnshops, the banks created to favor and collaborate - when they fulfill their purpose, which is, ultimately, to seek the common good, social justice, peace, as well as the integral development of each individual, each human community and all people. However, the Church warns that these beneficial institutions, both public and private, can fall into sinful structures. I am using the definition of Saint John Paul II.

The structures of sin today include repeated tax cuts for the wealthiest people, justified many times in the name of investment and development; tax havens for private and corporate earnings; and of course the possibility of corruption by some of the world's largest companies, not infrequently in tune with the governing political sector.

Every year one hundred thousand million dollars, which should be paid in taxes to finance medical assistance and education, accumulate in accounts of tax havens, thus preventing the possibility of the worthy and sustained development of all social actors.

Poor people in heavily indebted countries face overwhelming tax burdens and cuts in social services as their governments pay debts contracted in an insensitive and unsustainable way. In fact, the public debt contracted, in many cases to boost and encourage the economic and productive development of a country, can be constituted in a factor that damages and damages the social fabric. When it ends up being oriented towards another goal.

Just as there is co-irresponsibility with regard to this damage caused to the economy and society, there is also an inspiring and promising co-responsibility to create a climate of fraternity and renewed trust that embraces the search for innovative and humanizing solutions as a whole.

It is good to remember that there is no magical or invisible law that condemns us to freezing or paralysis in the face of injustice. And even less an economic rationality that presupposes that the human person is simply an accumulator of individual benefits unrelated to his condition of being social.

The moral demands of Saint John Paul II in 1991 appear surprisingly current today: «The principle that debts must be paid is certainly right; it is not lawful, however, to ask or demand a payment, when this would actually impose political choices such as to lead to hunger and to despair whole populations. Debts incurred cannot be expected to be paid with unbearable sacrifices. In these cases it is necessary - as is happening in part - to find ways of easing, extending or even extinguishing the debt, compatible with the fundamental right of peoples to subsistence and progress "(Centesimus annus, n. 35) .

In fact, even the Sustainable Development Goals approved unanimously by all nations recognize this point - it is a human point - and urge all peoples to "help countries achieve long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at to encourage debt financing, debt relief and debt conversion, and to address external debt and reduce the hardship of heavily indebted poor countries "(SDG, 17, 4).

This must consist of the new forms of solidarity that unite us today, which unite us here, if we think about the world of banking and finance: in helping to develop the peoples left behind and in leveling among the countries that enjoy a determined standards and level of development and those unable to guarantee the minimum necessary for their populations. Solidarity and economy for the union, not for the division, with the sound and clear awareness of co-responsibility.

Practically from here it is necessary to affirm that the greatest structure of sin, or the greatest structure of injustice, is the industry of war itself, since it is money and time at the service of division and death. The world loses billions of dollars every year in armaments and violence, sums that would end poverty and illiteracy if they could be redeployed. Truly Isaiah spoke on behalf of God to all mankind when he foretold the day of the Lord when "they will beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into sickles" (Is 2: 4). Let's follow him!

More than seventy years ago, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights committed all its Member States to take care of the poor in their land and homes, and all over the world, that is, in the common home, the whole world is the common house. Governments recognized that social protection, basic

income, medical care for all and universal education were inherent in fundamental human dignity and, therefore, in fundamental human rights.

These economic rights and a safe environment for all are the most basic measure of human solidarity. And the good news is that while in 1948 these goals were not immediate, today, with a much more developed and interconnected world, yes they are. Progress has been made in this direction.

You, who have kindly gathered here, are the world's financial leaders and economic experts. Together with your colleagues, help to establish global tax rules, inform the global public about our economic situation and advise the governments of the world on the budget. Know firsthand what the injustices of our current global economy are, or the injustices of each country. Let's work together to end these injustices. When the multilateral credit organizations provide advice to the various nations, it is important to keep in mind the high concepts of fiscal justice, the public budgets responsible for their indebtedness and, above all, an effective promotion, which makes them protagonists, of the poorest in the social network. Remind them of their responsibility to offer development assistance to poor nations and debt relief for highly indebted nations. Remind them of the imperative to stop man-made climate change, as all nations have promised, so that we don't destroy the foundations of our common home.

A new ethics presupposes being aware of the need for everyone to work together to close tax shelters, avoid evasions and money laundering that rob society, as well as to tell nations the importance of defending justice and the common good above the interests of the most powerful companies and multinationals - which end up suffocating and preventing local production -. The present tense demands and requires moving from an insular and antagonistic logic as the only authorized mechanism for the solution of conflicts, to another capable of promoting the interconnection that favors a culture of encounter, where the solid foundations of a new one are renewed international financial architecture.

In this context, in which the development of some social and financial sectors has reached levels never seen before, how important it is to remember the words of Luke's Gospel: "Anyone who was given much, much will be asked" (12, 48). How inspiring it is to listen to Saint Ambrose, who thinks with the Gospel: "You (rich) do not give yours to the poor [when you do charity] ... but you're giving him what's his. Because you are using the common property in use for all "(Naboth 12, 53). This is the principle of the universal destination of goods, the basis of economic and social justice, as well as of the common good.

I am delighted with your presence here today. We celebrate the opportunity to know how to co-participate in the work of the Lord who can change the course of history for the benefit of the dignity of each person today and tomorrow, especially the excluded, and for the benefit of the great good of peace. We humbly and wisely work together to serve international and inter-generational justice. We have boundless hope in the teaching of Jesus that the poor in spirit are blessed and happy, because of them is the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5: 3) which begins already here and now.

Thank you! And please, I make a request, it is not a loan: do not forget to pray for me, because this work that I have to do is not easy at all, and I invoke all the blessings on you, on you and about your work.