

MESSAGE FOR THE WORK CONVENTION

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Dear entrepreneurs, workers, professors, students and all those involved in the project for the Economy of Communion and in New Humanity's World of Economy and Work.

We have come to the third international convention of the Economy of Communion, "Working in Communion: Many Challenges, One Proposal." In 2004 I had outlined work as the topic to reflect on for the following three years. Therefore, I must congratulate you for having dedicated this convention precisely to work. In fact, work is going through a new stage today, a painful and difficult one, but also filled with opportunities.

"Working in Communion," the title you chose for this Convention, shows that the hope I expressed at the conclusion of my talk in 2004: that is, that mutual love would lead those active in the Economy of Communion "to find together new models of organization, participation and management," has found fertile ground in you.

The communion lived within a firm enables business roles and functions to become forms of service, responsible management of activities entrusted to each one, without any hierarchical attitudes.



The culture of communion not only changes the individual's disposition towards work but it also gives life to "structures of communion," which facilitate relationships of mutual love in the firm.

I would like to share some thought on this very aspect.

The Economy of Communion is rooted in the Focolare Movement. It was born in 1991 in Brazil, fruit of almost fifty years of practicing the communion of goods, a life of reciprocity, of mutual love in our communities. If today we wish to understand the "structures of communion" within the business enterprises modeled on the Economy of Communion, we must necessarily turn to the charisma of unity's spirituality of communion and its lifestyle, as suggested to us through the years by the Holy Spirit.

In this regard, one of the main suggestions for organizing our life together has been the so-called "aspects". Back in the fifties, God made us understand that just as there is one single light, which is however reflected into seven colors, similarly, the life of Gospel-based mutual love is one, but also articulated into different aspects, as in a rainbow. The whole Focolare Movement has been ordered according to the seven colors, from economy (the red), to communication (the violet). Mutual love thus becomes defined and organized.

In 1997 the New Humanity's international Bureau of Economy and Work, together with the Economy of Communion, documented the first application of the seven colors: "Guidelines for Managing an EoC Business Enterprise," a document that had an influence, in some measure, on the life of the EoC business enterprises.

I believe, however, that the Economy of Communion Movement today has reached such a maturity that it can attempt to take a new step, to make the colors become a real inspiring force for the life of the firms.

The colors, however, do not fully exhaust the organizational and structural innovations of the charism of unity. In fact, the Holy Spirit has also given us some characteristic “instruments” of our spirituality, practices that allow the communities of the Movement to live according to the specific novelty of a spirituality of communion. These instruments also include sharing experiences of life and the so-called “moment of truth,” thanks to which we periodically take stock of our situation: we highlight the positive in a person and also where he or she may need to improve, with sincerity and love, by understanding and encouraging one another.

Certainly, each business has its own specific circumstances: the colors and instruments of the collective spirituality cannot simply be applied in a uniform way to productive organizations. But the Economy of Communion will not reach full maturation unless the “new wine” of the Charisma of unity finds suitable “new skins.”

Finally, I would like to address my last consideration to the poor. Today we are speaking and reflecting on work, but our heart and soul must hear the voice of those who are unemployed. The Economy of Communion was born also for these brothers and sisters, to give them the opportunity to work, which is always the most effective means of overcoming every form of poverty.

My wish is that your days here together will be “very fruitful”. Each of our international conventions has opened new perspectives and horizons on the Economy of Communion. I am confident that also “Working in Communion” will mark a fundamental point in our journey towards a world where, as for the first Christians of Jerusalem, “there was no needy person among them” (Acts 4:34).

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