



22nd October, 2012

119/2012

'THE DOOR OF FAITH' AT THE PLACE OF WORK

During this year of Faith, as promoted by Pope Benedict XVI, the Pastoral Commission for Work (PCW) desires to convey to the employees at their place of work, some reflections with regards to the document that was issued by the Pope himself called 'Porta Fidei' meaning the 'The Door of Faith'.

When speaking about actual work, many times one discusses all its aspects involving the worker, rather than the impact it has on one's faith. The Commission regards this year dedicated to Faith as the occasion for workers to combine their work with their faith. It should also serve as an occasion for both their employers and representatives to help them improve with respect to their beliefs.

In this document the Pope begins by stating that the Door of Faith is always open for us so that we may live in unity with God. This Door of Faith does not close during the time of work; during this time the Christian must also live his faith and unite with God the Creator – the First Worker.

This Door of Faith is open so that man may utilize this avenue of life that leads to eternity. The place of work is one of the locations which leads us along this avenue. Along this voyage of Faith we strengthen our faith in One God who is our Father; God of the Church, God of our house, is the same God who is present with us at our work place. HE is the ever present love.

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that from the beginning of his Pontificate, he spoke about the necessity to re-discover the path of our faith. This year, even at his place of work, the Christian worker has the opportunity to change one's place of work from a Godless desert to the discovery into a way of faith.

In this labour intensive world more importance is accorded to those decisions that are taken based on the economic, social, and political aspect and little importance is accorded to the consequences that result upon our Faith. This is leading to crisis in faith at our work place. This year also serves as an invitation to the workers so that they will come to terms with the fact that work should serve as a means of assisting them to grow in Faith. Reference is made to a quote by Beatific John Paul II in 'The

Gospel of Work' issued in the 1981 Encyclical letter on the work of man, referring the dignity of work and the redemption value.

The Gospel of Work illustrates that the teaching of Jesus is directed towards our life at work: the work contributes or hinders our faith, depending upon the way we live at our workplace; Jesus Christ Himself said that we must not concern ourselves with nourishment which passes away but above all with the sustenance required for everlasting life (John 6.77). As remuneration for his work, the employee deserves a decent wage for his upkeep and that of his dependents. Apart from this, during this year one must rediscover work as the path for eternal life; for this reason, we ought to rediscover work as a means to holiness.

The disciples asked Jesus what they should do in order that their work would be united with God's will (John 6.28) and Jesus reply was to believe in Him. To believe in Jesus means that even at the work place we must unite our work with the plan of salvation.

At the work place, while performing his tasks, the Christian worker cannot afford, is unable, is not capable of forgetting his Faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

The 'Year of Faith' has already been celebrated by Pope Paul VI in 1967. He had stated that it was the time when the Church professes again its authentic and sincere recognition of its faith, both individually and also within the community, in a liberal and understanding manner, demonstrating internal and external signs. It identifies employees who at their work place, both personally and also collectively, are professing, with their words and actions, their Christian faith. The work place is a fertile terrain where one can and should proclaim his faith in a loving manner. Above all, one must do this not merely as a profession of his faith to others but because he is authentically living his faith, and this will aid him in his course of faith.

Through baptism, the Christian worker is duty bound to bear witness to his own faith. He is called to demonstrate and convey the word of Truth ceded by Jesus Christ. Since heaven is our country, the Christian, similar to a stranger in a foreign land, with the help and consolation of God, should look ahead regardless of the harassments encountered. This is the reality of many employees who live according to their faith.

First and foremost our place of work should remind us that our effort is to mirror the word of God. The Christian worker who had the experience of 'how good and sweet is our Lord', should let this sweetness of the Lord spread throughout the work by way of his living faith. 'Caritas Christi urget nos'- the love of Christ inspire us at our work place.

Pope Benedict XVI states that this year of faith is the moment where, through faith, we expand our hearts, thus bearing more fruit of love. The place of work is the field where, as a Christian, the employee animates his faith, broadens his heart both to God, to his workmates and even to the work he performs. As St Augustine says 'our faith

strengthens us', the strength of the worker stems from the faith of 'Kbir Alla' (Maltese National Anthem)

At the workplace we meet people who in spite of having lost their faith, are genuinely trying to discover truth. The Christian can support these persons by reminding them that what they are looking for is already pursuing them and wishes to meet them.

During this year, the Christian worker should allocate some time to review his faith. The pastoral contributors in the workers' domain are encouraged to find an approachable method to assist their colleagues to grow in their faith. If one ponders for a while and enquires what man may be searching for, he would grasp the fact that one would only be praying: 'Lord enrich our faith' (Luke 17.5)

Every person, including the Christian worker is encouraged to re-discover the beauty of the Christian faith for his own well-being. The Catechism of the Church is of special aid and significance during this year where one can find the rich teaching which the Church received, cherished and taught along these last two thousand years of history. This teaching of the Church ought to reach the work places of our employees so that they may resume along this path of Faith which delivers them to eternal repose.

The Commission trusts that during this year, as employees, we will do our utmost to strengthen our faith at our work place. This will materialise even if we simply make the sign of the cross before we start our work, and if we beseech God to bless our work places. But our faith goes beyond, it assists us to enhance our working conditions, it helps us to appreciate more the workers' efforts, helps us to perform our work conscientiously.