



Message from the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Integral Human Development Service on the occasion of World Tourism Day 2019

“Tourism and Work: A Better Future for All” is the theme of World Tourism Day, which is observed on September 27, and promoted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It’s a theme that recalls the initiative: “The Future of Work,” desired by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is celebrating its centenary this year.

The choice to address the topic of tourism from the perspective of work, seems particularly opportune, in face of the rooted and growing critical issues that characterize the work dimension of life for very many people, of all latitudes. The objectives hoped for of peace, security, social promotion, and inclusion cannot be reached if a joint commitment is neglected to ensure worthy, fair, free work to all,

built around the person and his primary needs of integral human development. “To work is proper to the human person. It expresses his dignity as being created in the image of God,”[1] said Pope Francis. Where there is no work, there cannot be progress, there cannot be wellbeing and, assuredly, there cannot be a better future. Work, which is not only the commitment but the way by which man fulfills himself in society and in the world, is an essential part in determining integral development, be it of the person or of the community in which he lives.

“We have been called to work since our creation,” wrote Pope Francis in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, remarking that “Work is a necessity, it’s part of the meaning of life on this earth, a way of maturation, of human development and of personal fulfillment.”[2] “Without work — he said again in the Video-Message to the participants in the 48th Social Week of Italian Catholics (Cagliari, October 26-29, 2017) — there is no dignity.”

As the “Compendium of the Catholic Church” recalls, “The person is the yardstick of the dignity of work. And, quoting the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, ‘There is, in fact, no doubt that human work has its ethical value, which bluntly and directly is linked to the fact that he who does it is a person.’”[3]

With particular reference to tourism, in his Message for the 24th World Tourism Day,[4] Saint John Paul II also explained that this sector “is considered as a particular expression of social life, with economic, financial, cultural implications and with decisive consequences for individuals and peoples. Its direct relation with the integral development of the person should orient it to service, as of the other human activities, to the building of civilization in the most authentic and complete sense, to the building, namely, of the ‘Civilization of Love’ (Cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 33).”

To date, the problems are not few linked to the exercise of work in the tourism sector, which is declined in variegated professionalism and with specific tasks. Travel consultants and tourist guides, chefs, wine waiters and waiters, flight attendants, animators, experts in tourist marketing and social networks: in many <instances> they work in conditions of precariousness and sometimes of illegality, with unfair remuneration, constrained to exhausting work, often far from the family, with a high risk of stress and bowed to the rules of an aggressive competition.

Unworthy, then, is the exploitation of workers in poor countries but of high tourist calling in virtue of the rich environmental and historical-cultural patrimony that characterizes them, where the indigenous peoples rarely draw benefit from the use of local resources. Unacceptable also are acts of violence against the host populations,

the offense of their cultural identity, and all the activities that cause the degradation and voracious exploitation of the environment.

In this connection, Saint John Paul II also evidenced in 2003 that “Tourist activity can play an important role in the fight against poverty, be it from the economic or the social and cultural point of view. By travelling, one gets to know different places and situations, and one realizes how great the divide is between the rich countries and the poor countries. Moreover, the resources and local activities can be appreciated better, by fostering the involvement of the poorest segments of the population.”^[5]

In this connection, a closer look at the development potentials offered by the tourism sector are respectable, be it in terms of opportunities of employment or of human, social and cultural promotion. Opportunities that are opened, in particular, to young people and which encourages them to take part as protagonists of their development, perhaps through initiatives of self-employment in disadvantaged countries.

The data published by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) highlight that out of 11 work posts in the world, at least one is generated — directly or indirectly — by tourism, and they record a constant growth of the phenomenon, which involves millions of people in all corners of the earth. There is talk of an expansive cycle, with enormous implications on the social, economic and cultural plane, which has surpassed the rosiest expectations. Suffice it to think that in 1950 international tourists were just over 25 million, whereas, in the coming decade, it’s estimated that they could reach <the figure of> 2 billion travelers in the whole world.

In the face of these fluxes, the dimension of encounter seems encouraging to us, which work in tourism can offer. The sector’s operators at all levels, in the exercise of their daily tasks, in many cases have the opportunity to meet with people of the most diverse countries of the world, and to initiate that knowledge that constitutes the first step for the abandonment of prejudices and stereotypes and for building relations marked by friendship. Pope Francis spoke of tourism as an occasion of encounter, when addressing the young people of the Youth Tourist Center last March, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Association’s foundation. The Pontiff expressed his appreciation for their profuse commitment in the promotion of “slow tourism,” “not inspired by the canons of consumerism or the sole desire to accumulate experiences, but being able to foster encounter between persons and the territory, and to have knowledge grow in mutual respect.”^[6]

Therefore, the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development makes an appeal to all rulers and leaders of national economic policies to foster work, particularly of young people, in the tourism sector. A work that puts the dignity of the

person at the center — as the Global Commission on the Future of Work of the International Labour Organization (ILO) [7] recommends elsewhere — which makes itself an instrument of promotion of the integral development of every man and of the whole man, who cooperate in the development of individual communities, each one according to its own peculiarities, and who foster the creation of relations of friendship and fraternity between persons and peoples.

We assure our closeness and our support to all those that are committed to attaining these objectives, and we exhort the directors and operators of tourism to acquire an awareness of the challenges and opportunities that characterize work in the tourism sector. Finally, we wish to thank, in particular, the pastoral workers for all the energies expended daily, so that the Word of God is able to illumine and vivify this singular field of human living.

From the Vatican, July 23, 2019

Peter K. A. Cardinal Turkson, Prefect

[Original text: Italian] [ZENIT's translation by Virginia M. Forrester]

[1] Francis, Catechesis at the General Audience, August 15, 2015.

[2] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, May 24, 2015, n. 128.

[3] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n. 271.

[4] John Paul II, Message for the 24th World Tourism Day, 2003.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Francis, Address during the Audience to the Directors and Members of the Youth Tourist Center, March 22, 2019.

[7] “Work for a Better Future,” Report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, May 22, 2019; available also on the site; https://www.ilo.org/rome/risorse-informative/comunicati-stampa/WCMS_664152/lang-it/index.htm

Credit: <https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-turkson-where-there-is-no-work-there-can-be-no-progress/>