

Importance of Agriculture



In his remarks prior to praying the Angelus this Sunday, the Holy Father spoke of the importance that work, especially agricultural work, has for human life.

Addressing the thousands of pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square, the Pope recalled how this question is highlighted in today's reading from St. Paul , and that in Italy the second Sunday of November is dedicated to thanking God for the end of the harvest. "Although I know that in other areas the farming seasons are different, I would like to draw from St. Paul 's words to reflect particularly on agricultural work", he said.

"The current economic crisis, which was also examined during the recent meeting of the G20, must be faced in all its seriousness. It has many causes, and sends out a strong call for a profound revision in the model of global economic development. It is an acute symptom which must be added to other even more serious and already well-known symptoms such as the enduring imbalance between wealth and poverty, the scandal of hunger, the ecological emergency, and the now-widespread problem of unemployment.



Faced with such a panorama, a strategic relaunch of agriculture is clearly vital. Indeed, the process of industrialisation has sometimes overshadowed the agricultural sector which, though it too has drawn benefit from modern technology, has nonetheless lost importance, bringing significant consequences also at a cultural level. I believe it is the moment to call for a re-evaluation of agriculture, not in nostalgic terms but as a vital resource for the future.

"In the current economic situation", the Pope added, "the temptation for the most dynamic economies is to seek advantageous agreements. However, this can turn out to be harmful to poorer States, prolonging the situation of extreme poverty suffered by vast numbers of men and women and using up the natural resources of the earth, which was - as Genesis says - entrusted by God the Creator to man for him to cultivate and protect".

He went on: "For this reason it is vital to cultivate and spread a clear ethical awareness, one capable of meeting the most complex challenges of the present time, educating people in wiser and more responsible consumption patterns, promoting personal responsibility and the social dimension of rural activities founded on such perennial values as welcome, solidarity, and sharing the fatigue of work".

The Holy Father concluded: "Many young people have already chosen this path, and even a number of university graduates have chosen to dedicate themselves to agricultural business feeling that in this way they are responding, not only to a personal and family need, but also to a sign of the times, a concrete awareness of the common good".

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