

# PEACE AND GOOD

**A letter on social issues in the Czech Republic  
for public discussion**

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## ***Introduction***

On January 1998 the Permanent Council of the Czech Bishops' Conference decided to start preparing a document on social issues in our country in order to – as other European countries (Germany, Austria, England, Hungary) have already done – make accessible to the public views inspired by the Church's social teaching on urgent problems of our time. A team of experts was appointed which started work on June 3, 1998 under the auspices of the Czech Christian Academy. Later other experts, empowered by the Ecumenical Council of Churches, were also invited to take part in the preparation of the document.

The diagnosis of the process of social changes, the economic, political and social transformation, launched in our country after regaining civil, political and religious freedoms in November 1998, is the task on the which the team's work focused. An inspiration for this difficult work was provided the social teaching of the Church, particularly the latest encyclical by Pope John Paul II 'Centesimus annus' issued in 1991 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the first papal social encyclical 'Rerum novarum' – that is, at the very beginning of these changes. Team members included people with wide life experience, including those who were political prisoners in the 1950s and the 1960s, and active participants in the church dissent of the 1970s and the 1980s. In its work the team was united by its awareness of the importance of understanding the signs of the times.

The period in which we live and work is by its nature a vast social transformation and hence, necessarily, a controversial time. A search for consensus on past developments requires a great deal of patience, mutual tolerance and a willingness to listen to each other. Despite everyone's goodwill and effort the working team members are aware of the limits of their understanding of, as well as of the existence of possible alternative views on, the core issues of this document.

This version, submitted to the Czech public for discussion, is already the fifth working document produced by the team. The previous versions were an attempt to react to comments made by the Czech Bishops' Conference, theological faculties and others involved. Previous versions were already provided for participants in the seminar 'Morals and Faith' which was organised by the Government Council for Social

and Economic Strategy, trade unions' representatives and political personalities. However, by making the document public on the national holiday on November 17 we are opening a broad social discussion. We hope that it will throw light on past development and, primarily, contribute to reaching a broad social consensus on future direction for our country.

I sincerely thank all members of the working team as well as those who contributed to the work and all who will join in the public discussion with the aim of contributing to real progress for our society in this area.

A subtitle of the document is a Christian greeting to the beginning of the 21st century. However, the joint wish of the team which prepared the document and those of us, who commissioned it, is expressed in the title of the document itself, 'Peace and Good'. The peace of Christ and the common good of the national community.



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## Introductory note

Over the past ten years since Czech society regained civil, political and religious freedoms, it has gone through complex and difficult changes, collectively called the transformation. The breakdown of socialism opened a way towards a renewal of civil society, parliamentary democracy and market economy in the whole group of countries belonging to the former Soviet bloc. At the beginning of these changes there seemed to be a broad social consensus in our country as regards the character of these changes and the general direction of our journey. We looked at the example of our luckier western neighbours who did not have to undergo four decades of wandering in the wilderness of the socialist experiment.

After ten years of transformation we have not ceased to be grateful for the gift of freedom. The task of our time however has turned out to be more difficult than we expected: we are losing a clear vision, and social consensus about choices for the future is disappearing. A society lacking common shared basic values, hopes and visions weakens and is endangered by unrest, feuds and discord. In such a situation, sometimes called a crisis – an economic, political and moral crisis – we face the turn of the century and the millennium. These very circumstances lead us to a serious reflection on where from, where, and through what historical ways we are heading for the future.

We consider it our moral obligation and civic duty to express our view on social issues. We all count the entry into the new millennium from the birth of Christ. The two-thousand-year-long tradition of the institution of the universal Church and our history from that very dawn have been fed by the life-giving sap of the good news of the Scripture – the Gospel. In all humbleness we are aware of the fact that both we and our predecessors have failed many times to keep the moral obligations given in the Gospel, as, among other things, our continuing division proves. But the treasure of faith, which we, in spite of all our imperfection, bring and proclaim, remains God's light on our journey even after two thousand years.

The social dimensions of the Gospel – Christian social ethics – is a field in which cooperation among various churches is most successful. It was also ecumenical brotherly love which led us to drafting the present letter: the social teaching or social doctrine of the Catholic

church and the other main Churches in our country share many common principles. In this sense we will use a unifying concept – 'Christian social teaching' in this letter. Its application to our specific historical conditions is a difficult task, but it is possible in principle.

In modern times, namely in the course of the now ending 20th century, the Church has established a tradition of papal social encyclicals on social issues of the times. The last of them – '*Centesimus annus*' was issued by Pope John Paul II in 1991, one hundred years after the first encyclical by Pope Leo XIII – '*Rerum novarum*'. The former is a critical reflection on the rising capitalist order, Marxist-orientated socialism and the worker question at the end of the 19th century. The latter is a critical reflection on the capitalist order after the breakdown of the socialist experiment. The prophetic spirit of the first papal encyclical already contained a fundamental and deep criticism of Marxist socialism. In this sense the last encyclical could be considered a satisfactory triumph for the Church's social teaching. However Pope John Paul II reflected the new signs of the times, on new dangers and trials which our country was to cope with after 1989. These include the fragility of our young democracy and the creation of conditions for our integration into a wider family of European nations. The latest document summing up the Catholic social doctrine is the recently published '*Social Catechism of the Church*' (Rome, Vatican 2000).

The title of the letter – 'Peace and Good' has been borrowed from Brother Francis of Assisi, who used these words to greet his brothers. Francis was able to include all his contemporaries into his love, nobody was excluded. The struggle for peace and good, for reconciliation among people of various ethnic origins, class, of differing political and ideological positions, is a value which will be urgently needed at the beginning of 21st century. It involves goodness and peace in interpersonal relations and in society. Also it is becoming our task to apply these values in our relations with nature. We are convinced that 'Peace and good' are central values, which, we hope, can be agreed upon by all people of goodwill, who are concerned about the future of our country, by religious people of all churches, as well as people who have not yet lost the ability to distinguish what is good and what is evil, what they should do and what they should avoid.

We decided to publish the outcome of our common effort because we are concerned about a number of precarious phenomena in social

life. We do not want to pass judgments over our fellow men or to place ourselves above and outside you to whom we address this letter. We have in mind the innermost and deepest interests of all of us who have the goodwill to act to change our social climate and ourselves. With God's help this goodwill gradually lead us to changing our opinions, habits and behaviour.

Christian social teaching emphasises values and moral principles which underline the dignity of man as a creature made in the image of God. In this sense it is not attached to any particular social and political setup. However these values and moral principles are not neutral towards particular institutions, concepts and ideologies: social teaching evaluates them not from the partial and political point of view, but in relation to the main concern of the Churches: the prosperity of the 'earthly city', improving the quality of human life and man's journey towards God. We wish our document to be received as a contribution to discussion about the conduct of social affairs with all people of goodwill, namely with those who are engaged in politics, business, civil service and public administration and want to take part in the improvement of public life.

## **PEACE AND GOOD**

### **A Christian greeting for the beginning of the 21st century**

#### **I. THE INHERITANCE OF THE PAST**

##### **1. Closing the chapter on the past is not possible**

Looking for the causes at the roots of the current state of our society and its economic, social, political and cultural problems, we cannot avoid looking back into our past and at those forces and traditions which are still alive in our country. Only in this way can we seek and find ways of improving the current state of affairs. To reflect on the past means to investigate 'the signs of the times' and seek ways leading to a more just society. This is why the chapter on the past cannot be closed.

##### **2. The Churches admit their responsibility**

Christianity in the Czech lands suffered mainly from the ongoing persecution of active priests, preachers, monks and nuns, and many lay people over forty years of Communist rule. But the roots of the diversion of current society from Christian values are of a deep historical origin. The attitude of some people towards Christianity – and particularly towards the Churches as institutions – is indifferent and sometimes even hostile. Practising Christians are a minority in our country even though in the latest extensive public opinion poll, conducted at the beginning of the changes of the past decade, a significantly high proportion of the population identified themselves more or less as Christians.

In this situation the Christian Churches are facing two primary questions:

- to what extent did we cause this state of affairs ourselves?
- what is our task today to be able to fulfil our mission in the world?

An honest answer to the first question must be that the negative influences of history, for which we, Christians, must acknowledge responsibility, can be traced back to the 14th century, or perhaps even to the time of the acceptance of faith in our country. In short, the

temptation of worldly power, later combined with a subordination of Christianity to the policy of Germanisation in the former Austria-Hungary, resulted in the population's alienation from the officially predominant Catholicism. In modern times a number of external, imported factors also played their role; these were the ideas which culminated in the Enlightenment period and to which none of the Churches found an adequate answer. However, many other negative factors lead to a declining role of Christianity in our country resulting from our own failures and neglect. The Churches focused on their internal problems, some of them even on power or political targets; they lost the sensitivity for reading the signs of the times and neglected the needs of the poor. They did not pay sufficient attention to earthly justice in economic and social spheres. Out of the richness of traditional social concerns they rather emphasised those which, for example, led to a dubious policy of subordinating the Roman Catholic Church to the state structures of the Austrian empire. Sensitivity to social problems of parish priests contrasted with a disparaging approach of many representatives of the hierarchy, often of privileged Austrian origin. Social activities in the Czech lands developed simultaneously with support for national awareness (Susil's Druzina Association, the first Congress of Catholic Unions in Brno, the establishment of the Christian Social Party in Litomyšl in 1894).

A particular form of mutual relations between the state and the Church, known as Austro-Catholicism, played a negative role in the Czech historical context: social pillars of the Church hierarchy – often lacking national awareness – were not able to recognise Jesus in the poor and weak (see Mt 25,31-46), and misheard their voice raising justified claims. Pope Pius XI called the fact that the Churches lost working class support a scandal of the 19th century. We have to say with sorrow that this sentence applies to our country more than to any other. A considerable number of members of the intelligentsia and people engaged in public affairs became indifferent towards the Churches, too.

The present letter does not provide space for a detailed analysis and argument, which such serious statements deserve. Neither is self-flagellation its aim. Self-criticism could, of course, be balanced by an enumeration of all good things that Christian Churches did in our country in the past. But all this cannot delete the responsibility of the

Churches for the diversion of many people from the message of the Gospel. In the Jubilee Year 2000 Pope John Paul II exhorted the church to self-criticism and repentance and to the evaluation of the failures of the past, and he himself serves as an example in this. The pastoral letter of Bohemian and Moravian bishops entitled 'The Holy Year of the Lord', published a month before the feast of the missionaries to the Slavs, Sts. Cyril and Method, on July 5, is a sincere step in this direction.

We acknowledge with sorrow that Christian Churches in our country bear their share of the responsibility for the gravity of the social question at the end of this century. We are starting our letter on social issues with this confession. It is a necessary condition in order for the letter not to lose its credibility. Only the spirit of repentance and humbleness can offer a promise of a change. It applies primarily to us but also it is a challenge for the world of politics, economics, science, culture and social work. We reject a common and deep-rooted temptation to seek for an external enemy. In the dialogue, which we would like to start, we do not want to avoid co-responsibility for the crisis in which the whole Czech society finds itself.

### **3. All Christians have been united through persecution and suffering, and through the victims of both totalitarian regimes**

If we thank God for the gift of religious freedom today, we should also give thanks to the thousands of the courageous and self-sacrificing Christians who were arrested, interned and imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps and Communist prisons. Many of them vindicated their fidelity to the faith by shedding their blood. A number of clergymen, as well as active lay people shared this fate. Many victims came from the members of associations and organisations which sought to spread Christian values, such as the physical fitness organisations Sokol, Orel, YMCA, the Academic YMCA, scouts and others. We must not forget the victims from the Czech Orthodox Church, namely of the period called 'the Heydrichiad' (a period following the assassination of the Nazi governor of Bohemia and Moravia Reinhard Heydrich during which thousands of people were executed – note of the translator), when all leaders of this Church were executed. In the times of Communist persecution particularly the priests and members of the Greek Catholic

Church showed a great fidelity to faith. All these victims opened the way to the ecumenical rapprochement of views and attitudes. Common suffering strengthened the feeling of unity among Christian Churches. Since 1989 brotherly relations among our Churches have become as good as they ever were in the past.

#### **4. We pay for misreading the signs of the times and for a weak resistance to evil**

As in Germany in the 1930s and later in our Sudeten borderland, Christians were unable to read the 'signs of times': they did not oppose the openly rising Nazism. We, Christians in the Czech Republic, reproach ourselves for a similar failure after the war. We were not able to recognise the danger of hatred which flared in all spheres of our society at the time. The Churches did not oppose this spirit with sufficient force. A justified desire to secure the Czech nation against any possible existential danger from Germany in the future unfortunately blended with an unjustifiable desire for collective revenge and insufficient willingness to fairly differentiate the share of individual responsibility. The trauma of the post-war solution of the German question still burdens us, whether we are willing to admit it or not. (After WWII some 250,000 million ethnic Germans were expelled from the then Czechoslovakia and their property confiscated on the basis of President Edvard Benes's decrees – note of the translator.)

The war and the uncontrolled expulsion of the Sudeten Germans distorted and weakened the faith in justice as the basis of society. Faith in the power of the spirit was lost. A contrary vision of the world and history, that of social Darwinism prevailed: he wins and survives who has physical strength and can make use of violence. Following the logic of this thinking the Communists, after taking over power, violently suppressed freedom and expropriated property without compensation. It was another decisive step on the wrong path. Also at this time the Christian Churches did not show a sufficient unity and resistance to such gross violation of the institution of ownership, even though social ethics and Church documents at that time clearly rejected mass expropriation in principle.

Similarly as German Christians who, only a short time before, paid dearly for their failure, the spirit of evil now turned against Czech

Christians, who did not oppose it immediately after the war. Repression, planned provocation, show trials and sentences passed after 1948 aimed at subordinating the Churches to Communist power. Under this pressure several divergent streams arose inside the Churches. At one extreme there was collaboration with the regime, while on the other there were underground churches and groups of Christian dissidents.

The fact that some Christians went so far in adapting themselves to the regime was caused both in Germany and our country by a mistaken interpretation of the events of the times and by an insufficient understanding of the principles of Christian social doctrine. The principles of equality and social justice, by which the Communist regime attracted its followers, though at the cost of loss of freedom and personal responsibility, seemed to some sincere people (even religious ones) to resemble the biblical principle of charity. Under pressure, especially in the period of the so-called cultural revolution at the end of the 1950s, the Churches fell increasingly deeper into a ghetto, from which they extricated themselves only with difficulty after 1989. They have not so far managed to overcome the internal tension leading up to division, to which the former regime contributed by its practice of discrimination. It will not be possible to close the chapter on the past at this point either. Our past failures will return to us and we will pay for them dearly until we come to terms with the past in line with Christ's call for conversion. Christians should not disregard thoughts about God's punishment for our failures: they were many in this century alone! What followed can be seen as the 'storm of wrath that fell upon our heads for our sins' (J.A.Komensky). God educates us even by punishing us. However for those who love God everything works for good.

#### **5. The decay of morals resulting from deviating from God is our inheritance from the past**

Social morals are an important part of our inheritance. Historical arguments support the claim that the decay of morally stable social structures began in the 19th century, with the arrival of the industrial era. Austro-Catholicism with its often superficial or even hypocritical religiosity is partly to blame for this tendency. The trials of history, which our nation had to go through in the 20th century, speeded up the process of erosion of the tradition-rooted cultural and moral behavioural

patterns. We have inherited confused values, a low resistance to ideological manipulation and weakened moral integrity. As a nation we showed a lower resistance to the social evil of Communism than our neighbours who shared a similar fate. The Communist takeover, the crimes and the burdensome atmosphere of the 1950s morally weakened many people. Political relaxation and hopes raised by the reform efforts of the Prague Spring movement in 1968 (without a deeper self-examination) followed by their suppression by military force and two decades of the 'normalisation period' (a period of hard line Communism following the crush of the Prague Spring movement with the help of Warsaw Pact troops – note of the translator) led only to a further decrease in moral resistance. The sad realisation that a negative trend of demoralisation in our nation had not stopped even after freedom was regained in November 1989 leads us to a brief reflection on this last turning point in our recent history. We are doing so in the firm belief that a return to the spiritual foundations will offer the hope of escaping from the 'quicksand' of moral devastation.

## **II. NOVEMBER EVENTS OF 1989**

### **6. The real Lord of human history is Jesus Christ, the Son of God**

The lapse of time allows us to answer better the questions which social scientists as well as lay people ask: what has actually happened, how to understand the break-up of the socialist regime in our country and how to explain the nature of what is known even abroad as the 'Velvet Revolution'? The disintegration of the Iron Curtain, the split of the Soviet bloc and the subsequent process of transformation and introduction of a standard market economy certainly rank among the key events at the end of the 20th century. It is remarkable that social science experts in relevant areas were not able to predict this 'event of the century'. Even though the competition between the two blocs had been showing for some time who would be the winner, virtually everybody

was surprised at the quick, easy and non-violent character of the changes.

We are convinced that even where evil seems to be dominating for years, God has the final say and control over the events in His hands. From the very beginning of the revolutionary development, religious people interpreted the breakdown of Communism as God's intervention in human history, as the fruit of the determination of many innocent victims, who were imprisoned and martyred, religious as well as non-believers.

Besides factors of a material nature, which contributed to the break-up of the socialist regime (the economic and social retardation of the whole of the Soviet bloc was increasingly obvious since the 1970s) the Churches justly point to factors of a moral and spiritual nature, which brought about the fall of Communism. We have in mind the moral resistance against evil of the past regime, shown by individuals, within the Churches or outside them, by organised opposition and dissident movements, church activities, petitions campaigns and displays of civic courage (Charter 77, the Revival movement, and the influence of Polish Solidarity).

### **7. Thank God for the peaceful course of revolutionary change**

The peaceful course of events opened room for a journey towards a free society, towards a return of legal and moral order, and towards economic order, which is the child of evolution of the European and American civilisations, a result of long term care, work and systematic self-reflection, in short, the result of hundreds of years of intellectual and moral efforts.

It is not justified to interpret the changes of the late 1980s as a result of a conspiracy. We should not be distracted by hypotheses of this kind. A sign of a mature Christian is that his or her faith cannot be shaken and that he trusts God to bring his work to fulfilment even through evil human acts.

## **8. Undue legal and political continuity with the past regime was and still is a burden**

The 'Government of national understanding', formed in November 1989, chose the way of political and legal continuity with the past regime. Even though a special law (On the Lawlessness of the Communist Regime) declared the past system criminal, some deduce wrongly that the suspected perpetrators of crimes can be judged only according to the laws ratified by the Communist regime. In the 1970s the international community passed significant legal norms concerning civil, political and other rights. Through the ratification in parliament they became a part of our legal system too. Thus they were – due to their nature and legal legitimacy – placed above the related regulations of our legislation. If we talk about legal continuity (1) in this connection, it is necessary to take into account that the former legislation incorporated laws in the light of which it is possible to judge the acts of representatives of that regime even today.

## **9. Without goodwill and a willingness to overcome the past the rule of law can hardly be established**

A change of the economic and political system always implies a change of social structures and constitutional and ownership rights. Christian social teaching recognises the influence of social structures on man's behaviour, but points out that sin primarily has an individual dimension. It is always an individual who decides for good or evil. However, in the modern, complex and highly institutionalised society, a sensitive individual conscience is disappearing, the awareness of one's own guilt weakens and the individual's responsibility fades away. Christian social teaching uses the notion of 'structures of evil' or 'structures of sin' in which individual evil can become institutionalised. The era of 'real socialism' contributed to this erosion of moral consciousness by creating a special, hierarchical structure of political and economic power, in which personal responsibility disappeared.

This system gave man an opportunity to avoid the problem of individual guilt and responsibility. It happened on a mass scale. The insufficient will of today's politicians to correct legal deformations and moral damage caused by the Communist regime can be explained by the

fact that too many people in our country took part in illegal activities in some way – either intentionally, to their benefit, or out of fear. This is why a majority of the nation seeks to close the chapter on the past. However an attempt to start with a clean sheet without reflecting on our failures is connected with a danger that we will not make a clear separation between good and evil and relations between people and relations between the state and citizens will not be purified in the light of truth and justice.

## **10. Real transformation cannot be a mere exchange of the structures of evil**

A change of system can mean a mere exchange of the forms and structures of evil. After November 1989 the political and ideological monopoly of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC) was abolished and administrative and state economic planning structures of the old ('real') socialism were dismantled. However, at the same time a number of files kept by the StB – the Communist secret service were destroyed and all traces swept away. Consequently many big fish slipped through the net of the screening ('lustration') law. The laws have not prevented the former powerful political positions and privileges based on party membership from being transformed into new structures of economic power and legally registered ownerships.

In many respects a real transformation is still ahead of us. We are stuck in the past deeper than we are willing to admit. A real change of society has more dimensions than a mere change of system. It involves a change of hearts, minds, habits and patterns of behaviour. This is why it is necessary both to reform structures and institutions and to improve morals.(2)

The November events of 1989 undoubtedly involved a moral impulse. However, for many people it stayed on the surface. Soon society returned to seeing the world in terms of crude power: political and economic power has become decisive again, and in the interest of gaining power one allegedly does not need to bother much about the law. We consider this vision of the world erroneous and unacceptable from the point of view of the social teaching we proclaim. The passivity of the Churches, closed in their own problems and overlooking the deep causes of decay, while facing these dangers, deepened the social crisis.

### III. THE CONCEPT OF TRANSFORMATION AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL TEACHING

#### 11. The moral dimension of transformation was underestimated

Even though the significance of the moral dimension of privatisation and transformation was underestimated from the very beginning of the changes after November 1989 and sometimes even intentionally belittled, the moral aspect was at least partly incorporated into privatisation rules and procedures. A proof of this is, for example, the restitution law, with the exception of some cases of transformation of agricultural cooperatives in which the right of the entitled persons was impaired. Over the last decade there has been no political will to resolve the restitution of the property of the Churches and religious societies as well as of civil associations and economic cooperatives. The rights of emigrants remains restricted too. This excluded a large intellectual and ethical potential, which could have been used for the whole process of transformation. It was only recently that the restitution claims of Czech Jews were recognised. Between 1945 and 1948 the terrible wrongs committed on Jews were not mitigated either for those who survived the war or their descendants.

Voucher privatisation as a method of free distribution of state property to citizens, was and still is a subject of dispute among economists. They are discussing mainly the question of whether this is the safest way of finding identifiable responsible owners. One way or the other, the concept, which started as just and egalitarian, later led to a concentration of economic power, often to the detriment of small shareholders, whose ownership rights were not sufficiently protected. This weakened and marred the idea which originally seemed to be close to recommendations of Christian social teaching. Similarly, direct sales and public tenders, financed from loans of semi-state-owned banks, were fraught with danger from the merging political and economic power of large companies.

Lack of generosity and insufficient incentives were hindering the entry of foreign capital. The original idea of splitting the socialist colossi into parts and selling them as small private companies has not been implemented. Allied interest groups in large companies and government

ministries prevailed, while medium-size companies, managed by responsible owners, which in advanced countries create most jobs and a major part of the gross domestic product, have so far failed to be set up to a major extent. The link between sustainable prosperity and research and development has been completely underestimated. It has resulted in an economic collapse of large companies; they demand new capital injections all the time to the detriment of profit-making small businesses and tax-payers.

Besides such an unjust redistribution of funds, which is a relic of the former socialist economy, unemployment is growing and a number of companies of this kind even wantonly withhold their employees' wages.

#### 12. A firm legal order has not been established; the law is separated from ethics

In this period a kind of revolutionary 'ethics' prevailed, enabling the transfer of the state companies' assets into private hands, an activity which was later called '*tunnelling*'. Strikingly, legal perception of these illegal property transactions, which in civilised countries would be called theft, fraud or embezzlement, was almost non-existent. The forty year long divorce of the law from justice was not overcome in the transformation period: the law has remained separated from ethics. We still encounter signs that a legal system, which would ensure the working of law and justice in the economy, has not yet been established. We hesitate to conclude whether the reasons are ignorance and negligence or intention. At present a general mistrust in the organs of the state, including the system of justice, prevails. The loss of confidence in justice and the power of legal protection of one's own rights is alarming. The efforts of the last two governments to put this crucial matter right cannot be overlooked, but this effort still faces hidden and even open resistance by various interest groups, which seek to preserve their power to profit from manipulating the law.

#### 13. The renewal of state protectionism and the structures of evil

One of the outcomes of the Czech way of a radical ownership change has been the emergence of quasi-private ownership. It is ownership of property that is formally privatised but in reality the state has kept

a decisive influence in it, although it sometimes may have the form of a passive acknowledgement of irregular privatisation. Quasi-private ownership does not permit the state to decide on manager contracts and salaries but, at the same time, it goes on transferring the liabilities, resulting from bad management, onto the state and the tax-payer. Institutions of this kind are not entirely new; rather they were created through a recombination of old elements, inherited from 'real socialism'. It is an institutionally complex, non-transparent and (therefore) ineffective ownership. In this form the social structures of evil of the past have been preserved in a most obvious manner. The continuation of these renewed forms of state protectionism enables further redistribution of resources and is to the detriment of the weaker and defenceless. It is often only a hidden form of exploitation from the times of 'real socialism'. Cases of banks and large companies of this type are known to and discussed openly by the lay public.

#### **14. The new form of materialistic philosophy is also wrong**

There are similarities between an earlier transition period of building socialism with its ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the extreme form of liberal ideology in the changes after 1989. Normal ethical principles are put aside. Alleged future rationality and productivity is posited against morals. We would like to emphasise that this idea is erroneous in its very premises: institutions which lack a moral basis do not work properly; the hoped for effect of privatisation has not materialised. In the misunderstood extreme liberalism once again the 'basis' (using the former terminology) is prioritised to the 'superstructure'. In this sense the old-new mistake has been fittingly labelled as 'Marxism upside down'. It opened opportunities for people without scruples, from the moral point of view resembling some of the former national administrators and Communist expropriators half a century ago. In this sense it was a repeat return of the spirit of revolt against traditional morals. The discredited form of philosophy of historical materialism of the Marxist type was replaced by a new form of materialism, this time in the form of extreme liberalism. Another matter was the schizophrenic form of this ideology, as a result of which liberal principles were not applied to a number of important policies (ways of privatisation, spending the state budget surplus, social policy, regulation of wages and prices...).

#### **15. Fundamentalist liberalism has become a substitute religion**

The long-lasting suppression of civil, political and economic freedoms for more than four decades followed by a sudden opening of space for private initiatives created favourable conditions for extreme individualism. It drew inspiration from the Anglo-Saxon (American) world, but it lacked its spiritual and cultural rootedness of morals in the economy and politics and a firm rule of law. Materialistic thinking, which prevailed in a large part of the population, the idol of the highest possible consumption and accumulation of property were prerequisites for the reemerging false social messianism. It opened the door to exaggerated aspirations and, again, it promised ('it will work this time') the creation of a 'paradise on Earth'. Many people, who were not sufficiently anchored and morally integrated, accepted the ideology of market fundamentalism as a kind of substitute personal religion. An identification with doubtful values, such as greed and obsession with property and money, as a universal means of satisfying the consumerist way of life, were the idols of this substitute religion. A share of blame for this seduction belongs to shortcomings in general and ethical education, poor professionalism, lack of respect for different opinions and their rational reflection in the media and in the public sphere in general.

Christian social teaching rejects this idolatry. It is dangerous because it weakens respect for human dignity, it deprives life of deeper meanings and, as a final result, it endangers his or her eternal salvation.

#### **16. Irregular transfers of property without a firm legal framework must end**

A concentration of economic power has emerged through ways far from the principles of the rule of law. In this it is a continuation of the institutionalised evil of the past regime. There is a danger that this power will prevail over the formal institutions of political democracy. Irregular property transfers outside a legal framework must end. Real (postcommunist) social transformation is unthinkable without a spiritual change; as is suggested by the spiritual heritage of great personalities of our modern history, Karel Havlicek Borovsky, Frantisek Palacky and Tomas Garrigue Masaryk.

Private ownership, which respects the rule of law as a fundamental constraint on the creation of profit, values and resulting prosperity, and which is socially responsible, will be accepted by people and considered legitimate. Only such private ownership is able to make room for real entrepreneurship, creativity and the application of people's talents for the necessary modernisation of our economy. The still prevailing negative perception of the institution of 'private ownership as theft' (Proudhon) needs to be reversed if economic transformation is to be successfully completed. Ownership is responsibility and service; it has been entrusted to us.

One must appreciate efforts to put things right and gradually establish the rule of law. However, everything indicates that the fight against the structures of evil, which still obstruct the rule of law, have not been completed yet.

#### **17. The Churches are in favour of a social-economic system based on the rule of law and moral order**

The above critical reflection on the way which until now has prevailed in the Czech transformation suggests that, apart from a moral deficit, the weakest point is an insufficient understanding of the need for strong legal order in the economy. The role of civic virtues both in politics and the economy was underestimated. From historical patterns, the concept of a *social market economy* appears to be closest to Christian social teaching (3). It is not by chance that this concept was a primary target of critical attacks by extreme liberals in our country. We are fully aware of the fact that institutions in the social market economy are not perfect and unchangeable and that an application of its principles (of *ordo-liberalism*, that is a liberalism emphasising order) in today's world requires urgent reforms even in those countries, which have so far convincingly combined economic effectiveness and social sensitivity.

The inheritance of 'real socialism' has been a state with too extensive powers. It is harmful that citizens excessively rely on the state. At the same time the state has been weak and unable to guarantee law and order. However we consider it necessary to emphasise that extreme liberal ideologies, which consider the state as inherently evil, are highly dangerous. In our country it is the ideology of right-wing anarchism

which, by definition, considers the state as corrupt. Even though this ideology calls itself liberal, it is equally dangerous as those extreme political movements, which look back to the paternalist state and the old regime. Similarly, the ideology of a 'capitalism without attributes' turned out to be harmful and, in the end, it caused the country's own citizens as well as foreign analysts to use non-flattering attributes for post-socialist Czech capitalism.

#### **18. Lack of respect for the common good is a sign of social ill health**

The suppression of individual initiative, creativity and entrepreneurship by the former regime and its persistent effort to concentrate all decision-making on so called national ownership to the state authorities turned to the opposite extreme after 1989. The swing of the pendulum today puts one-sided emphasis on individual freedom which does not want to be bound by any responsibility: an understanding for the need of the common good has nearly disappeared. However a respect for the '*bonum commune*' has been one of the cornerstones of European civilisation which was emphasised by the earliest Church fathers. Today we are witnessing a dissemination of dangerous views of extreme libertarians who consider man as an isolated creature, selfishly seeking only his narrow personal interests under an extreme form of freedom. However, a healthy society needs the broadest possible consensus on what constitutes common good. It is not by chance that a pastoral letter by the bishops of England and Wales was entitled the 'Common Good'. The notion of common good, *bonum commune*, refers to a series of 'goods' which, we hope, will meet a with positive reception from all citizens: they include personal security, internal and external security of the country, respect for human and civil rights, as is characteristic of a democratic and law-abiding state, a synergetic cooperation of people in all spheres with a focus on the welfare of the whole society, and a reasonable social security net to support the weaker members of society. The common good can also be expressed as a set of social conditions which allow everyone to apply and develop his or her talents in the economic, political and cultural spheres.

#### **IV. A SYSTEMIC CHANGE: THE MARKET AS A PANACEA AND THE MARKET AS A SALVATION?**

##### **19. The transformation is an integral task with many dimensions**

A systemic change is a substantive part of the social transformation. In our post-1989 transformation it was the transition of one economic-political order – 'real socialism' – into another – a capitalist market economy and parliamentary democracy. However, this task does not have only one dimension. Our transformation so far has suffered from a one-sided emphasis on the economic dimension, while other dimensions were underestimated. The transformation needs to be understood as an *overall civilisation change and regeneration* involving the cultivation of the legal and moral order, the development of civil society, modernisation of the economy, civil service and public administration – and not least – a revitalisation of the cultural and spiritual life of society, its visions, hopes and ideals. Without this latter dimension society suffers and decays.

##### **20. Economic values must not be placed at the top of the pyramid of aims**

The notion that the economic dimension of the changes is the main or the only one involves a misunderstanding of the task of transformation and even of what the market economy itself is based on. We have already seen for ourselves that a one-sided concentration on the economy can be counter-productive in the end. Material welfare is something what we may gain as a bonus if we keep the moral principles which were bestowed on us for all spheres of life. The duty of the Churches is to hold a permanent dialogue with the world of politics and business and communicate, in healthy competition with other opinions, ethical values from the Churches' own two-thousand-year-long experience.

##### **21. The market can function well only in an ethical environment, but it will not create it**

The capitalist market economy arose through evolution in the cultural and spiritual spheres of Christian Europe and the New World. Historical evidence shows that the market works effectively only in a moral environment of elementary justice and honesty, and where there is a basic social consensus on the understanding of good and evil and on the conception of human person and his/her place in society. In an ideal world market participants would be honest and fair, and would respect human dignity of others and observe strict moral code. The Golden Rule of relations between people in the economy, politics and society is generally considered to be Jesus' ethical demand: 'As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them'. Under such conditions a social climate of mutual trust can develop, on which the functioning of (especially) financial markets and other financial institutions crucially depends.

It is true that market participants can learn the spirit of cooperation also in their mutual interaction; but there are basic moral principles and civic virtues which the market participants need to bring in themselves. Without these principles and virtues the market – as well as political democracy – cannot work properly. Man needs to be taught basic social skills, decency and morals from childhood in his or her family, school, the Churches and religious societies, civil associations and clubs. The interrupted tradition of our country is a serious obstacle to these important tasks for our time. The set of civic virtues, principles and practical morals form what is called the 'social capital'. The current economic problems of our country and other countries of Eastern Europe have been attributed to the diminution of social capital under the influence of Marxist ideology and practice also by the experts of the world financial institutions.

##### **22. Only a competitive market can fulfil its function well, but competition should be protected by the state**

Among other ills, the economic structure inherited from the socialist economy was almost completely cartelised and monopolised. It was far away from the conditions of perfect functional competition. Privatisation on its own was not sufficient for a turnaround to efficiency. Privatisation cannot achieve the desired effect without competition and

efficient regulation if market agents are monopolistic (sometimes as a result of the nature of goods or services they provide). Unless both these conditions, competition and effective regulation, are met simultaneously privatisation misses its economic target. Private unregulated monopolies can behave even more arrogantly than the former state-owned monopoly structures. Market competition needs to be protected, supported and cultivated. Otherwise the market, left to itself, tends to subvert competition. This especially holds for a market which has been marked by many past ills. Similarly, it is necessary to learn gradually how to regulate technical and infrastructural network monopolies. Any simplification of these complex problems in the form of ideological formulas (eg. that private ownership is, by definition, more efficient than state ownership) is theoretically erroneous and can result in unnecessary losses for society.

**23. The restructuring of old industries cannot be carried out without the participation of the state – market forces alone are not enough**

The break-up of the old markets of the Soviet bloc only accelerated the long-felt need for fundamental restructuring of the historically 'old' sectors of the economy, such as coal and mineral mining, power production, metallurgy and steel production, heavy engineering and the armament industry. The high capital intensity of these industries, long term return on investment, high business risk and concentrated regional impact of unemployment turn the state (government) into a hostage to these industries. This holds whether these sectors are state-owned or formally private, and even if foreign strategic investors have been brought in to solve the matter. The solution may take up to two decades and due to the nature of the problem market forces alone will not help. Ideology or politics cannot change this fact; they only try to hide the interests of lobbying groups which make use of this situation to blackmail the state and leave the tax-payer to pay the bill.

**24. There are sectors that cannot, by their nature, be reduced to a mere game of supply and demand**

A number of social sectors, without which modern society at the turn of the millennium cannot live, belong to a sphere the governance of which cannot be left to a mere interplay of market supply and demand. Such a reduction of their management would be harmful and socially dangerous. *Science, culture, education, social services, health care, as well as road and railway transport*, cannot of course do without costing, budgeting and the quantification of supply and demand, but mere economics is not enough. It would be an extreme simplification to think that privatisation and the autonomous forces of the market are the only salvation for these sectors. It is necessary to look for functional ways of financing and for integrating adequate segments of research and development into the Czech economy; they are one of the key sources of our potential future prosperity. The market alone does not usually provide sufficient funds for these sectors, but their retardation can seriously endanger the common good. It is not by chance that even in countries, where the philosophy of deregulation and privatisation was applied first, hesitated for a long time before including these sectors into their privatisation programmes. And when they did so – after a delay – the results are often highly ambiguous. This is why we are convinced that in a country, which faced an unprecedented denationalisation to an extent, which none of Western European countries could even imagine, an *attempt of a blanket privatisation* of these sectors, done *as quickly as possible*, was a strategic mistake. A fundamental systemic change has not been achieved and could not be achieved in this way, but the destabilisation of these socially sensitive sectors was a social loss. More cautious and less ideological approach could have been less costly. Nevertheless we must consider how to support various activities that would lead to a renewal and growth of the socially sensitive sectors with the participation of non state funds, such as non-governmental non-profit organisations. The role of the Churches and associate bodies is irreplaceable in this respect.

## **V. THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY: RENEWAL OF THE RULE OF LAW AND GROWTH TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP**

### **25. Continuity with the deformed legal system of the past is an obstacle to the rule of law**

Legislation in modern societies consists of thousands of laws. We have already indicated that the continuity of a legal system, the cornerstone of which was expropriation and class hatred, is highly problematic from the moral point of view. A lack of will to come to terms with the past in the political and judicial system has resulted in a contempt for the law in our nation. New wrongs and injustices often occur (5). We consider such an erroneous attitude to law and justice as one of the main causes of the enormous growth of economic and financial crime which we have witnessed in the 1990s.

### **26. The letter of the law on its own kills justice: a return to natural law is necessary**

In the legislation of the former regime a formal perception of written and codified law prevailed. (In legal terminology the 'positive law' is referred to in this context, which does not however imply any positive evaluation). The letter of the law and its expedient interpretation became the norm. Generations of lawyers educated in this spirit lost all sense of natural law. Legislators and judges ceased to be able to apply general ethical and legal ethical principles to the controversial cases of their time.

This inherited state of affairs turned out to be a weak point after November 1989, when legislators faced the task of preparing a change of the whole of the legal system in a short time. Similarly, in the period of transformation judges were suddenly asked to judge cases with which the 'positive law' did not deal at all and whose economic nature they did not understand. This period finally confirmed that a threat of sanctions by the 'positive law' does not deter crime where the sense of natural law is absent. Natural law allows for the fact that legal norms are based on

tradition and principles which transcend the interests of state power and its operative targets.

Hence it is necessary to work for a return of natural law into legal practice and theory in order to remove the gap between the letter and the spirit of the law. It is this gap which makes our 'positive law' defective.

### **27. Mere changes of laws do not make the legal system legitimate – laws that cannot be enforced invite injustice**

In a period of passing many new laws the lawmakers appear to have forgotten that *legality* does not necessarily imply *legitimacy*. In order to be legitimate a law has to be in harmony with the natural legal feeling, the country's tradition, internationally recognised customs and with general and professional ethics. Under common 'legalism', particularly as understood in legal positivism, good and norm is only what is contained in the positive, written and declared law. However, legality does not guarantee common good, right and justice. Christian social teaching puts emphasis on the ethical aspect of political and legal changes.

There was no opportunity to consider these deeper ethical-legal problems within the philosophy of transformation which considered the *speed* of institutional changes as the priority. Laws which are permanently lagging behind the economic changes, a 'legislative storm' of hundreds of legislative initiatives, bills and their frequent amendments, discussed and passed in a hurry, amendments to amendments, all that did not uphold the legitimacy of the law in our country. On the contrary, with the increasing frequency of newly passed laws, a feeling of legal vacuum seemed to be increasing. A rapid decay of the inherited socialist economic organisational structures resulted in a fast growth of complaints lodged in commercial disputes which, together with the registration of speedily privatised and newly established companies, overburdened commercial and registration courts. The high speed of institutional changes was counter-productive: the enforceability of the law decreased and court proceedings prolonged. All this was detrimental for the legitimacy of the law. A feeling spread that it was not possible to defend one's rights and achieve justice through courts. The discrepancy between the 'legal' and the 'legitimate' grew into a serious rift.

It is necessary to rehabilitate legal order in the eyes of citizens by court decisions being in line with a natural sense of justice (even though we are aware of a weakened sensitivity in this area) and not defying common sense. The worth of judicial power does not consist in merely the formal keeping of procedural rules and its professional power does not consist in a formalistic mannerism. An urgent need of the day is to raise the morality of the law.

### **28. Equality of citizens before the law is a condition of establishing order**

The inadequacy of the judicial system creates queues in the registration of new companies and resolutions of general meetings of shareholders, in resolving commercial disputes and conflicts, and submitting proposals for bankruptcy proceedings. Such a state of affairs, together with a weakened legal sense for natural justice, has created preconditions for the growth of a climate of corruption. The independence of judges, supported by a safeguard from dismissal, may turn into arbitrary wilfulness by the judge. As the stability of parliamentary democracy and civil society critically depends on the equality of citizens on 'political markets', the working of the economy depends on the equality of market participants before the law. The situation described above contains seeds of the state when only the 'strong', those who have economic and political power, are able successfully to claim their rights and justice. A clientelist or even mafia-driven society is incompatible with the rule of law and stable political democracy. Christian social teaching must express a serious warning: society which follows these erroneous ways will not be able to establish a functioning legal and political order and will not avoid serious economic and social crises.

### **29. The legislative power should strive for justice**

In a modern society in general – and in a post-socialist society in particular – there are strong interest groups. They seek to incorporate their particular interests into bills and new laws. Economic power can influence politics in legitimate ways, but it can also use ways that directly endanger both parliamentary democracy and the creation of a

legal framework of the economy complying with the principles of common good. The legislation of large scale privatisation, including voucher privatisation, laws on investment privatisation funds, laws on securities – i.e. legislation concerning the regulation of the emerging capital market in general – has been under a strong pressure from those groups. Small and minority shareholders were not sufficiently protected and the laws have left (unintentionally or on purpose?) unregulated space for the concentration of property and accumulation of capital. In order for the property of one group of shareholders to grow, the property of the other group – the weaker ones who were less able to defend themselves – had not been sufficiently protected. Similar hypotheses – with an even blacker background – were voiced even with respect to the wording of some tax laws. The state, which allows the creation of new laws to succumb to the predatory interests of individual groups rather than to the common good and the prosperity of the country, changes the legislation – which should have been striving for justice – into *a new expression of a class conception* of law, with which we have had unfortunate experience. Judges, who in such a state of affairs adhere only to formal congruity, lose a sense of objectivity, truth and justice. This would amount to a betrayal of their true mission. We consider an improvement in this respect as a primary task, especially in connection with the effort of our political representation to bring our country into the European Union as soon as possible.

### **30. The inherited paternalistic state is an imperfect substitute for civil society**

The paternalistic state of 'real socialism' with a peculiar care used to direct citizens as to what they should do, how they should behave, what they should believe in and, the same time, took care of their material and psychic needs, so to say, from the cradle to the grave. The paternalist state took over tasks which were not within its competence and which it should not and, from the nature of the matter, was not able to do well. However, even today we still see citizens relying on state assistance in matters where they should – and could! – help themselves. These people often do not mind that by such behaviour they give up their dignity and free development of their talents and skills. In extreme cases their

behaviour becomes antisocial; they abuse the social system and other citizens by wasting taxpayers' money.

Briefly, we have not yet learned to draw a clear distinction between *the state* and its irreplaceable functions on one side and *civil society* on the other. Christian social teaching fully supports the creation, development and cultivation of all non-governmental, public entities such as municipalities, towns, regions, and public and private organisations: associations, corporations, foundations, and non-profit publicly beneficial, humanitarian and other organisations. All these non-governmental civic bodies support and develop human freedom and only in these forms is it possible gradually to overcome the excessively enlarged and ill-functioning relics of the former totalitarian state.

We are convinced that these organisations, spontaneously created by citizens (ie. from below), can cultivate a responsible search for consensus on basic questions of social life in multifarious dialogue. Civil society involves many groups in which people work voluntarily for various aspects of common welfare. We appreciate the effort of many of our fellow citizens who build these structures of civil society.

We are aware of the fact that the basic condition for creating civil society is not financial but people's inner conviction that human dignity involves taking care of themselves and others rather than expecting help from elsewhere. In the spirit of the traditional links between the Churches and civil society structures we offer our support and cooperation to all people of goodwill.

### **31. Education towards legal consciousness and responsibility cultivates legal order**

From the period of the Communist regime we have inherited a weakened awareness of personal responsibility. The Communist state with its totalitarian and paternalistic features emphasised the collective; even property belonged to all and to nobody, everybody and nobody was responsible at the same time. Now we live in freedom which is not sufficiently balanced by individual responsibility. We still require state paternalism and ask for the state multilateral care, but we omit to act responsibly and to demand adequate responsibility even from those who misbehave.

As citizens of the post-socialist era we still have not yet matured fully. It is our task to grow towards deeper legal consciousness and the ability of accepting civic and political responsibility for public affairs. It will be a long and hard journey, but we must take it. The cultivation of civic virtues, personal responsibility and legal consciousness is one of the ways leading to a renewal of the rule of law and flourishing civil society. We all experience a deficit of leading personalities in politics and the economy. Neither of the totalitarian regimes we had to go through permitted the selection and growth of leading personalities in principle, and even purposefully liquidated potential leaders. We call on our parishes, congregations and communities to create conditions for the growth of educated and morally strong personalities, people engaged in social life, open and tolerant, able to reflect on and actively influence social life. A spiritual rootedness in God is the basis of such life orientation in which responsibility for personal and social life has priority.

### **32. The international and European law contributes to a renewal of order at home**

The question of whether the international law or the European Union law has a priority over the law of a national state has been a subject of disputes among experts as well as politicians. It is part of a broader problem of the weakened or limited sovereignty of nation states at the end of the 20th century, especially in connection with the ongoing process of European economic integration and globalisation of the world economy. In the Czech Republic this controversial point is particularly important in connection with preparation for European Union membership, which includes harmonisation of our laws with the EU. We hear political arguments evoking national sovereignty and patriotism as values which express our national interests. Christian Churches value highly national interests and patriotism as essential values. However, at the same time we warn against possible misuse of these values by nationalism, racial hatred and narrow group interests. The interests of his/her national community naturally guides every responsible politician also in the coming-together Europe. However, the values of patriotism and national feeling must not be misused to cover insufficient professionalism and failures in the ethics of enterprise. We also

remember good examples of well professionally managed and successful firms owned by foreign companies contributing to the welfare of our community.

In our situation of a weakened legal conscience we have to welcome the external pressure from the European Union and international judicial and financial institutions to harmonise our law with standard norms of civilised countries as a desirable aid in the complex and prolonged renewal of legal order. We warn against populism which might misuse national feelings in favour of interest groups which would prefer arbitrariness to the rule of law, even at the cost of our country remaining outside European community.

### **33. Subsidiarity and solidarity serving to the common good**

The principle of *subsidiarity* is one of the pillars of Christian social teaching which we proclaim. It means that every level in the hierarchy of social life: individual – family – municipality or parish – region – country – state – (and eventually) international community, should act, as much as possible, autonomously and responsibly at its own level decision making and ask for help from the higher level only if it has insufficient power to solve a particular task. Then there is a need for *solidarity* which is the second central pillar of Christian social teaching. Subsidiarity and solidarity are mutually interlinked. Only if they are balanced, can the common good be fulfilled.

As an inheritance of the past in our country, the respective demands of subsidiarity and solidarity are not well balanced. The principle of subsidiarity is not understood and applied, the inheritance of the paternalist state has not been overcome yet. At the same time solidarity needs to be further developed. However the rising wave of solidarity during the recent disastrous floods showed that there are still many great-hearted people. The effort to develop responsibility, which respects the principle of subsidiarity, must go hand in hand with the development of solidarity in minds and action. These are the tasks to which are called not only Christians of all denominations, but also all people of goodwill, whom their consciences tell that it is good.

### **34. Democracy without values easily degenerates into totalitarianism**

Christian social teaching builds on the experience of mankind with historical forms of sociopolitical setup, including our recent experience with 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. The experience shows that *parliamentary democracy* is the least bad of all possible (and imperfect) solutions. This is why the Churches fully support democracy. The rule of the majority, based on the equality of all people, their freedom and the free development of civic and human virtues in every individual, belong to values to the 'invention' of which Christianity has contributed. They include the recognition of the rights of minorities and rejection of any form of racism.

However parliamentary democracy – especially in its purely formal version – cannot be regarded as absolute. Even this form of sociopolitical and constitutional arrangement has its drawbacks and limits. First of all, democracy does not rely on the *majority* principle alone. Even a majority can be wrong. Hence the role of those who have the gift of recognising the signs of the times is important and much depends on the values which the majority learn in free dialogue, in listening to each other and mutual sharing. If society lacks such values, there is a danger that parliamentary democracy will turn into an empty form under which dictatorship of the economic and media power may hide.

The experience of other countries also shows that it is wise and prudent to incorporate safety checks into the constitutional system in the form of a well-thought-out division of power and well-balanced powers of the second house of parliament and the head of state. However, the most important thing is to understand that democracy lives on values which responsible citizens draw from spiritual sources and traditions, thus legitimising laws and supporting steps made by political institutions.

### **35. Christian duty is to get involved in civic and political life**

The strength of a democratic state rests on citizens who gladly and willingly accept responsibility for themselves, their families, society and the state in which they live. The possibility to live in freedom and take part in public affairs is a great gift, but also a commitment. Politics is not only a struggle for power, but also service to people, it is an art and

an opportunity for brave, high-principled, truthful and incorruptible people.

It is a great encouragement and promise for the future that at local, municipal and regional levels, where the emphasis is on concrete service to concrete people, many upright politicians and public officials have already appeared, who are willing to work selflessly for the benefit of their fellow citizens. In the future they may grow into personalities, embodying the ideals of honesty and personal morality, more of which our politics need at the national level.

## **VI. THE MODERNISATION OF THE ECONOMY: MAN IN THE WORLD OF WORK**

### **36. An entrepreneur is an organiser, coordinator and creator**

One of the leading strategic ideas of the Czech way of economic transformation was the principle 'first privatise, than restructure'. This principle was fulfilled only partly, only in the privatisation stories with a happy ending. They include successful strategic alliances with foreign investors, who came not only with the necessary capital but also with experience, know-how and new ideas. They also include some successful restitution stories and a number of small green field companies, mainly where new owners understood their role and accepted it with responsibility. Christian social teaching dignifies and highly appreciates the role of the entrepreneur in the modern market economy as a leading personality in the world of work. In all the privatisation success stories the role of private ownership, as well as the right meaning of privatisation and reasons for it, were understood well.

### **37. Privatisation for mere personal enrichment was not a solution**

Unfortunately, in a relatively large section of the economy only the first half of the principle of 'first privatise, then restructure' was realised. Restructuring and modernisation requires know-how and capital, both of which were lacking in our country. In such a situation even the best

intentions were not enough. Sometimes the very conditions of privatisation ruled out the fulfilment of the second half of the strategic principle. This happened mainly in cases of privatisation based on credit; the privatised company was burdened with high amortisation payments, which drained off funds necessary for modernisation and development. When signing such credit contracts, both sides – the bank and the buyer of the privatised company – often knew that the loan would never be paid. Such privatisation was based on an erroneous ideology of privatising for the sake of it; it continued the stereotypes of behaviour which both sides had learned during the times of 'real socialism'. Then it was only a small step towards 'tunnelling' which often included corruption even by government and bank officials. We emphasise that such behaviour is immoral and deserves condemnation. Companies that were tunneled out were turned into the empty shells of the devalued company's material and human assets. These were probably the most serious damages suffered in the course of transformation when teams of experts, networks of creative cooperation, and teams of experienced workers in companies broke down, and only outdated production facilities remained.

Negative patterns of behaviour also included dubious aims and activities of some foreign firms (as distinct from the contribution of foreign investors already appreciated above). There have been entrepreneurs who ruined a domestic company only in order to occupy the market and destroy competitors, or those who drained off profits from a domestic subsidiary in the form of 'tax optimisation' and intentionally keep the domestic company dependent on the research and development of the foreign parent company. Such behaviour deserves equal condemnation as the above-criticised practices of new domestic owners and managers.

### **38. A high unemployment rate is a social evil – the creation of new jobs is praiseworthy**

Our society has been suffering from the social evil of unemployment for a long time. Though it is obvious that the demanding changes in companies cannot do without requalification, workers' transition into different professions, and their willingness to adjust to the unavoidable pressure of market competition, it is necessary to keep in mind that

unemployment remains a heavy burden both for individuals and society; it remains an evil. Hence it is a primary duty of all employers, trade unions, public administration and civil service bodies and employees themselves to seek accessible ways of reducing unemployment. Arguments that are sometimes put forward in favour of unemployment – that it increases so called flexibility of the labour market – neglect the qualification structure of demand for labour.

One of mankind's goals is man's personal development and the use of his or her skills to the benefit of his own family and society. Work for him is a source of means, through which he or she achieves these goals. If work is denied to him even if he wants to work, he is pushed to the fringe of society and deprived of social recognition. Thus his or her human dignity suffers. (6)

Unemployment causes deep psychic and social damage. Man feels uprooted from society, a feeling of complete insignificance may overwhelm him. It leads to problems with free time, debts etc; a marriages crisis often develops and families may break up. But there are also consequences that afflict the whole of society: hatred towards foreigners, right-wing and left-wing radicalism, crime. Financial assistance provided by the state can hardly compensate for personal and social injuries. They may end up in tragedies, which sometimes occur in cases of long-term or permanent unemployment. Young people who fail to find a job after finishing school cannot form work habits, they get used to living on social benefits and often slip into drug taking and crime.

If unemployment already exists, it is praiseworthy to create projects of support, state or municipal ones, and support counselling institutions and clubs aimed at helping affected people. Even entirely new ways and possibilities of dignified activities for unemployed fellow citizens *outside the market framework* need to be found.

Long term unemployment should become a prime subject of concern. Here programmes of public work are more important than social assistance; supporting jobs is more important than supporting unemployment. Special attention should be paid to the problems of youth unemployment.

It is good to 'have a job' and work faithfully as an employee. However independent entrepreneurial activity gives greater freedom and it is praiseworthy to create jobs for others. A shortage of jobs is caused

by insufficient support for preparatory or early stages of entrepreneurial ventures and investment projects. The creation of one worker vacancy costs from a quarter of million up to one million crowns in investment on average. It is not only a matter of capital – apart from large scale problem cases involving the employment of thousands of employees. However the capital sector does not find enough promising, trustworthy investment projects in the Czech Republic; this applies both to Czech and foreign banks. Communication between industrial entrepreneurs and banks depends on the climate of *confidence* which cannot be established when financial discipline has broken down. The creation of new jobs would certainly be helped by easier enforceability of the law in the economy and better conditions for enterprise, including standard business *ethics*.

Another social evil is withholding wages and salaries from employees. The Israeli people of the Old Testament considered a withheld wage as the most serious sin which under the burden of injustice cried up to God. In our conditions this phenomenon is even more serious since the salaries and bonuses of managers often depart from business development and their merit. Again we emphasise that such behaviour is immoral and has to be condemned. Entrepreneurs and managers who exploit their fellow citizens, by their anti-social behaviour raise social tension in the country; this plays into the hands of those who call for the return of the old order. Social and economic ills endanger the very existence of parliamentary democracy. However we declare with emphasis that Christian social ethics does not one-sidedly favour employees: those who do not keep working hours and basic discipline at work, those who do not work faithfully also act immorally and by their behaviour harm and even endanger the existence of their employer and his or her business. Also here, in work discipline, in the morals of workers and employees, we have to overcome the negative inheritance from 'real socialism' and the ideology of class envy and hatred.

### **39. The Christian Churches are on the side of those who are pushed to the fringe of society**

The Churches sympathise and support those who suffer from social injustices, who are pushed to the fringes of society, who become victims

of an ill-functioning political and economic order. Growing numbers of people without work, homeless people surviving under destitute conditions, and overcrowded prisons, are evidence of an ill society. Social work and charity has always been an area in which a Christian can prove his or her love of his neighbours and also find a deep meaning of life for himself. Church charity organisations seek – according to their means, finances and strength – to improve the negative effects of transformation by selfless social work. We want to thank all who work in these organisations. We are aware that the social work of the church is not sufficient. In this sense there will never be enough people willing to serve because 'you will always have poor people around you' (Mt 26,11). This statement should not discourage us but rather challenge us always to be attentive to the needs of the weak.

Christian social teaching appreciates the acts of mercy and solidarity. At the same time it is aware of the fact that charity on its own is not sufficient. It is necessary to reform institutions and rectify steps leading to these serious problems. And it is also necessary to uncover wrong ideologies the social structures which generate such evil.

Christianity cannot give up seeking social justice. It cannot become reconciled with the fact that groups of people enjoy unjustified privileges, while others are discriminated against. We are witnessing inequality between state, municipal, private and church organisations and institutions. Also relations between towns and the countryside have been strained. The list of the weak in our society includes the old and the ill and families with many children.

Unemployment divides society, which reminds the Czech people of the class division of a past era. Class struggle and class hatred were often the fundamental cause of the totalitarian system. It is our duty to warn that unemployment can in the future become a fuse for social disturbance; a democratic society cannot live in peace if unemployment is to become a permanent phenomenon.

#### **40. The postponement of necessary changes in companies has brought about high social costs**

It is the responsibility of the state to execute law and justice in society. However, the state often and in many respects does not fulfil this duty: in the transformation period its legislative function failed and

its executive power did not cope with the privatisation of a number of companies, banks and other financial institutions. As a result of past failures our legislation still does not sufficiently protect law-abiding owners from the dishonest ones, creditors from debtors, and employees from irresponsible employers. Shortcomings in the legislative sphere need to be removed quickly. A great help will be an integral and fully functional bankruptcy law: it will help solve quickly the situation in companies which their owners and managers were not able to keep alive. Companies need to get into the hands of such owners and managers whose professionalism and competence will give hope for a revival and maintenance of jobs. A number of trade union leaders appear to have the same opinion in this matter.

#### **41. Trade unions are a legitimate part of society**

Christian social teaching considers as fully legitimate the employees' right to associate in trade unions and employees' and professional associations. Also it is legitimate to defend the justified interests of employees in negotiations with employers or the state. The existence of disputes and potential sources of conflict in the economy is natural, particularly in the current period of transformation. In contrast to Marxist ideology, which regarded employment relations as involving class antagonism and class struggle, Christian social teaching prefers social partnership of all the sides involved: the employees, trade union members and those outside unions, employers – owners and managers. The huge task of transformation requires striving for social peace and collective bargaining aimed at reaching an agreement.

The 'tripartite' framework, which comprises representatives of employers, employees and the government, can help to solve conflicts peacefully. It requires mutual respect on all sides and respect for the very idea of such bargaining. (7)

Hand in hand with the transformation of industrial society and a transition to a new, 'information society', the role of trade unions is changing. A necessity is arising to replace the present forms of organisation in trade unions with new forms which would better correspond to the new demands. It appears that employees will no longer have to be at the company premises because they will be able to do the work at home. The solution would seem to combine a

representation of employees at the companies – also recommended by the European Union – and organising professional associations outside the company, for professions of all kinds, for both qualified people and workers without a specific qualification. Only in this way will it be possible to stand up to the growing competition on a global scale and, at the same time, through legal protection to guarantee a dignified life for employees. The importance of the role of unions as qualified advisors and defenders of employees in labour disputes, in questions of labour safety and other issues, is growing.

#### **42. The democratic culture of work is an alternative and an economic challenge**

The demand for respecting human values and dignity in the world of work is not limited to participation in trade unions. In advanced societies people's skills are the main source of wealth. Such terms as *information society* or *knowledge society* have been used. An effective utilisation of all 'talents' given to man or woman is conditional on active interests, and the motivation of the employee. This can be achieved through participation of employees in management and administration of their companies, sometimes in the form of co-ownership.

Even in this sphere of culture of work many crude omissions, faults and even fundamental mistakes occurred in the transformation period. As a result of loose discipline at work inherited from the years of 'real socialism' some of the new owners understood the need for discipline in the spirit of the slogan: 'the manager thinks and the worker passively performs his orders'. Such a system – in a way resembling *Taylorism* and *Fordism* of the beginning of the 20th century – does not make use of the talents and creative skills of employees. Man's place at work is extremely important: it is not possible to reduce him or her only to 'labour force'. The employer has to accept the employee as the whole person. The Churches in particular uphold the marginal 'fragile' groups of handicapped and disabled people, and all who in spite of all efforts cannot stand up to hard competition. These people particularly need help so that they can integrate into society and do not feel excluded and desolated.

It is necessary to create such a culture of work which incorporates the personal motivation of employees which should come close to a kind

of a 'spiritual ownership'. At the same time it is necessary to consider actual co-ownership of companies by their employees. Generally it holds that democratic mechanisms of control, in whatever form, are more effective than external control. A link between democratic elements in the production process and democratic forms of administration of public affairs strengthens trust in democracy in the whole of society.

Regarding the future, competition pressures exerted by the global world economy and an integrating Europe into the emerging information society of the 21st century will lead to the necessity for a life-long education. *In the transformation period the importance of science, research and development was underestimated, but in the future this sphere will be decisive for the economic prosperity of the country.* It is an urgent challenge. Life-long education is the only alternative to the threat of the continuing retardation of our country and sliding into the margins of civilisation. Our good name as an advanced country of Central Europe obliges us not to neglect this challenge.

## **VII. HUMANE ECOLOGY: MAN AS A KEEPER OF NATURE AND OF THE WHOLE CREATION**

#### **43. Man is a part of the created world**

Mankind in every generation is a part of the planetary ecosystem. This reality, expressed in the introductory chapters of the biblical message, is often neglected in historical, political, social and economic reflections. The Christian view emphasises respect for creation. Social-economic systems, too, are rooted in the world of nature; they influence it and, at the same time, are influenced by it. Hence humanity must exercise caution in its economic activities and responsibly think through the impact which this activity can have on nature and the environment.

It has been frequently suggested in this context that instead of permanent economic growth it is necessary to establish a dynamic

balance between population numbers and a form of sustainable economic development, which would secure the adequate needs of the planet's inhabitants.

#### **44. Europe is growing old and the population dying off but it still has increasing demands on consumption**

We can say in a somewhat simplified way that the population grows in countries in which consumption is not growing while consumption grows in countries in which the population is not growing. There are positive exceptions, such as Ireland, where both the population and consumption are growing, but also negative cases, such as some post-Soviet countries, in which both the population and consumption are decreasing.

This development is unbalanced and not permanently sustainable. In this sense the Czech Republic is part of Europe. We are growing old and without immigrants we are dying out. But our consumption demands are increasing all the time. The idea of permanent economic growth in terms of material wealth and consumption is typical of the Euro-American civilisation. An economic system stemming from man's desire to have more and more brings about growing production. As a result we face the exhaustion of non-renewable natural resources and the increasing pollution of nature. Over the past ten years the state of the environment in our country has improved in many respects, but the global danger has remained.

The Christian view is based on an understanding that all natural resources are precious gifts from God destined for all people; not only for our generation but also for generations that will come after us. A thoughtful approach towards the environment and frugality in material consumption belong to the basic elements of environmental ethics.

#### **45. Challenges and problems of globalisation**

Globalisation, as a development tendency of the world economy, politics and culture, is a source of many hopes and fears. It has been accelerating due to political changes and technological development. The desire to create a world order and a system of cooperation is not

new and in principle flows from the basic mission of Christianity. We can trace its various expressions and forms during the past 2000 years, from the Roman Empire to the United Nations. Pope John Paul II says about the globalisation of the world economy the following: "Today we are facing the so-called 'globalisation' of the economy, a phenomenon which is not to be dismissed, since it can create unusual opportunities for greater prosperity. There is a growing feeling, however, that this increasing internationalisation of the economy ought to be accompanied by effective international agencies which will oversee and direct the economy to the common good, something that an individual state, even if it were the most powerful nation on earth, would not be in a position to do. In order to achieve this result, it is necessary that there be increased coordination among the more powerful countries, and that in international agencies the interests of the whole human family be equally represented. It is also necessary that in evaluating the consequences of their decisions, these agencies always give sufficient consideration to peoples and countries which have little weight in the international market, but which are burdened by the most acute and desperate needs, and are thus more dependent on support for their development. Much remains to be done in this area." (Centesimus annus, 58). For us Christians globalisation means not only a danger but also a certain hope and challenge: we cannot remain mere spectators, but we must try to face its risks and put its potential benefits into practice. Hence we must understand the changes it brings and learn about the factors which operate in it. This is why Christian Churches and institutes already study these issues. Information, knowledge of facts and contexts are the best defence against the propaganda of extremist groups. During the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Prague we could see for ourselves that violence, vandalism and the stirring up of hatred does not solve anything.

Our preparations for our accession to the European Union can also be understood as a step towards responsible globalisation in a democratic way. Globalisation processes are sometimes wrongly reduced only to their economic dimension only. The current form of globalisation brings with itself certain dangers in the sphere of culture: abandonment of traditions, endangerment of national cultures, fragmentation of the world, and uprootedness from the local community and its cultural, spiritual and social network. These factors can increase

the crisis of identity even in its national dimension and speed up a break up of the system of values, including morals. Man's rootedness in Christianity is the most secure way of facing these dangers.

**46. 'Real socialism' was a less successful and not an environmentally-friendly variant of development**

'Scientific Communism', as an atheist ideology, considered man to be the master of history. It proclaimed that mankind had its fate in its hand and that it would build a paradise on Earth. Promises of a future age of abundance in terms of material consumption contrasted with the low economic effectiveness of the Communist system. The concept of socialist industrialisation with the goals first to 'catch up and overtake' and then to distribute 'to everybody according to their needs' was only a more vulgar and less successful variant of a discredited (and we stress this!) Enlightenment idea about permanent progress. Owing to the discrepancy between the aspirations and the possibilities, the growth of consumption in an ineffective system was often sought at the cost of the environment. The socialist economy did not even have mechanisms which would allow it to assess natural resources objectively. Consequently the ongoing devastation of water, air, trees, soil and nature in general was economically invisible. Also the effect on the health of the population showed up with a delayed impact. Only after some years the level of consumption (with which we were dissatisfied) turned out to have been achieved only at the cost of environmental damage and gross inter-generation injustice; everything will be paid for by our children in the future.

**47. Economic transformation has already partly redressed the damage caused to the environment. However increasing transport by road is becoming an environmental threat**

A loss of eastern markets, changes in the industrial structure, an overall decrease in economic activities in the sectors which were particularly damaging nature with air pollution, and the decreasing agricultural production, all this on its own lowered the rate of pollution of our environment. Though we often complain about the decrease and restriction of production it turned out to have its positive side.

However in the 1990s a significant purposeful effort was directed towards the improvement of the environment. With the support of the European Union, and also from the proceeds of privatisation, many useful environmental projects were carried out (the establishment of desulphurisation facilities, sewage disposal plants and eco-friendly methods of production). It is necessary to continue in this way and bring our standard up to the level of Western countries. It would not be wise to save on investment in environmental protection and improvement.

The countryside is particularly valuable. An intimate relation with the world of nature helps to cultivate the human soul. Measures supporting the maintenance of the cultural character of the landscape as well as those countering the depopulation of the countryside belong to the primary tasks of civilised politics.

Also in our country industrial activity and related consumption habits continue to overburden the environment. Hence it is necessary to seriously consider an introduction of 'environmental taxes' with the aim to include into the user cost of road transport and other nature polluting activities the full costs of their negative environmental impact. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would most likely be different if it incorporated various kinds of these external costs which, at present, have to be born by citizens, while they remain 'invisible' for business calculations.

**48. The preservation and improvement of the environment as a source of new jobs**

New branches of industry and new services aimed at preserving and maintaining the environment are emerging at present; they include sorting, liquidation and recycling of waste, air filtration and containing exhaust fumes, water revitalisation, and recultivation of degraded farming land. Environmental taxes have been a well tested tool in other countries; they penalise pollution and, at the same time, create financial sources for remedial measures. Such programmes which stimulate related research and development, can also alleviate unemployment since a great deal of this work can be done by less qualified workers.

However economic restructuring, which would help to save the environment, also requires a change in the way of thinking of consumers, including politicians. It is dismaying that proposals

submitted by environmental experts in our country are still seen as a 'disruptive campaign'. It appears that even in the struggle for a healthy environment we need what we call a 'conversion'. The champion and agent of such an 'ecological conversion' can be only a responsible citizen. Also the Churches have their irreplaceable role in environmental education, to which they are led by a number of biblical impulses.

#### **49. The economy of voluntary frugality, and the culture of service and giving**

The economy, as a substantial part of human activities, cannot develop without involving respect for man in his or her inner substance, that is, as a person created in the image of God, who is One and in the Trinity. This reality is the basis of the fact that human nature is relational. The basis of human existence is 'to be for somebody', to be in a relationship with somebody with the aim to seek unity among people, the ideal model of which is given in God.

On the journey towards new environmental ethics, towards a culture of service and solidarity of sharing, it is necessary in time, but voluntarily, to adopt a new system of values in which we abandon the exclusive emphasis on quantitative, material growth. Instead, the quality of life aiming towards spiritual values and transcendence would be accorded priority. Such a new system of values would be able to support a sustainable economic development. Also it would be congenial towards a number of other values: the quality of the environment, health, friendship, strong families, associations of common interest and meaningful service for fellow citizens.

The New Testament, in particular the example of Jesus's life and his commandment of love, exemplifies this system of values. We can draw inspiration for environmentally friendly behaviour, as well as for a search for a new quality of human life from it. 'For man is the source, the centre, and the purpose of all economic and social life.' (Gaudium et spes, 63). At the same time man is also 'homo religiosus' or man with a relationship with God and his neighbour. This is why economic relations cannot be deprived of their religious content. On the contrary, only in a religious context can they find their full meaning.

One of the remarkable personalities and examples worth following is St. Francis of Assisi, the apostle of poverty, voluntary modesty and love

for all living, as well as for inanimate creatures. We hope that 'peace and good' will rule on our sister – mother Earth – only if humility and voluntary frugality germinates in our hearts. In our country the idea of voluntary frugality was put forward by the last federal minister of environment, Josef Vavrousek, before his tragic death. His personality may be a source of inspiration for us Christians.

## **VIII. THE FAMILY, EDUCATION SYSTEM AND PUBLIC MEDIA**

#### **50. The family is in serious danger**

Family life is going through many serious changes at present. First of all various pressures, which undermine and weaken the family, are growing. Undoubtedly this situation is connected with the disruption of moral standards and society's system of values. Also financial burdens on families harms the relations among married couples as well as between parents and their children. Responsibilities at work bring about further complications, including problems with finding common free time. As a consequence, married couples tend to have fewer children and the number of couples who live together without having children, and without having been married, is growing. After the general devastation of the whole region, caused by Nazism and Communism, our country went through a rapid precipitating reversal, which created a completely new situation in the economic, political and social spheres. However it was not accompanied by a deeper assessment of spiritual and moral roots. Moreover, there are also purely contemporary sources of danger. The rules of free competition favour those who invest little or nothing in families and handicap those who give generously, for example by having more children. Even in this respect we live at the expense of our children. A marriage is very fragile, easily vulnerable.

We are aware of the unfavourable situation for marriage and the family in our society. Relations within marriages and families are increasingly insecure and vulnerable. The most compelling expression of today's crisis is the couple's unwillingness to decide for an exclusive

wedlock and its faithful continuation for the whole of life. But only in such wedlock can men and women find the deepest human happiness. And only in such wedlock is it possible to educate children that are healthy, not only physically but also mentally, and secure good conditions for the development of their intelligence, character and specific talents. Christians and the Churches underline the dignity and holiness of matrimony.

Whatever deep changes the family has undergone during the development of culture, its mission lasts. The family is the basic cell in which the consciousness of personal, civic and national identity is formed and continued. It provides space for the co-existence of generations and for the acquisition of experience which is necessary for forming attitudes in society. In a family we also learn to understand the past of a wider range of relatives, as well as of the community, into which we belong as citizens. Learning and accepting the live-supporting moral and spiritual traditions, which we receive from our predecessors, contributes to the growth of responsible humanity and citizenship. Christian values strengthen these roots. Research in the Czech army has revealed that mainly religious soldiers are willing to sacrifice their lives in the defence of their country.

In comparison with the family of the past, today's family is less cohesive. This is highly demanding for harmony in personal relations, tolerance, respect, trust and intensive communication in marriage and family. In today's marriage the independence of the woman has come to the fore much more than in the past. It allows the woman to develop her individual features and specific gifts, which enrich the marriage and the family. Opportunities for women in qualified professions and various spheres of public life have been considerably extended. The idea that the work concerns mainly men and the family concerns mainly women is not justified. It is up to men to realise their new roles which they are to take up in a modern marriage. An increasing flexibility of roles and equality in partnership contributes to creating better relations in family life.

However these changes should not weaken the irreplaceable role and calling of the woman-mother and a responsible father in the family. Education for motherhood and responsible fatherhood with full participation in the education of children are the task of many social

institutions, but mainly of the family itself. Parents educate their children mainly by the example of their own life.

The independence of today's children is demanding on the cultural standard of the emotional life of married couples and the harmony of their views; marriage and the family provide a shelter against the disintegrative pressures of life in modern society. It protects its members against anonymity and desolation. It may provide today's man and woman with an experience of home and safety, and a sense of life's roots. Both our past and today's experience show that the family meets these demands better if family life is sanctified by faith. In it we can grow together, both the parents and children, towards genuine humanity. The family living-together is the richer, the deeper are the bonds linking the members in mutual service, listening and sharing. A marriage built on God's moral order gives hope that the children will learn the basic moral principles for their own life. Though as Christians we highlight the importance of the family, we have not yet made sufficient effort in practice to support institutions, which protect the family and support its development. We should also organise permanent education in the Churches, both for families and the clergy, on the problems of the contemporary family and invite lay experts to participate in it. Let us look for effective forms, let us learn to communicate our experience, let us recommend suitable literature and let us not save money. It is the best investment in the future of our Churches and our national community.

## **51. Society should create conditions for the stability of the family**

The family and the economic system complement and condition each other. The world of work and business has not been friendly towards family life. It should be adjusted more to its needs. A true harmonisation of employment with family responsibilities requires that both activities are justly appreciated from a social point of view and that neither one nor the other are perceived as subordinate. Work and care of the family should be socially recognised, and this recognition should show in its financial evaluation. Employment should not be preferred above family life in economic terms. Parents who devote more time to their children and, therefore, work only part-time, must not be discriminated against in the social security system (especially with respect to pensions). Their chances of getting another job also need to be improved. Child and

education benefits should be such that having children ceases to be one of the main reasons of poverty. Four or five children in a family appear to be the optimum number for the system of social education. However, families with more children are still the most socially disadvantaged group in our country.

For young families as well as for elderly and the socially disadvantaged the problem of housing is of special importance. The tools ensuring new and adequate housing are insufficient at present and social policy lacks sensitivity and the goodwill to take measures which would go beyond market criteria. The fact that every social system can be abused should not be a reason for giving up the effort to create social conditions for the stability of family.

#### **52. A renewal of society begins in the family – the contribution of the family to education**

In the above sense the family is irreplaceable for the formation and development of personal relations, for the growth of personality, for experiencing freedom and its limits, for accepting responsibility and the feelings of protection, fidelity, mercy and love. Family co-existence and communication and the mutual exchange of gifts are priceless cultural values. It is here where the renewal of society starts. In faith these values are sanctified, completed and brought to fullness. The symbol of the Holy Family plays a significant role in Christian devotion.

The formation of child's personality in the family is a cultural achievement; it forms a basis of education. Education at school organically follows the family formation. Both spheres are a workshop of humanity (8) and, besides skills, knowledge and other abilities, we should learn to understand life in its entirety in them. Specialised education, though it is necessary, is not enough. We have to widen it unless we want to have a narrow specialised idea of life. It would involve the ability to see beyond the boundaries of one's field and the ability to accept even what is 'strange'. This is true not only about various fields of education. The challenge for us to be open is addressed to our families, both the adults and children, also by the presence of minorities, opinion, ethnic and national ones. In this sense the family and school have to be a *workshop of humanity*, '*officina humanitatis*', in agreement with the ideas of Jan Amos Komensky.

#### **53. Consequences of a loss of the integrating role of Christianity in culture**

The Christian conception of education influenced the foundations of European culture during its long history. In this conception, man's personality is formed in the light of learning the meaning of things and life (Jan Amos Komensky). It involves not only providing knowledge, understood as an accumulation of information, but also an improvement of man and his and her responsible participation in the creation of the world. It is necessary to warn against educating the reason without educating the heart. No matter how educated an expert is, what help can he provide if, at the same time, he is a master of lies and hypocrisy? Only an educated personality, firmly rooted in morals, can contribute to society.

The former regime of 'real socialism', following its ideology, wanted to exclude Christianity from culture. Even today Christian faith is not always considered as an integrating foundation of culture. The functionality of education is assessed according to how it satisfies individual needs. This fragmentary, specialised, instrumental and technology-orientated education prepares people for social roles, and it has become a way towards making oneself useful in society, achieving success and power. In this form it creates a certain philosophy of life which prefers narrowly understood secular values and norms. An education system orientated in this way contributes in its consequences to a disintegration of culture.

#### **54. A serious task of education is to renew the Christian spirit of culture**

We face the task of bringing back to contemporary education those values which would help to overcome the above-mentioned shortcomings. We are convinced that inspiring motives for increasing the quality of education can be found in the best Christian traditions, the characteristic features of which are tolerance, emphasis on a universal understanding of human mission, fidelity to truth, and a sense of justice and the common good.

Education inspired by Christianity overcomes instrumentalistic one-sidedness. It understands education as a cultural asset which human beings receive not only to find their place on the labour market. All

education is at the same time the enrichment of the individual, deepening the understanding his or her life purpose or mission, and a help for more effective service to others and the community. We also realise that 'knowledge puffs up, but love builds up' (1 Cor 8,1). Besides the cognitive part and its moral basis Christian faith also cultivates memory; it helps an individual to understand history better and to develop an intimate relation towards culture. It even stimulates imagination, which helps the individual to look ahead with an open mind, not to fear the future, work on a positive vision of the world of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

### **55. Education cannot be subordinated just to practical concerns**

We earnestly plead for *education to become a social priority*. In emphasising this we share the views of those who formed the soul of Czech society in the period of our 'national revival' and in the second-half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

They underlined what they were convinced was one of the fundamental features of our history. If education helps a small nation to compete with more powerful (in terms of numbers and resources) nations in the period of the new information civilisation, which we see developing at present, it is necessary to provide education with *adequate financial resources*.

We have said that the prevailing ideological orientation of our society after 1989 first led to the reduction of education to a commodity and to its market application. At the same time there was a tendency to weaken the commitments of the state in the education sector. The argument that there is still a lack of money for education cannot stand, especially now that funds earmarked for education make up only a fraction of the sums wasted and stolen in industry and banking. Considering the key importance of education in the era of the 'information' or 'learning' society, such a policy endangers the future prosperity of the nation. The cultivation of reason and morality is a *social investment offering the best prospects for the future*. We have already learned that one of the consequences of lack of the social capital of 'reason and morality' is an inefficient economy.

Higher schools and universities have often abandoned humanistic ideals, on which traditionally they were founded and succumbed to

purely financial concerns. They are often forced to this by the strict funding policy of the state bureaucracy. Then they are more concerned about meeting the demands of the market and industrial and political management than about freedom of research. Today educated specialists are only rarely educated in the classical sense of the word. Engineers, managers and scientists are often educated only in their narrow field and lack a deeper humanistic awareness. We face the task of preventing the disintegration of education under the pressure of the market and narrow profit criteria.

If the functionality of education is derived exclusively from the demands of the market, it may be forgotten that, in the end, only *education* can help to reveal whether the demands of the market on education in five or ten years are the same as today. The market is blind in this matter; it cannot know what *education it will need in the future generation*. Therefore the deepest possible and as universal as possible an education is the best protection against the caprice of the market.

Developments since 1989 have its indisputably positive sides. Primarily, they include the renewal of academic freedoms, and the right to use various philosophical and religious precepts in teaching, education and scientific research. This is a priceless asset after half a century of lack of freedom. Elementary education will remain under state control even in the future. It is therefore important to support the spirit of cooperation between the Churches and the state. Church grammar schools and other secondary schools should seek high quality and at the same time maintain a democratic approach; they prepare intellectuals whom we need for the education of pedagogues, journalists, social workers and other needed professions.

### **56. Life-long education and the education of adults is necessary**

Education of the youth and adults in their *free time* is a great opportunity for Christian associations within the civil society framework. Adult education is necessary in our permanently changing world, and it should be supported both by the state and the Churches. If inspired by Christianity, it opens understanding for culture in general and particularly for its Christian elements. School education in social and health care, aimed at the preparation of workers for the Catholic

charity and Christian deaconate on a broad ecumenical basis today, is of great importance.

Many gaps in education have been both inherited from the past and created recently. They include themes such as the relationship between science and faith, morals and the economy, the moral impact of technology, the relation between the church and politics and so on. Particularly important is the task of deepening the awareness of European unity, cooperating on what is called the 'soul of Europe'. The Churches must support and extend the structure of out-of-school educational institutions, such as the Czech Christian Academy, the Moravian-Silesian Christian Academy, the diocesan centre for spreading Christian social teaching and other charitable organisations involved in education, such as YMCA, the Academic YMCA and others.

### **57. The power of the media in current society: what is expected from them**

The mass media are a wonderful invention. They can help us to learn about and understand the world, to gain the ability of assessing various phenomena. However the communications by the media should be first of all understood as a process of creating a community with others and a way of deepening mutual understanding. The meaning of this communication should be a search for those values in human life which go beyond its basic framework. We do not live just from one day to another!

The Churches consider the media as a platform on which a dialogue with today's world should be held. The less space they have for a dialogue with society, the more assiduously they should see to it that their voices penetrate to listeners and readers and raise their interest for such a dialogue. This creates demands on the ethics, cultural horizon and spiritual quality of all who work in the sphere of the media.

The arrival of new media – computers and the internet – has extended the possibility of mediating information and culture in an unprecedented manner. At the same time it increases demands on the ability of the public to sort out directions for their lives. A great deal of the media's contents has a positive and cultivated form. On the whole however, their formative influence on the development of character for most of their viewers and listeners is generally weak or problematic.

Christians do not cope better than any others. The main problem is the wrong and irresponsible selection of information. It is connected with shortcomings in education; we should choose programmes carefully. When watching them or listening to them we should follow the voice of conscience and good taste. Parents have a special responsibility for their children in this respect. They should be able to talk with them about what they have read, seen or listened to together. If we work in the media, we should avoid deception, emptiness and flattery and must not let ourselves become enslaved by political or economic pressures.

### **58. The danger of abuse of the mass media**

In their current form the media mostly do not make it easier to see our way to a truthful knowledge of the world. An abundance of superfluous information, ambiguous and problematic values, fragmentary and sound bite vision of the world weaken our sense of context and the ability to distinguish fundamentals. All are talking and nobody listens. The following words from the Gospel of Matthew are fitting here: 'On the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter' (Mt 12.36).

Wisdom is incompatible with information from all over the world. Technical possibilities of picture transmission often obscure the difference between reality and fiction and make it possible to live within false relationships in a false world. Not only in the time of Communism, but even today the media are bearers of ideologies, even though they are less sophisticated and a police state does not stand behind them. Technological, market and globalisation ideologies curry favour with us. (The theme of globalisation deserves independent reflection. Regarding the problems of the debt burden of the Third World and the need for a new economic order, we refer to our joint "Statement of Representatives of Christian Churches in the Czech Republic on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Meetings". Prague, August 31, 2000).

The dangers of media abuse are great. The media are usually criticised for pointing the current culture towards immediate superficial experience and manipulation. Violence, vulgarity and the omnipresence of lascivious sexuality are phenomena that are essentially anticultural. Together with the emphasis on material consumption, they are a sign of

a lack of freedom. The media, particularly the commercial ones, focus on advertisement and on creating new, mostly unnecessary needs. As a result, greed is becoming a public obsession.

A decayed religiosity is drawn into the media where it often borders on programmes of entertainment. Advertisements make use of religious symbols and rituals. Television creates its own civil media religion without God. The media do not know silence, and erase the difference between profane and sacred. In the media life is often described as a chain of experiences that must be lived out and not as a task that has to be fulfilled with responsibility. Even though the Churches are trying to fill the narrow space that has been left to them, they often lack professionalism. Only a few of their programmes are relevant and attractive.

Television and especially magazines start to be packed with programmes and articles of a purely entertainment nature. An undemanding cultural standard, fragmentary information and an increasing amount of entertainment help to create a virtual reality with its narcotic effect. As a tool of political influence the media have contributed to the decay of political thinking, the public's loss of direction and the degradation of politics to a mere show. The ideological journalism of the first years of transformation was an example of irresponsibility. It induced liberal schemes in a crude one-sided form and manipulated the public to a naive credence. Its clichés were considered sacred and those who doubted its principles were not given enough room or were shouted down. Christian journalists did not react in a qualified way, and the Churches themselves did not express clearly their view on issues on which they should have spoken. The use of Christian social teaching remained far below the potential of its hidden treasures. It failed to be explained to the public. We, both individual Christians and representatives of the Churches, admit our responsibility in this serious matter, which is crucially important for reading the signs of the times in society. We should strengthen the understanding of the media as a service to the public and seek the revival of the moral dimension of economic and political behaviour in the media. As citizens we have the right to a good media, and we should realise that we can influence their form.

In spite of all the criticism of the direction, shortcomings and imperfections of the media, we want to stress that their freedom is a

condition of the plurality of views and one of the most powerful means of protecting democracy. We still remember the experience with the totalitarian systems, whose strict censorship of the media was hostile towards every opinion expressed freely, and often towards the smallest sign of democratic thinking. It is necessary to warn against any attempts to introduce political or ideological censorship and against direct political interference in the public media. In turn, from the media we have the right to demand truthful information, constructive assessment and respect for man's dignity.

## **IX. VISIONS, HOPES AND IDEALS: GOD'S KINGDOM AMONG US**

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.' (Mk 1.15)...'The kingdom of God is in the midst of you.' (Lk 17.21)...'Thy kingdom come' (Mt 6.10, Lk 11.2)...'For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.' (Rom 14.17)

### **59. A man who lives from one day to another cannot be satisfied and weakens spiritually**

In order for human life not to be a pure stream of everyday concerns, it must contain anticipation of coming events, planning for the period of not only days and weeks but for life in the the long run. Finally it must deal with the question which we cannot escape: what is the meaning of our life in this world? This applies not only to the life of an individual but to the whole of society. The forty-year-long negative experience with the planned economy and monolithic ideology of the former system involved the totalitarian power trying to predetermine the future of individual citizens as well as the form of all social processes in the long run. Today it leads us not to believe in visions, hopes and ideals in both our personal and social life. We do not believe that anything can be made better in politics, even though a wide public has become worried about the current state of affairs. For many people, who accepted the

concept of the Czech way of transformation in the past decade with false hopes and without reserve, everything has ended in disillusion.

However, disillusion with false messianism is no reason for resignation. We must not give up hope, we must not waive ideals and visions. The Christian community in Czech society cannot abandon the expectation of the coming kingdom of God. The words we say in Lord's prayer: 'thy kingdom come' compel us to think about the impact of this message on both the personal life of faith and our social responsibility.

#### **60. The current state of affairs must not become a norm of our behaviour**

Jesus's call for a fundamental change of life, which accompanies the news about the coming kingdom of God, concerns all levels. It applies to what makes us spiritually and morally as individuals, and concerns our human relations in a narrow circle of our family, friends and the church. However it offers us a creative approach towards problems of social life, as well as our relation to the environment, nature. and the universe as a whole.

The call for a change is significant. It shows that Christ's witness can never only seek to maintain what has already been achieved, either for himself, or for the community to which he belongs.

We need to return idealism to Czech politics and public life. We are called to openness and new steps forward. We must not be satisfied with what has been achieved. Politics is not just the 'art of the possible'. A Christian is called to 'the politics of hope' and even 'the politics of the impossible'. We must not place ourselves, and still less so others, in the predictable category of what we know with certainty and can manipulate to our advantage. Neither our partners nor opponents can become merely the subject of our political or economic calculations. The miracle of conversion is possible both in a personal and social dimension.

#### **61. Churches must not remain silent, it would mean their silent complicity**

The claim that we have set out on a new journey and that we believe in a turnaround, in a change of the state of affairs, will be confirmed by the effort of individual Christians and the Churches to fulfil Jesus' call:

'Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well' (Mt 6.33). Jesus' call draws the Churches' attention *primarily to the care of the poor and the weak*, of those who find themselves down trodden. The primary tasks of the Churches include the duty to raise a prophetic voice in protection of those who are weak and are not able to defend their justified claims or even express them. The social teaching of the Churches is to be a burning fire of God and a hope for the poor.

The Churches must oppose all injustices in today's world, the result of which is hunger, poverty, racial discrimination, fear, terror, crime and killings, the destruction of nature etc. Such obligation follows from the biblical message and its prophetic tradition.

Acting on God's order, the Old Testament prophets reproached the Israeli people – often with hesitation and suppressing their own weakness – for serving alien gods, acting unjustly, greedily seizing the property of others, taking bribes, hating the good and loving the evil. By their protest in the name of justice the Churches get to the centre of events and in dialogue with both the poor and those in power (with each of them *in a different way!*) they open the way towards solving problems.

*Minorities*, especially from the Balkans and eastern Europe, belong among the weak and are often deprived of every protection. Fear of foreigners predominates in the minds of a considerable number of our citizens. However the most serious problem in our country is the co-existence of the majority of the population and our domestic Romany nationals. The Churches emphatically warn against extremist groups who proclaim xenophobia, racism and hatred against all who are 'different'. As a part of their responsibility for the life of society, the Churches consider *the protection of human rights as one of their priorities*. We call on legislators to gradually amend our laws so that they are in harmony with international conventions on human rights in every aspect.

#### **62. A Christian vision as a suitable programme of social changes towards order**

We see the contrast between the Kingdom of God and our contemporary world. It gives us the opportunity to look critically even at

those institutions, values and mechanisms in politics and the economy which appear to serve their purpose. They are only a human invention, belonging to 'our age', and were established in a historical context, which often exhausted its life-giving power. Besides making a profound analysis, we must work with the vision. We need a working, flexible vision or model, based on the principles of Christian social teaching. This does not mean that we are concerned about the final target of an ideal society. We neither promise nor seek anything like this. The message, saying that the kingdom of God is not *food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*, leads us to a recognition that if we first of all these seek fruits of the Holy Spirit, everything else, including what we need for our life, will be given to us.

The Second Vatican Council as well as world boards of protestant Churches, such as the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and synods and convents of individual protestant Churches have in past years called on Christians to equip themselves thoroughly with knowledge and get involved in the economic, social and political life. Only in this way can they help to solve the social question which cannot be solved without committed witnesses of the Gospel and all people of goodwill. Reason deprived of the gifts and challenges of revelation runs the risk of losing sight of its final target – eternal life. Faith deprived of reason runs the risk of becoming only a myth or a superstition. Mere enthusiasm, zeal and goodwill are not enough. A life-long effort to implement the social message of the Gospel should be led by an unquenchable thirst for justice in our hearts. Such an effort can give rise to charismatic personalities, embodying the ideals of honesty, selflessness, truthfulness and personal integrity. Such spiritual, political and business leaders, in cooperation with responsible citizens, will be able to lead our country out of the moral and social crisis.

In this context we want to point out one problem accompanying us in the present.

### **63. Freedom as a moral task**

In the past decade we have been watching with anxiety the growth of the irresponsible conception of *freedom* as the 'right' to push through ones own often selfish aims. It is a deformation of the ideal of freedom.

Genuine freedom is a moral task. It is a freedom under the law. A number of biblical events speak about this: the Exodus events, when the Lord liberates the Israeli people from slavery, go hand in hand with the Sinai covenant with the Decalogue of God's commandments. These commandments show the direction of a genuine life of freedom. It is characteristic of the biblical message that it always links freedom of personal growth with service to the advancement of the community. It is not a freedom without borders, but a cultivated and responsible freedom, a freedom within order.

*Freedom* understood in this a way does not contradict justice. The notorious dilemma 'the more freedom, the less social equality' is sometimes quoted by economists as an unavoidable law; as if the opening of space for civil, political and business freedoms, which opens doors to economic prosperity, had to be paid for dearly by a growing social inequality. In many countries and continents this law has not been confirmed. On the contrary, in the former Soviet block countries we observe a precarious development, where the inequality is growing while the overall economic level and standards of life are falling. Our country has not managed to reach an overall economic prosperity either, but the gap between the rich and the poor is widening significantly. This is why it is so important to link solidarity, growing from below, from civil society, with a well-balanced legislation. It is necessary to strengthen the equality of opportunities, in particular the opportunity to receive education regardless of property, position and the education of parents. This can prevent the precious social values: justice, freedom and equality from standing in opposition to each other; and help them to work together productively.

### **64. Churches offer new approaches – let us not fear to go against the wind**

The ideas of Christian social teaching, which have proved their worth especially in the past hundred years, are also viable and inspiring for making courageous plans for the future. Changes which occur in society all over the world are sometimes much too precipitous. Hence it is important to analyse these changes and distinguish which of them are positive and compatible with Christian ethics, as they strengthen the dignity of man, and should therefore be supported.

In the coming age of information and communication technologies the nature of *work*, which man performs within the market framework, changes radically. Work stops being a life-long gainful employment with one employer. Demands for ever growing flexibility and adaptability of work bring new problems to individuals. Decentralisation and individualisation of work puts demands on one's independence, creativity and responsibility. Where can one draw strength for such demanding adaptation? We are convinced that personal faith and communion with others in parishes and congregations supported by hope provide armour even for the difficult decisions of life.

In a situation where work cannot be found for a majority of the population of a productive age over a long period of time, it will be necessary to look for new solutions. The 'end of work' does not have to mean an end to meaningful human activity. If the non-profit sector, in which people are led by human compassion, succeeds in developing new forms of self-help, then even those who are already in the post-productive age or have lost their jobs are not threatened with a loss of human dignity. The care for children and the family, housework, work in educational facilities and many other useful activities will certainly find a corresponding place (and support!) in social life; the future will bring new forms of evaluation of the life of each human being.

For the Christian community it opens a wide field for service testifying to the fact that human dignity is not bound only to *performance*, for which we are remunerated by wages or salaries in the *market sphere*. It is a fruit of the mercy which is given to us in Christ *beforehand and without merits*. In the long run one of the tasks of the Churches' workers in the field of social ethics will be to ponder over how to bring this fundamental emphasis of the Christian faith into the social and economic order. Initiatives from the grass roots of society and new approaches of Christians and all people of goodwill are of great significance.

In response to negative tendencies and social threats, Christian social teaching provides us with a strong impulse to seek ways of breaking free. It cannot claim to know the recipe for all ills. We are aware that an ideal society and an ideal state has never existed and will never exist. The struggle for a dignified life on this Earth is never ending. Let us protect our freedom and set out on a journey of seeking alternatives and new solutions. Let us not fear new ways, even if they sometimes go

against the wind. Let us not fear to educate our children in this way. There are never enough brave people.

#### **65. The constants of Christian social teaching: "yes" and "no" to social concepts and visions**

The crux of Christian social teaching are the ideas of the dignity of every man and woman, solidarity and subsidiarity, common good, the participation of man in economic processes, in which he can also develop his or her personality, and freedom and inalienable human rights. All these ideas are in harmony with the General Declaration of Human Rights and related human duties. These include socially responsible ownership, freedom of enterprise and a socially-orientated market economy, which does not lack respect for the law and ethical principles. Thence we can draw inspiration for the creation of working alternatives, projects and visions in the sphere of social, economic and political life. We also draw inspiration and strength for being able to say a clear 'yes' and a clear 'no' to various social phenomena.

Peace and good belong, we believe, to the innermost wishes of every man and woman. These wishes are shared by religious people and unbelievers, by the rich and the poor. The basic message of this letter is the following: The deep basis of the long-term prosperity of society is a state of affairs in which the leading forces of society, as well as individuals, seek life in justice and common good. In order to achieve an elementary agreement on what is *good and peace*, it is necessary to hold a dialogue, a disputation, a debate. Democracy is a discussion. We are tired of a monologue of the deaf. A Christian knows, or at least should know, that in order to listen to others, he should first calm down, stop on his or her journey, look back and see his way in a new light. What applies to individuals, applies to the Churches too.

We started our joint letter by expressing regret over the mistakes of the past, over the historical burden of Christians of past generation, aware that we have not met the demands of the Gospel in the social dimension. The Lord calls us to put things right. We do not consider ourselves to be the owners of the only truth. This is why we open ourselves in the spirit of penitence to a dialogue about the most urgent questions of the present. We need to hear the views of others: politicians, economists, scientists, social workers, citizens, the employed

as well as the unemployed. We want to seek new ways *together with everyone*. The time of all of us is running out.

If people of goodwill, with sensitivity and conscience, either Christians or others, engage in a dialogue, taking into account responsibility and professionalism, we are full of hope that the expected transformation will occur in our country. In turn, it contributes to Peace and Good, for which we do not stop praying and on which we want to work.

Prague, September 2000

## Notes

1 Unfortunately, even the workers of the Office for Investigation of the Crimes of Communism are doing so.

2 Only this can overcome the mistake of previous generations of Christians who almost exclusively emphasised individual ethics, a change of the individual's mind. They underestimated the necessity of an institutional transformation. Especially under the influences of the Enlightenment, with its optimistic view of man, others held the opposite view that a change of social institutions was crucial and that a change of thinking would follow automatically. Today we understand that the two condition each other.

3 It is a label of an economy linked with the tradition of 'ordo-liberalism'.

5 The Old Testament prophet warned: 'Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil.'. (Isaiah 26:10)

6 In this context the question of whether man has the *right* to work is important; that is, whether he has the right to employment within the framework of market mechanism and for a remuneration which is set by the labour market. We consider discussion of this problem necessary, but we cannot give it a proper place in this document.

7 A sign of the fact that the Churches accept responsibility even in this sphere could be attempts to establish 'local, regional (seniorate and diocesan)' tripartite bodies, which could be organised by church institutions or Christian-orientated civic associations.

8 Here belongs J.A.Komensky's idea of officina humanitatis – the workshop of humanity