
Pope Francis: “child labour is the exploitation of children for the profit of others”. “A child who cannot dream, who cannot play, cannot grow up”.

Child labour “is the exploitation of children in the production processes of the globalised economy for the profit and gain of others. It is the denial of children’s rights to health, education and harmonious growth, including the possibility to play and dream”. The Pope said this as he received in audience the participants in the International Conference “Eradicating child labour, building a better future”, promoted by the Vatican COVID-19 Commission of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in cooperation with the Holy See Permanent Mission at the FAO, scheduled for this afternoon. “This is tragic”, the Pope commented off the cuff: “A child who cannot dream, who cannot play, cannot grow up”. Child labour, Pope Francis went on to explain, “is robbing children of their future and therefore humanity itself. It is a violation of human dignity”. “The scourge of child labour exploitation, on which you are reflecting together today, is of particular importance for the present and the future of our humanity”, Francis began. Indeed, for the Pope, “the way we relate to children, the extent to which we respect their innate human dignity and fundamental rights, expresses what kind of adults we are and want to be, and what kind of society we want to build”. “It is shocking and disturbing that in today’s economies, whose productive activities rely on technological innovations, so much so that we talk about the ‘fourth industrial revolution’, the employment of children in work activities persists in every part of the world”, the Pontiff decried. “This endangers their health and their mental and physical well-being, and deprives them of the right to education and to live their childhood with joy and serenity. The pandemic has further aggravated the situation”. “Child labour - Pope Francis explained - is not to be confused with the small domestic tasks that children, in their spare time and according to their age, can perform as part of family life, to help parents, siblings, grandparents or other members of the community. These activities are generally beneficial to their development, as they allow them to test their skills and grow in awareness and responsibility. Child labour is something else entirely!”.

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