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Pope Francis calls for global economic reform

by Thomas C. Fox

NCR Today

Pope Francis

Solidary with the poor of the world requires a rethinking of the entire global economic system, which spreads unemployment "like wildfire," Pope Francis said Saturday at an economic forum in Rome.

We need to "rethink solidarity" with the poor, he said, adding it should no longer be viewed as simple assistance, but as a global rethinking of the economic system, "seeking ways to reform and correct it in a manner consistent with fundamental human rights, the rights of all men and women."

According to a Vatican report, Francis warned that global unemployment is not only economic and financial in nature, but is also rooted in an anthropological and ethical crisis that puts "the idols of power, profit, and money over and above the value of the human person."

Global solidarity with the poor and structural global economic reform have been two early themes in Pope Francis' two-month pontificate.

Francis is the first pope from the "global south," where poverty is a way of life for millions.

He spoke before members of an economic forum, the *Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontefice* foundation, formed by Pope John Paul II 20 years ago to mark the 100th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, considered to be the first major church encyclical on economic justice.

Francis noted that "rethinking solidarity," means combining church teaching with socio-economic development, which, being constant and fast, always presents new aspects for discussion.

The current economic and social crisis adds urgency to this "rethinking" and brings out the truth and

relevance of the church's social teaching even more," Vatican radio quoted Francis as saying.

Francis said the lack and of loss employment "is spreading like wildfire in large areas of the West, which is alarmingly spreading the confines of poverty.

"And there is no worse material poverty, I am compelled to emphasize," he said, "than that which does not allow people to earn their daily bread and deprives them of the dignity of work.

By now this 'something is wrong' no longer concerns only the South, but the entire planet. This is why there is an ever greater need to 'rethink solidarity' no longer as simple assistance to the poor, but as a global rethinking of the whole system, such as finding ways to reform it and correct it in a manner consistent with the fundamental human rights of all men.

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Francis called for a restoration of the word "solidarity," which is not well seen by the economic world.

"The current crisis is not only economic and financial but is rooted in an anthropological and ethical crisis," he said. "The idols of power, profit, money, over and above the value of the human person, has become a basic mode of operation and decisive criterion in organization. It is forgotten that above the business logic and parameters of the marketplace, there is the human being and there is something which is due to man, by virtue of his profound dignity: the opportunity to live with dignity and participate actively in the common good."

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