

From the editors

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With this volume, we offer you the second installment in the series “The Idea of Solidarity Today,” which is the result of the international scientific conference entitled *Solidarity as a Communion and Brotherhood of Working People*, held on November 19–20, 2021. The purpose of the conference was to recall the idea of solidarity and to analyze it in international terms, taking into account contemporary realities. The event was organized by the International Center for Study of the Phenomenon of Solidarność (MCBFS), a research unit established by the Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarność” and the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, working in cooperation with the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in Rome.

The idea of solidarity, which was solidified more than forty years ago by the testimony of Polish workers and the Solidarity Trade Union, opened a new chapter for labor movements by bringing about the collapse of Marxist ideology. Today, however, it requires a deepening and creative development to reflect the political and economic changes that have taken place in the world since August 1980 and to maintain its relevance.

A modernized understanding of the idea of solidarity, expressed in light of Catholic social teaching, can contribute to solving the crises faced by working people around the world. The diagnosis of these crises is not yet complete – it is enough to see that the modern community of workers has been largely divided. New forms of labor increasingly isolate a growing number of workers, abandoning them before a free and frequently manipulated market. International regulations on tariffs and trade have the effect of globalizing capital and trade, while the defense of workers’ rights remains at the national level. As a result, big business can easily shift jobs to countries that offer low wages, low levels of rights protection, and no respect for workers’ dignity. The existing situation can be compounded by additional difficulties,

such as those associated with pandemics or war. These contribute not only to the disruption of the labor community but also often strip working people of their subjectivity.

In response to the challenges cited above, a valuable proposal seems to be the postulate to universalize the Polish experience of solidarity and revive its spirit. This revival should not be limited to the local or national levels but rather be implemented in a global dimension, so that the value of the dignity of the working man is universally recognized. In this way, all participants in economic life will have the chance to obtain justice and fair wages.

The emergence and development of Solidarity in Poland were made possible by strong Christian inspiration and Catholic social teaching. In the modern day, the Church continues to respond to the challenges of modern times. An example is Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, which in recent years has been a major advocate for the poor, marginalized, and excluded.

When referring to the role of Christianity in the formation of the Polish experience of solidarity, the vital role that the Eucharist played in the lives of the working people should be emphasized. The Eucharistic experience of communion influenced the Polish experience of solidarity, as well as the building of community and fraternity between first workers and then between members of different social and professional groups. It was a community beyond divisions and beyond the particular interests of individuals.

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The book begins with the Foreword, which was authored by the Archbishop of Krakow, Marek Jędraszewski – Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków, and Mr. Piotr Duda, President of the Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarność.”

The first article is entitled: *The role of solidarity in the quest for the sustainable improvement of the material and spiritual living conditions of people and planet earth*. Its author, Archbishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, emphasizes the role of solidarity in overcoming the problems facing the modern world, especially concerning issues of hunger, marginalization, climate change, consumption, pandemics, and new technologies.

In the second text, *New forms of solidarity in the light of John Paul II teachings*, Stefano Zamagni seeks to provide a sense in which to speak of the new forms of solidarity. The author focuses on Pope John Paul II's essential contribution to modernizing and expanding the reach of Catholic Social Teaching.

In his article *On the globalization of the idea of Solidarity*, Rocco Buttiglione conversely stresses that the Polish trade union Solidarnosc introduced the idea of a moral society, which includes a critique of not only communism, but also of unrestrained capitalism. The author stresses that the fall of communism did not mark the end of history, but rather the beginning of a search for new and more dignified ways of life for working people.

In another article, *The rise of the philosophy of Solidarity in Poland*, Władysław Zuziak points out that the rise of the Polish Solidarity movement has its origins in biblical inspirations. These – in the formation of the ethos of solidarity – came under the influence of Karol Wojtyła and Józef Tischner. The author outlines the development of the moral philosophy of solidarity in the early period of the movement's formation and discusses the reasons for its later departure from the ethos of solidarity. He concludes by showing both the shortcomings of contemporary models of solidarity and the prospects for the development of the project of solidarity in a universal dimension.

The next author, Marek Rymśza, points to another dimension of the problems connected to global solidarity in his text *From a social issue to an ecological issue*. By looking at the ongoing transformation of the energy model in Europe from a sociological perspective, he addresses the problem of energy and climate policy. He proposes linking it to a model of integral ecology that allows for systemic change, thereby breaking through contemporary consumerism and technocratism. This model is intended to be a comprehensive solution: while lowering the costs of economic development, it also sees an increase in social benefits.

In his article entitled *Solidarity in social insurance on the example of the Polish pension system*, Marcin Zieleniecki analyzes the elements of social solidarity and its understanding of social insurance through the example of the reformed pension system in Poland. The subject of the analysis consists of the various methods of financing pension benefits, the construction of pension risk, the conditions for acquiring the right to a pension, and the formula for determining a pension's amount. These issues are critical problems confronting Europe's aging societies.

In the last article *The triple threat of artificiality*, Gustavo Beliz points out the further threats to the labor market associated with the virtualization of social reality. Among the most important of these, the author examines issues related to artificial intelligence, artificial wealth, and artificial ethics. He argues that countering these problems could be possible with the globalization of workers' rights and multilateral initiatives to harmonize labor regulations and standards between countries.

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