

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



815 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 637-5000
www.aflcio.org

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

JOHN J. SWEENEY
PRESIDENT

Gerald W. McEntee
Michael Goodwin
Elizabeth Bunn
Joseph J. Hunt
Leo W. Gerard
William Hite
Larry Cohen
Robbie Sparks
Alan Rosenberg
Ann Converso, R.N.
Matthew Loeb

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Michael Sacco
William Lucy
Michael J. Sullivan
Clyde Rivers
Ron Gettelfinger
John J. Flynn
Warren George
Nancy Wohlforth
Capt. John Prater
Richard P. Hughes Jr.
Randi Weingarten

ARLENE HOLT BAKER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Frank Hurt
Robert A. Scardelletti
Harold Schaitberger
Cecil Roberts
James Williams
William H. Young
Gregory J. Junemann
Paul C. Thompson
Rose Ann DeMoro
Fred Redmond

Patricia Friend
R. Thomas Buffenbarger
Edwin D. Hill
William Burrus
Vincent Giblin
John Gage
Laura Rico
James C. Little
Mark H. Ayers
Jill Levy

For Immediate Release

Contact: Alison Omens/Zoe Bridges-Curry
202-637-5018

Statement by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney On the Pope's Encyclical July 8, 2009

Pope Benedict XVI's commitment to the cause of working people worldwide shines today. In the new encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* or *Charity in Truth*, Pope Benedict XVI offers an ethical critique of the global economic crisis and proposes concrete elements for policies anchored in moral values that enhance the dignity of all, especially the poor and working people. The encyclical levels a strong critique at the forces of unfettered free-market capitalism and globalized greed.

Particularly, the new encyclical offers a much-needed reminder that to create an economy that works for everyone it is critical to protect workers' fundamental right to join together as a union and bargain for a better future. As the Pope makes clear, it is not only working people, but also entire communities - - nations even - - that stand to benefit when workers exercise this right. In the document, the Pope reaffirms the Church's longstanding position that labor unions play a vital role in efforts to build a more just economy—one in which even the most marginalized workers are guaranteed basic dignity and respect.

As the gap between the wealthy and the poor continues to widen, and workers around the world are denied the dignity and freedom they deserve, the union movement stands with the Catholic Church in its call for a global economy that works for working people. Now, more than ever, we must rally to protect the rights of workers—at home and worldwide—to come together in unions and build a better future for us all.

###