



CAPP FRANCE

Symposium on the duty of corporations and their managers
Saturday February 29, 2020
at Apprentis d'Auteuil

Minutes of the Symposium

The Symposium was called to discuss three themes :

- the gap between the ruling elites and a large segment of society,
- the social role of money,
- the place of man and the Creation in organizations.

There were about eighty participants, thirty from the organizing group and fifty guests. Members of the organizing group opened each of the debates by building on the group's previous work. The floor was then opened to every participant.

As agreed, the comments made by each will remain confidential, but we are accurately reporting what we heard. We have endeavored to remain as close as possible to the very words used and we have therefore not attempted to merge these minutes with the documents distributed before the Symposium.

On February 29, we had already adopted social distancing and Covid 19 was sometimes mentioned during the interventions. Nevertheless, and even though we were within two weeks of drastic measures such as the closing of schools, then of restaurants and finally in-house containment, we had not yet integrated the pandemic into our thinking. Without a doubt, our debates would have had another content had they taken place after the beginning of the crisis; the pandemic is shaking up benchmarks and operating modes. Will it bring out a new world, as some think, or will it just accelerate mutations already underway? We may be able to debate this at a later date and point to the positive and negative impact, on a human, spiritual, economic, social, ecological level, of this crisis, which is exceptional by its intensity, brutality and global character.

In any case the themes we debated remain topical as reflected in these minutes.

At the end of the day, we broached the subject of interior life. We are preparing a concrete program, a day open to all, dedicated to interior life. The date will be decided when we know the actual set up of meetings.

During the meeting, we heard a call to action, not just to reflection and debate. We will keep this in mind. Opening courses of action is a task that remains to be done.

The more numerous we are, the more we will be able to carry out work of different nature which will cross fertilize. It was said at the end of the day that each participant interested in joining the original group was welcome. This is a genuine call. The times are stimulating, we need more than ever to widen our circle.

Our purpose is and will remain the “raison d'être” of corporations and the responsibility of their leaders in a globalized world whose boundaries and interdependence are, as said on February 29, imposed on us and call us, in conscience, not to externalize the negative consequences of our actions.

The organizing group is made up of Christians, committed to understanding, living and enriching the Social Doctrine of the Church, both in the exercise of their responsibilities and in their reflections. Nevertheless, Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* encyclical is addressed to all men of good will and its impact proves that these traditional words are not empty words ; we therefore wish to open the door of meetings such as the February 29 one to other people, because we are interested in the enrichment that, strengthened by other benchmarks and other cultures while also concerned for the common good, they can bring to our reflections.

1st DEBATE

The gap between the ruling elites and an important segment of society

Preliminary remarks

Since we had been influenced by numerous public comments on the social situation, we had chosen to entitle this debate : the gap between the elites and the people. However, it emerged from the debates that :

- the concept of elite does not refer to a social category acknowledged by all ; we talked about the diversity of elites (those who matter for the under 40 years old come more from music, art, sports or web influencers more than from corporations or public affairs),
- the word people is handicapped by the vertical meaning which it conveys, not to mention that the people include the elites.

It seems therefore fairer to speak of a gap between certain elites groups, typically those with economic or political power, and other people. The yellow vests crisis has clearly shown the distance between the elites and those who feel subjected to them and who contest their pre-eminence.

Introduction of the theme

We began our reflections six weeks before the rise of the yellow vests and our observations were greatly revisited during the following months. The feeling of loss of economic consideration has been widely publicized for months. We have noticed that the increase in inequality - which relates more to wealth than to income - has created divisions in society over the past ten years, resulting in regional loss of consideration, a feeling of loss of social status - notably the feeling that social ascent is much more difficult now than for previous generations - or even a downgrading of identity and morality, with both a loss of the will to live together and a very strong individualization which means that we exist only as we are acknowledged for who we are and no longer as belonging to a community. This social, geographic, economic, identity and morality downgrading also affects the elites of this country.

Globalization is one of the main causes of this development ; it is not only economic, it also implies a move to increasing international regulations which have not completely replaced the old national ones, thus causing an imbalance. Another cause is the break with the principle of subsidiarity, according to which decisions must be taken as close as possible to the people concerned. It is also due to the loss of the long view which impacts society as well as individuals ; building something takes quite a long time and therefore the loss of the concept of long view has accelerated some dislocations.

What to do ? We have selected four avenues.

Personal practices :

An ethics followed by the elites is essential, a coherence between what they, the elites, say and what they do. How can the elites reconcile what they are experiencing globally and locally ? How can globalization be human and take root in specific milieu ?

Organizational practices :

Organizations must fight against everything that contributes to social segregation. Lifelong learning is a topic which seemed to matter to us. How can we find a better fit between the professional and personal lives of our employees ? How can we make our commercial offers more respectful of social and environmental issues ? How can we go beyond the legal obligations of our organizations on these issues ?

Institutional practices :

It seems to us that the emergence of norms, regulatory or moral, were too much the mark of a dominant thinking and do not appear to take sufficiently into account everyday realities. How to renew the complementarity between the top and the bottom ? It is a subject of social openness that raises the question of the definition of the elites.

Cultural practices :

Is the strength of the so-called elites built at the expense of the strength of all classes of society ? How can we avoid weakening the symbolic, historical and cultural universe of the people around us ? What can we do to make sure that society does not live without the very idea of transcendence, whatever that idea is ?

Discussion

The debates that followed opened up new avenues. The comments are noted mostly as they have been heard.

Accepting to change, accepting the diversity of others

- Thinking that the world will not change if we do not change ourselves.
- Going directly to the most fragile, putting them at the center of the action : not just relying on intermediary structures and systems.
- Not surrendering to the populists the monopoly of proximity to people.
- Making sure, for ourselves and for others, to keep in touch with our roots ; otherwise a promotion does not benefit the community.
- Giving its due to half of the world : women.
- Taking the diversity of the elites into account.

Managing differently

- Acting with justice, temperance, courage, prudence, sincerity : conflicts are resolved over time, but the time to act is now.

- Start from the base : what is local is as important as what is global ; keep your roots and remain credible on the ground ; accept to be changed by those who do not belong to your circle.
- The leaders are not sufficiently vigilant on how their visions are shared throughout the hierarchy, on how they are translated into objectives and compensation, on their consequences in terms of future skills.
- Know the working community : the "seen" and the "unseen".
- Act while staying aware that others know things that you do not know.
- Humility, humor, solidarity, responsibility; love the teams, be attentive to people, say hello and smile...
- Avoid parachuting people, give internal promotions, use training programs: rediscover the spirit of the military service, of training programs spent on manual jobs.
- Importance of recruiting : accept diversity so as not to break someone's potential, make room for emotional intelligence ; higher education schools are not enough.
- Use authority as a service, power is not a means to domination.
- Corporations and their spirit are not often enough mentioned as places which teach human resource management, but they are demanding schools : it is tough to be the boss of a small company.

Giving meaning again

- Regain a common vision of the true, the beautiful, the good (as we experienced together in front of Notre-Dame while it was burning). We are the heirs, the creditors of the past and the debtors of the future.
- Avoid globalizing, rather build the common from the particular. Accept the ability to think differently : not too much conformism in dialogue.
- Foster diversity and avoid relativism. Relativism dissolves the bonds of unity. Do not just give meaning : what is needed is to share meaning.
- Young people are the future elites and they are attached to the meaning given to action.
- Populism is opposed to science, while Church and science are reconciled. Distrust towards those who know leads to excessive prudence. If we lack confidence in techniques, we will shrink.
- To avoid populism the elite must be understood by the people. This raises the question of the experts.
- Respect the culture of others (especially on the part of globalized elites who are open to societal changes) ; accept the culture of people with roots without ostracizing them.
- Favoring action makes it easier to respect a variety of point of views.

Regaining democratic coherence

- The social elevator is broken and those at the bottom note that those at the top are spared from bad breaks in life.
- Protest moves up the social ladder : there are fewer and fewer people in intermediary groups or they slide down the social ladder hence the more noticeable break between qualified and unskilled.
- Society does not price skills fairly : for example, the spread between bankers, doctors and the military are not justified. Furthermore, wealth inequalities outweigh income inequalities.
- We deplore the inaction of the political elites and their inability to offer a vision for the future. To have a vision is another way to express our transcendence

- We must rearrange and revitalize the three democracies : representative democracy (perceived as too vertical for a more horizontal society), social democracy (tired), deliberative democracy (to be built : in its infancy, sometimes anarchic and violent).
- Transformations bear results over time while anger is of the moment : the institutions bear the brunt of this contradiction.
- Involve citizens in issues that concern them : subsidiarity and local democracy : we must find ways to anticipate social acceptability.
- "It takes a minimum of faith and common will to restore confidence" Raymond Aron.
- Acting requires accountability.

With Laudato Si ' : refuse to outsource risks and agree to change

- The sum of individualisms does not make the common good : today, we realize that the world is finite : we can no longer outsource risks.
- Laudato Si ' is revolutionary with the concept of integral ecology : the environmental question must not erase the social question ; sharing has a spiritual dimension.
- Consequently, we are forced to change !

Red thread

In closing the session, two members of the organizing group revisited some of the highlights of the debates, a kind of red thread.

First revisit

- "We shouldn't forget the elites who have an impact" : are the economic elites really elites ? Are there genuine elites of the people around this table ? I thought to myself that maybe next time we should invite also other elites.
- "Knowing the workplace" : as I am involved in art crafts, to know the work place, to respect the craft of others is something that speaks a lot to me.
- "They know what we don't know" : no doubt there are other genuine elites who know a lot of things that we don't know. Let's be humble enough to reach out to others.
- "Social acceptability" : there is something to learn, rather than impact assessment studies which probably are expensive and are of little use.
- "Networks can create connections" : is this a real connection ? I was very surprised that little has been said about the digital society.
- "Remunerating the service given to others" : what a nice idea, and perhaps we could make this commitment in our companies.
- For a Christian, obviously, "share the good, the beautiful, the true" is one of the conclusions of this day. Ah, if only we could try to offer to the people around us in our corporations - because we can no longer impose anything - the beautiful, the true, the good ...
- Accept to listen to what the other has to say.
- "Why is nothing done ?" ; it's a call to action that we can all consider together !
- I am surprised that so little has been said about today's town planning which segregates : when we look at history, the Haussmannian building brought together the craftsman who lived on site with the

haute bourgeoisie and the household workers, all these people rubbed shoulders, met, talked, the children went to school together and played together.

Second revisit :

- When I listen, I listen to the lyrics a lot, but at the same time, I also listen to the music, that is to say from which angle everyone is talking. I found that it was very good from this point of view, because there was a great diversity of sources of speech, even if there were homogeneities ; I think we should keep this in mind when dealing with this topic.

- The word elite : I would start immediately by implementing this : I think that our paper - since I am one of its authors- is based on the idea that there is an elite, when in fact, from what I heard during the discussion, there are categories of elites, different elites and, depending on places, on people, there are really categories of elites that are not all the same ; we should incorporate this in the paper ; that would solve a number of problems.

- Staying in touch : some have said that we have to stay in touch with the poorest among us, others that we had to stay in touch with the people ... I think that in fact we should stay in touch with reality. It seems that the optimists will think that they can organize their activity in such a way that they can stay in touch ; the more pessimistic ones say that they need to have parallel activities that allow them to keep in touch, because they cannot do it in their main activity. But this question of where we find the ways and means to keep in touch with reality seemed to me to be a fairly general concern.

- The word meaning, "it doesn't work if we don't share some meaning" : I'm a little less optimistic than some ; I'm not sure that today we can say that we are all going to share the same meaning, because I think there is too much diversity created by globalization. But if we don't share meaning we won't make it. Meaning is also science ; there is no meaning if there is not a certain rationality, and there is no rationality without some sort of creating ; on the other hand there is debating, that is to say a science which cannot be sold, which is not a shared expertise, understandable, teachable, it does not work. I am very sensitive to deliberating, to the idea that there is a third democratic stage which need to be built. This seemed very important to me.

- Finally, to be accountable, to ensure the coherence between words and deeds : I think it must be acknowledged that, for a very long time, the elites have not been accountable ; they thought they were but this is not how it was perceived by those they were addressing ; today it's no longer possible.

- Many things that I have not mentioned : corporations, which is a very important point, the social elevator with all that it entails, geography and the divide, globalization, digital (actually not often mentioned even though it is omnipresent in the topics that we are addressing).

- I will end with an expression that struck me a lot : "risk outsourcing". For a very long time, we have dealt with problems by outsourcing the risks and, with globalization, we can no longer do this and we are becoming aware of a finite world ; Laudato Si ' is a manifesto against risk outsourcing. Well, if we can no longer outsource the risks, we must change and accept to change ; because the nature of outsourcing was precisely to avoid having to change.

2nd DEBATE

The social role of money

Presentation

Why money ? It goes without saying : every economic act, in one way or another, requires money at some point. What the Social Doctrine of the Church says on this is that private property is a necessary extension of the person and also the means to express oneself and act in all areas. At the same time, the Social Doctrine teaches that this private property is subordinate to what it calls the universal destination of goods, that is to say, that goods are there for the common good and for the good of others. This therefore means that the owner has a right on his property – he is the one who decides – while at the same time he disposes of it in connection with the common good. This leads to a form of tension and at the same time of logic ; people will decide and will act, while at the same time they will do so keeping in mind the common good.

We addressed the question of money by dividing it simply and logically according to each of its stages:

- how we earn it and how we spend it;
- how it is given, what is the role of gratuitousness
- how we invest it.

How we earn it and how we spend it

Introduction

In our society, to earn a living is to earn money, and to live is to spend it, not only in order to acquire what is necessary but also to develop a free and enriching life or quite simply to preserve a decent life, by financing, for example, the period in the future when one will be dependent on others .

The debate was organized around four axes :

- What drives me to earn more ? Is it because I belong in a model where professional success means earning more ? The fear of being short one day ? Or the simple desire to accumulate, even if it means being later genuinely generous ?
- Don't the market rules which determine remuneration lead to a poor allocation of human resources (medico-social professions / financial professions) ? As economic or political leaders, what remuneration policy do we want to promote ?
- What is the meaning of work, counterpart of the money earned ?
- What is the meaning of my expenses ?
 - o What boundary do I set between necessary and superfluous, my needs being often modeled on those of my neighbors ?

- o What do my expenditure generate beyond satisfying my need ? Will it ultimately serve the poorest and not harm the environment ?
- o Above a certain level of income or assets, will I give special consideration to artistic, cultural or social sponsorship (munificence expenses) ?

Discussion

On the link between work and money, several speakers put forward contrasting views on the concept of "working to earning more" :

- One remarked that work, whatever the craft, is first a vocation, a call, a purpose, even if this work allows us to live.
- A second evoked the need to give more value in work to what is produced versus the gain it provides : "it is the output that gives meaning to life". He underlined the role that public authorities must play, notably through taxes, in the necessary reduction of the pay gap because "whoever earns a lot depends on who does not earn much".
- Another remarked that some have chosen to "earn less", a certain frugality, in professions linked to public life or associations, not only for eco-responsible reasons, but also and above all for spiritual reasons in seeking dispossession, the non-appropriation of what surrounds us.
- A final one referred to Adam Smith and evoked a fundamental tension between the economic system in which we live (based on comparing ourselves constantly with others, what we do and how much we earn) and what as human beings we may wish for our self and for others (donation, generosity, sense of work, etc.).

A participant spoke of the disconnect between work and money insofar as a segment of the population receives money from solidarity and not from work thanks to the redistributive action of public authorities or associations and, in some countries, unions or churches. Another participant added that, in a country where the average monthly salary is € 2,200, access to common good, in particular education, health, and infrastructures of a certain standard, must be guaranteed by public authorities.

In contrast, a speaker underlined the need for dignity to link work provided and money earned, thus raising the issue of the wages of the poorest and of minimum wages, and pointing out that work should allow everyone to earn a living with dignity, receive a just remuneration and acquire the rights to a decent retirement.

Finally a speaker spoke of the young people saying that, for many of them, money is considered positive and unifying in that it allows access to beauty (travel, music, culture ...) and the preservation of the family.

A last speaker concluded by noting that in fact, in our position, with our income, we do not deserve all that we have received and wondering how to give back what we have received.

How we give it, what is the role of gratuitousness?

Introduction

The concept here is to share certain questions we had asked ourselves, in our small group, about our attitude towards gifting. These questions can lead to immediate actions, bearing in mind the beautiful maxim of Father Ceyrac, sj : "All that is not given is lost".

Whether it is "how much", "to whom" or "how to give", these questions call for eminently personal or family answers, depending, in particular, on one's financial situation, or even one's position in the cycle of life. However, religions, but also the State, provide benchmarks, the first in the age old reference to the tithe (even if there are many ways to calculate it), the second, in France, by authorizing to deduct (up to 66% of its amount) the amount donated to institutions (even those involved in cultural affairs) and this up to 20% of one's taxable income. In terms of inheritance, Saint Augustine suggests, for his part, to add to one's number of children an additional share, and to give it. Basically, the question everyone could - should ? – asked himself is : can I not give more, money but also time ?

Debate

The debate led the participants on the one hand to give a certain number of concrete, often very telling illustrations of gifting practices and on the other hand to deepen the more fundamental motivations which can push each of us to give .

In the first category, we will retain, without trying to be exhaustive:

- A great very recent experience in Burkina Faso, where one of the participants witnessed a collection in a parish, from low-income people, made in a climate of great joy, illustrating the words of Saint Paul "Let everyone give according to the decision of his heart, without sorrow or constraint, for God loves those who give with joy".
- Another experience, in France, of donation by farmers of products from their farm to charitable associations (the equivalent of 4 million meals over a year), source of much satisfaction for them, by focusing not only on what we give, but also "to the value of what we give and the way we give it".
- A third speaker wondered whether, beyond the donation that one makes to this or that association, it was not appropriate to be more interested in the life of these associations, which would give the donation a more human dimension, while forcing beneficiary associations to better fulfill their mission.

Several speakers provided a beautiful testimony on what was their deep motivation by giving :

- For one, the gift corresponds to a form of 'spiritual healing', to repair this sort of 'pathology of the soul' born from money, that which leaves the departing rich young man 'very sad'.
- For another, donation is both a way to get back to basics - "at the end of my life, what will be really important, if not gifting, what I did for my wife , my children, these prisoners that I helped, these handicapped people that I supported "- and a relief -" giving expresses my freedom in my relationship with the goods I own and that it is not my property that possesses me " .

- A third evoked the call to conversion who can - must ? - accompany the donation, mentioning the example of Zachée.

These different themes constitute as many avenues for enriching the initial document. And we will end with a "Jewish story" from the "Adventures of Rabbi Harvey" quoted by one of the participants. A man asked the rabbi, "Is it true that one can be saved until the last moment?" Rabbi answered: "Do you know when you are going to die ?" The man: "No, of course." And the rabbi concluded: "So begin now to do good and give to others".

How we invest it

Introduction

First there are obviously choices of instruments. The most virtuous investment is in stocks. People see it from a speculative angle ; but money put in shares is money tied to the corporation, which is not the case for a creditor.

Then there is the question of the mode of investment, and first of all the ethical criteria (developed in the paper). Besides the collective effort to identify ESG criteria (social, environment and governance) what should we examine if we want to draw inspiration from the Social Doctrine of the Church ? In particular the concern for stakeholders, suppliers, customers, etc. Another theme mentioned this morning is that of the fair price, not very present but quite fundamental.

Then there is the impact. People underestimate the sensitivity of the financial markets. A market is a place where signals are sent. Obviously the impact will be bigger the more it represents a critical mass, hence the importance of doing it collectively, and to communicate. Another important topic is access to information and the ability to analyze. This whole question of ethical investment is in its infancy. This is a place where intellectual investment is a priority, obviously followed by concrete investment.

Debate

Several of these themes were strongly emphasized by the participants, including :

- The importance of investing at risk, in equities ; managers of family owned businesses feel like they are contributing every day.
- The importance of good criteria and tools : leaving enough room for governance ; proper consideration given to maximizing shareholder's value ; attention paid to the social and environmental externalities of activity and products ; definition of the CSR / ESG standard (label which one participant claimed should be public) ; support for funds inspired by the Social Doctrine of the Church ; etc.
- The necessary and growing pressure from investors on companies, and on the market, for a diversification of criteria ; which underscores the importance of measurement, especially impact, and relevant communication. One of the participants considered that as long as the authorities do not

impose new standards taking into account the negative externalities caused by business activities, nothing will change.

Two themes have been enriched :

- Employees : first, employee ownership, which involves them in governance with employee directors. Or by structures such as the Société Anonyme à Participation Ouvrière. This concern can be extended to civil servants through pensions.
- The social and solidarity economy, which should be considered as a separate category because of its different operating logic (purpose, remuneration policy, reinvestment etc.) ; while stressing the importance in its financing of investment alongside donation. There is a lack of patient and united investors in France, and the regulations do not encourage this but it is a worthwhile innovation.

3rd DEBATE

The place of man and the Creation in organizations

Presentation

Our reflections were inspired by *Laudato Si'*, but also by a word from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin : "Do not just survive, but live more". We shared the following beliefs :

- even if it is very difficult for them, and because they have the imperative and the chance to live in a tangible world, leaders can have a worthwhile, even irreplaceable, impact on doing away with what does not lead to the common good and encourage what contributes to it ;
- it is with managerial practices that are genuinely based on trust that leaders of organizations or businesses can face the unprecedented challenges they have to overcome ; we tried to go down the path of praxis by using the tools of concrete inquiries ;
- everything is already in the Social Doctrine of the Church, patiently developed since *Rerum Novarum* and superbly updated over successive industrial revolutions until *Laudato Si'*.

We have retained four benchmarks, or four main lines of thought :

- absolute and uncompromising respect for human dignity ;
- the search for the common good ;
- the systematic application of the principle of subsidiarity ;
- solidarity.

Absolute and uncompromising respect for Human Dignity

Work is a way for man to express his inalienable dignity. The head of a company gives his employees the opportunity to fulfill their vocation, to express who they are. A company is a means to *having* but also one of the main areas where *being* can flourish. Leaders are encouraged to see the person before they focus on the task.

Beyond the rational intelligence that allows one to acknowledge good plans, beyond a more emotional intelligence which makes it possible to commit the teams, there is perhaps an intelligence which connects the two hemispheres, which we can call spiritual intelligence, and which allows a different look at the world, at work and at the dignity of man. It is this spiritual intelligence, the intelligence of the inner life, which makes it possible to dare to believe when it is not possible to see. It is the engine of the audacity to which Pope Francis exhorts us in *Laudato Si'*.

The search for the common good

Today, we can no longer consider that a company is only there to generate profit for its shareholders. It is even the other way around : many companies express their *raison d'être*, and express it by taking into account the development of its men and women, its suppliers, its customers and the whole

planet, whose resources they need. This is why we speak of integral ecology since it covers all the environmental, but also human and social components which must be preserved and developed by the company.

This integral ecology presents three challenges to each of us human beings but also leader and manager, that we will consider in the context of a corporation :

- How to live better and how to develop people and communities ?
- How to live together, that is to say, to share the wealth of our common home ?
- How to live sustainably, that is to say, work today for the good of future generations ?

The principle of subsidiarity

This notion is poorly understood, misunderstood and unpopular, but it is nevertheless essential and it is at the heart of the Social Doctrine of the Church. In addition, subsidiarity suffers from its label as it does not mean that it is subsidiary, even if the term comes from "subsidium" which means reserve troop ; the reserve does not intervene but stays ready to intervene. Subsidiarity means ensuring that decisions are taken by the entity closest to those directly affected by these decisions. Subsidiarity therefore means that we respect the powers of the subordinate, we help him if necessary, and if we have to intervene, we then restore his competence.

Subsidiarity is often confused with delegation, and it is exactly the opposite, because delegation is indeed the power from the top given back to the bottom, while subsidiarity is the conviction that the legitimacy of the action rest with the base.

Laudato Si ', in Chapter 5, joins subsidiarity with a new concept of authority and responsibility : "Let us recall the principle of subsidiarity which gives freedom to the development of capacities present at all levels (this is the definition of subsidiarity), but which at the same time requires more responsibility for the common good on the part of those who hold power ".

Practicing solidarity

Rather than talking about solidarity, I am going to talk about love ! We spoke about money and gifting, and we conceive solidarity in these terms. But of course, it's more than that : solidarity is also the idea of losing oneself for the good of the other.

The word came to life at the end of the 19th century, somewhat in contrast to Christian charity ; a terminology undoubtedly more social, more secular, but actually we should assign the same meaning to solidarity and charity, while solidarity which connects men is undoubtedly more horizontal and charity which is linked to God's love for men is perhaps a touch more vertical.

Beyond what is given, solidarity expresses total and altruistic love for others. We talked about the opposition that can exist between what is expected of the leader of a traded company, hard, very capitalistic and the care he wishes to take of others as a Christian. I am convinced that sincerely loving your coworkers, beyond just giving them due consideration or being benevolent, and acting

accordingly, making sure that this feeling is true and genuine, is ultimately infinitely more powerful than any discourse on corporate social responsibility.

I would like to be a bit provocative and ask each of us, business leaders, managers and others, if everything we do every day, everything we decide and everything we organize, is done by having in mind a genuine love for others, for our teams and for our employees.

Debate

The participants who contributed to the debate focused on a few recurring themes :

- The digital revolution permeates all managerial and societal transformations. In large companies as well as in startups, there is a dichotomy between the winners and losers of digitalization ; the digital divide has widened further recently.
- The new requirement for transparency is also noted with the pervasive role of social networks. It is a source of progress but also a source of concern : there is a risk of interference with liberties and the need to respect the part of mystery and interiority in each person.
- The need to have a purpose, a new fashionable mission assigned to corporations, is often publicized but to be credible in the long term, it must be accompanied with concrete actions by their leaders.

Several participants were concerned by the time frame of the decision process. Faced with the current mood favoring the short term they stressed the importance of the long term necessary for decisions to take full effect. In terms of governance, the board of directors could be the place where questions are asked which would entice the operational staff to reflect on the long-term effect of its decisions.

All of a leader's personal efforts to promote the dignity of each member of his team will be in vain if they are not supported by a surrounding network of trusted, like-minded managers. A common front capable of making a difference can thus come alive. Only such a collective wisdom can have a lasting impact in society.

We have entered a phase of profound change and all businesses will face many upheavals in the future. Among them, family businesses around the world have shown that they can be more resilient in stormy weather. Because they are at the crossroads between several ecosystems : family, business, territories, regions, nations, cultures. They constitute a laboratory of good practices : attentive leaders can learn to combine in their action the emotions and altruism specific to families with the rationality and self-centeredness which are traditionally the rule in the economic sphere. In the long term, family businesses experience a real challenge, that of the transmission between generations, hence the obligation to widen their horizon and their purpose to reach goals that go beyond their leaders, to a common good which is external to them and broader.

To integrate the short and the long term, the opinions of experts and science, environmental and climatic considerations, in short, all the complexity present in business, requires staying tuned despite criticism from all sides, staying in the flow of things and to exercise, at its different levels of

responsibility, the mandate received while daring to engage in gratuitousness and show respect for others whenever possible.

As to subsidiarity, a concept which is at the heart of the Social Doctrine of the Church, it was noted that it should in no way be confused with delegation which still involves a vertical concept of power. Subsidiarity, especially in a country like France, can be a great tool in negotiations, as long as it is combined with a principle of reality. The current context of increased fluidity in exchanges and increased consideration of CSR is conducive to its development. For some, subsidiarity is also the obvious answer to the failure of the authorities as well as to the growing complexity of the decision making process. A participant remarked that subsidiarity also requires taking into account what is happening around the world.

Regarding solidarity, it was pointed out by some that it cannot be separated from the concept of love. Others, on the contrary, highlighted the difference between the two : solidarity is based on the fact that we depend on each other. Its full implementation requires co-management. Others still doubt that the very notion of selfless action applies in a company, a place where conflicting interests clash, leading to decisions that are necessarily unpleasant for some of the stakeholders. Finally, the humility that is necessary for true solidarity and for the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity were highlighted.

The subject of the media was also raised : they should learn to talk more about the good as well as to have a long-term vision.

Looking for the common good in our inner life

The round table concluded with an exchange on the interior life, which seems a must for a leader whatever his field of activity and which is precisely what allows to act. This interior life should encourage us to put in coherence our actions, our responsibilities and our conscience, the vocation that we feel called to fulfill.

Obviously everyone is asking himself this question, since every human being has a conscience, and this dialogue we are talking about is never more than an internal dialogue between oneself and one's own conscience. However, don't we have a collective interest in talking about this subject ?

Some people noted that the evil of the century is indeed acedia, this disease of the soul which consists of an absence of spiritual life, often compensated by hyper activity. But it is also in and through work that one can develop one's inner life. The usefulness of this interior life is even recognized by biologists.

CONCLUSION

by Mgr Antoine de Romanet

What I retain from our discussions are words that have been used very often : gift, gratuitousness, time, money, personal conversion, humility, vision, meaning, sharing, interior life.

During the morning, in a completely legitimate and very understandable way, we, who have been rather well endowed by existence, have asked ourselves what we can do for others and the concern that we can have for the poorest and most destitute. It seems to me - and the last exchanges have been very eloquent on this subject – that we have come to a turning point which is to realize that I am the poor and that I am the one who is fundamentally deprived of what I essentially need the most.

We talked about interior life and there is a point that I would like to develop quickly, that of gratuitousness another word for grace. We are all chasing time, we are all having lots of activities, we are all having to choose between a number of contrary injunctions, financially as well as in terms of our agendas. We are all equal on one score which is that we all have 96 quarter hours per day. Consider a game of chess ; if your 96 spaces are filled by your professional, social, relational activities, etc., if all the spaces are blocked, you are simply unable to move anything. All it takes is to remove a pawn from one space and all of the pawns in your existence can move. This pawn is the quarter of an hour of interiority that you give yourself every day. If you do not dispose of a quarter of an hour of free time to descend into your inner being, listen to your conscience - possibly by relying on the gospel or any other text which will inspire you -to what point are you not a living dead ? What is very interesting is that you can do exactly the same reasoning on the topic of money. If you have reached bottom, if you took the absolutely biggest loan hoping to have it all repaid before retirement, and saving on everything else, you have no room for freedom. My true freedom is precisely in this dimension of gratuitousness that I have in my life, in this gift that I can freely make, and which allows me to give real breathing room to all of the other squares on the chessboard of my existence.

There is a short passage in the Old Testament that touches me enormously, it is the story of the widow of Sarepta : there is a great famine in the country, she is with her son and she is deprived of everything. The prophet comes to her and says : "Please, make me a pancake for my dinner". She replies : "I just have a little flour and a little oil, I'm about to make a meal for myself and my son, we will eat it and we will die". The prophet insisted : "make me a cake first". She makes a cake and offers it to the prophet. "Jar of flour will not run out, jar of oil will not run out" until several months go by and fertility returns. This woman gave her all, and her all was not great - it was a meal ; and she got what she needed and what she needed was to eat until the rain came.

Our "all", whatever our diplomas, our experiences and our medals, is not much. What we need is something that goes infinitely beyond us and is eternal life. The real question in our existence is "what do you have that was not given to you" ? We know it well, what matters the most to us in our

life we received for free. Without wanting to belabor the point, I would like to point out that today we have just lived a day of grace, because everything has been free : our time, sharing our thoughts, air, bread, water ... Totally free. A true moment of grace. "All that is not given is lost," as Father Ceyrac said. Finally, in my life, all that will gain value is what I give for free, since what I have to receive for free far exceeds any other consideration, but I can only receive to the extent that I give ; it is the same hand that gives and that receives. It is in the weakness but in the entirety of my gift that I can be changed to collect the absolute of God's gift.

This dimension of giving and gratuitousness that we have ultimately sought throughout this day, I think it binds to us, to each of our consciences, to each of our personal journeys, in a particularly strong and meaningful way and I hope that it will be one of the gifts of grace that will stay with us all.