

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference firmly believes that the family-type farm is good for families on the land and for the Nation as a whole. This conviction is based upon the spiritual, cultural, and social values as well as upon economic values. Man needs "daily bread" to live as a man, and the church has worked for the rightful betterment of this world in which all live, but it is also true that "Man shall not live by bread alone."

The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. Those who live on the land, working in close harmony with nature and its Creator, have many opportunities daily to commune with their God. Their work deals with the life of plants and animals, a life that is inexhaustible in its expression, rich in allusions to God the Creator and Provider. Man can place the seed in well-prepared soil at the right time but he cannot give it life. Only God can give that.

I would like to quote from Pope John's encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*, paragraph 215. He states, "Let men make all the technical and economic progress they can, there will be no peace nor justice in the world until they return to a sense of their dignity as creatures and sons of God, who is the first and final cause of all created being. Separated from God a man is but a monster, in himself and toward others." We are not saying that people in the city cannot and do not worship God, but we insist that people on the land have more reminders and more opportunities to think of their Creator.

So the spiritual values that are inherent in this life on the land is the important point that I'm making there.

Work of man has a subjective and an objective factor inherent in its very performance. When man works he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. This subjective development of man is more important than the objective results produced by his labor. The work on the land demands a capacity for orientation and adaptation, patient waiting, a sense of responsibility, and a spirit of perseverance and enterprise. A man is more precious for what he is than for what he has. I think that can be the crux of all these considerations—the value of a human being, man; and if we get into the greed and just striving for the money that is involved, we lose sight of the value of man.

We have heard a lot, ever since our country was young, about the beneficial effects upon young men and women growing up close to nature and good, honest work. And it isn't a myth either. Check the 4-H Club work, the FFA and FHA programs; review the biographies of many of our Nation's leaders. We could also perhaps come up with a story at the present time as we listen to the reports of the boys that have given their lives for our country over in Vietnam, especially in Iowa. I've been becoming very conscious of that the last couple of months. A good number of the boys—I would say the majority of the boys are from rural areas, some little towns you don't even know where they are. I think if we would go into research on that, we might find that this very statement is borne out—that the people on the land develop a sense of responsibility and enterprise and initiative that other forms of living do not give them the opportunity to develop.