



From the desk of the CEO  
Mario J. Paredes

December 30, 2019

**A NEW YEAR  
TO REJUVENATE OURSELVES  
AND RENEW ...**

"New year, new life," the familiar saying goes. The start of a new calendar year is a great opportunity to review, evaluate, adjust, straighten up, heal, move on, forgive ourselves and others, forget and rid ourselves of the old and what hinders us, reinvent, undertake, and begin anew... An opportunity to feel that we can renew and start again with new courage, hopes, and energies on the road we are driving toward the realization of our best hopes and ideals ... a new opportunity to build hope. A new year, in short, is an auspicious occasion to make us "new" like the year that's beginning.

And this hope for the "new" has never been as necessary as it is now in our current social, national, and global circumstances. Every minute, the media gives us news riddled with bad news, discouraging news about the lives of men and peoples: senseless news of life, suicides, crimes, family conflicts and breakups, corruption in the lives of political leaders and the religious, corruption in the administration of public affairs, neglect and poor quality in the administration of essential public services (health, housing, education, etc.), impoverishment of the majority versus the scandalous enrichment and excesses of some elites, national internal conflicts and the threat of conflicts and wars between nations, the arms race, electoral and political disappointment in many nations about the poor performance of their leaders, hopelessness, injustice, a thousand forms of violence and death.

What can be said amidst this anguishing panorama that, in the daily reality of the world and in the news, seems to suffocate the signs of goodness, truth, justice, righteousness, and honesty that also survive—who can deny it—in many men and women in every corner of the earth?



**From the desk of the CEO**  
**Mario J. Paredes**

We all have to rethink each day and with great seriousness and honesty: What is the individual life purpose we want for each of us? What type of society do we want to build for ourselves and for those who come after us? What type of society do we want to live in? What type of political system do we yearn for, choose, and want for our people? In what type of economic system do we want to live and enjoy the gift of our human existence every day? And, very importantly, what is the planet that we want to inhabit in order to deliver it, with the best possible conditions for human life, to future generations?

The overwhelming, worldwide failure of political and economic plans is resounding and undeniable. The uprisings, demands, and justified social protests among so many peoples and in so many nations are also obvious. The divide between the few who have so much and the many who have nothing has not been reversed or overcome. Still, there are threats to world peace that remain dormant. The excessive macro-economic growth of large corporations and multinationals in the face of the misery of so many. The suffering of the millions of men and women who, emigrating from their homelands in order to seek a better future, is approaching us and beckoning to us from all parts of the world. The hunger of millions against the indifferent comfort of a few. The dishonest and corrupt management of propaganda, elections, and the agenda of politics and politicians. The inequity, injustice, and violence scattered across the globe demonstrate our failures, selfishness, and social frustrations and, at the same time, point out our greatest challenges.

And at the bottom of all this lies, in praxis, in daily life and in the relationships of our individual lives, the absence of the most basic and profound values of human beings and a lack of authority, transparency, and consistency between what we believe and what we practice, between what we live and what we aspire to. A hypocritical inconsistency that translates into institutions and social structures that have been corrupted by the unbridled selfish and hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, greed, and ambition at all costs for possessing and the desire for the power to crush and repress the best ideals of humans.



**From the desk of the CEO**  
**Mario J. Paredes**

What do we have to do? Where do we have to walk together and join the best efforts and hopes of all? The time has come to change stereotypes and social models that no longer work because they produce the adverse, inhumane, and catastrophic fruits and circumstances aforementioned. The time has come to put the common good before the individual good. To prioritize the common goals and objectives (environmental, social, and governmental) of all before the individual profits of large companies and financial corporations. The time has come to say yes to life and abundant life against a culture of death. It is time to say yes to solidarity, freedom, truth, honesty, dialogue, participation, peace, respect for different cultures, and for nature and to turn our backs to selfish individualism, consumerism, intolerance, injustice, discrimination, marginalization, moral and administrative corruption, and all forms of inequity and violence.

If we want to overcome the abundant and very serious evils that assault today's human community, we must aspire to live a new year where respect for the person and for human life supersedes any other value or interest, in order to achieve the construction of a new society and a better world in which ethics prevail over technology, service trumps power, the worker is more important than the capital, and the transcendent supersedes the immanent and ephemeral.

I wish you all a happy new year 2020, which will be happy as long as we, all of us, want it and build it!