



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO JACQUES DIOUF
ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD FOOD DAY***

15 october 1999

Mr Director General,

On the occasion of World Food Day, His Holiness Pope John Paul II has asked me to convey his encouragement to all the members of your organization for their action on behalf of those suffering from hunger in the world.

This year's theme, "Youth against Hunger", shows your intention to appeal to young people to be more and more resolutely involved in the struggle against hunger, as well as for greater justice in sharing the benefits of development and for greater solidarity among nations, a perspective that is one of the FAO's main objectives. This invitation is particularly appropriate as the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 draws near, for it makes it possible to give concrete expression to the longing for peace shared by all peoples of the world. It echoes in a way the message addressed to young people by the Second Vatican Council, to take "the torch from the hands of their elders" in order to build tomorrow's society.

The Church encourages society's leaders to be ever more attentive to individuals and to peoples, with respect for the dignity, the freedom and the rights of each one. She trusts in young people, who, idealistic, full of energy and keen to "widen" their hearts on a global scale, will be able to make prophetic acts and forge links of solidarity and brotherhood, so that tomorrow no human being will suffer hunger, live in poverty or be excluded from economic or relational networks. The Pope also urges the young to act more firmly on behalf of the world's poor, hungry, needy and marginalized. It is an issue of justice and charity, without which the world would lose its human sense and would be unable to build peace. In fact, the presence on our earth of millions of people who still suffer from malnutrition is intolerable for humanity. It is also a real and permanent

threat to peace.

His Holiness therefore invites young people who long to live in a world of brotherhood and peace to act in every circumstance out of love for neighbour, in order to create conditions of peace, the peace which young people must make their best friend, living with them in invisible friendship (cf. St Augustine, Sermons 357, 1).

It is important to draw the attention of contemporary men and women to the need to see that creation is properly managed and used; it is also their task to educate the young about planetary issues, to awaken in them a sense of the dignity of manual, especially agricultural, work and to teach them to use our earth's resources with moderation, in order to preserve it for future generations.

On this World Food Day, the Holy Father invokes the blessings of almighty God on the national representatives to the FAO, on those who work within the framework of this organization and on those who are associated with their activity.

I am pleased to convey this message to you on behalf of His Holiness, asking you, Mr Director General, to accept the expression of my great esteem.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano
Secretary of State

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