



The Holy See

*MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II FOR THE WORLD LITERACY DAY 1981**

1. The 1981 International Literacy Day occurs at the beginning of the last twenty years which separate mankind from the year 2000 and during which UNESCO hopes to be able to reap the final results of its efforts to bring literacy to every human being in the world. This hope is shared by all those who have at heart the peaceful progress of the human community.

2. Everyone has an equal right to be free, or to be freed, from the painful and humiliating condition of being illiterate, a condition which is not a negligible cause of the poverty and handicaps that weigh on the least advanced peoples.

Thanks to literacy, every human being becomes more of a man, in himself and with others, but also for others; thanks to it, he can achieve his complete and harmonious development, on the spiritual, cultural and material plane, and learn to possess this fundamental asset, to develop it and use it always for his own good and that of the community.

3. The literacy effort must ensure nearly a billion persons a great hope that cannot be disappointed by those who, having already attained a higher level of global development, have the duty to make others share in it. It is a question of a service which man renders to man and in which each one must do his utmost to enable all to grow as human beings. In this way everyone will be able to lead a more human life, in freedom and respect for their dignity and their transcendence.

I am sure that these affirmations coincide with the thought and the convictions of the vast majority of men and women of good will, who launch a justified and energetic appeal in view of a general commitment, both on the national plane and on that of world cooperation, to bring about the changes required by a new inter-national order as well as for an increased search for, and the best possible use of, all the means necessary for this very noble struggle.

Knowing the results already achieved, I am anxious to congratulate you, Mr. Director, as well as all those who are working, with generosity, tenacity and effectiveness, in the area of literacy. I also wish to renew my warm encouragement and my most fervent good wishes for everyone.

From the Vatican, 2 September 1981

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