



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS STAFF\***

*New York*

*Tuesday, 2 October 1979*

*Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,*

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to greet all the Members of the Staff of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and to reiterate before you my firm belief in the extraordinary value and importance of the role and activities of this international institution, of all its agencies and programmes.

When you accepted to serve here, either in study or research, in administrative tasks or in planning, in secretarial or logistical activities, you did so because you believed that your work, often hidden and unnoticed in the complexity of this operation, would constitute a valuable contribution to the aims and objectives of this Organization. And rightly so. For the first time in the history of humanity, there exists the possibility for all peoples, through their representatives, to meet constantly with each other in order to exchange views; to confer on and to seek peaceful solutions, effective solutions to the conflicts and problems that are causing suffering in all parts of the world to large numbers of men, women and children. You are part of this great and universal endeavour. You provide the necessary services, information and help that are indispensable for the success of this exciting adventure—you guarantee continuity of action and implementation. Each one of you is a servant of the unity, peace and brotherhood of all men.

Your task is no less important than that of the Representatives of the nations of the world, provided you are motivated by the great ideal of world peace and fraternal collaboration between all peoples: what counts is the spirit with which you perform your tasks. Peace and harmony

among the nations, the progress of all humanity, the possibility for all men and women to live in dignity and happiness depend on you, on each one of you, and on the tasks that you perform here.

The builders of the pyramids in Egypt and Mexico, of the temples in Asia, of the cathedrals in Europe were not only the architects who laid out the designs, or those who provided financing, but also, and in no small way, the carvers of the stones, many of whom never had the satisfaction of contemplating in its entirety the beauty of the masterpiece that their hands helped create. And yet, they were producing a work of art that would be the object of admiration for generations to come.

You are in so many ways the carvers of the stones. Even a lifetime of dedicated service will not always enable you to see the finished monument of universal peace, of fraternal collaboration and of harmony between peoples. Sometimes you will catch a glimpse of it, in a particularly successful achievement, in a problem solved, in the smile of a happy and healthy child, in a conflict avoided, in a reconciliation of minds and hearts achieved. More often, you will experience only the monotony of your daily labours, or the frustrations of bureaucratic entanglements. But know that your work is great and that history will judge your achievements with favour.

The challenges that the world community will face in the coming years and decades will not diminish. The rapidly changing pace of world events, the tremendous steps forward of science and technology will increase both the potential for development and the complexity of the problems. Be prepared, be capable, but above all have confidence in the ideal you serve.

Look upon your contribution not only in terms of increased industrial production, of enhanced efficiency, of eliminated suffering. Above all look upon it in terms of growing dignity for every human being, of increased possibility for every person to advance to the fullest measure of spiritual, cultural and human completion. Your calling as international servants takes its value from the objectives pursued by the international organizations. These aims transcend the mere material or intellectual spheres; they reach out into the moral and spiritual fields. Through your work, you are able to extend your love to the entire human family, to every person who has received the wondrous gift of life, so that all may live together in peace and harmony, in a just and peaceful world, where all their basic needs—physical, moral and spiritual—may be fulfilled.

You have in the visitor who stands before you someone who admires what you do and who believes in the value of your task.

Thank you for your welcome. I send my heartfelt greetings also to your families. I especially hope that you may experience a deep and never fading joy in the work that you perform for the benefit of all men, women and children on this earth.

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