



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC CENTER
FOR THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

Friday, 10 May 2002

*Your Eminence,
Mr President,
Friends of the International Catholic Centre for UNESCO,*

1. I am pleased to welcome you this morning, to thank you and to tell you once again of my confidence on the occasion of your 30th General Assembly that took up the theme: "*Intercultural Dialogue: a Chance for Humanity*". I thank the President, Mr Bernard Lacan, for his kind words. I greet the members of the Catholic Centre, especially the director, Mr Gilles Deliance, and express to you my gratitude for your activity at the service of culture. I am delighted that the Holy See's Permanent Observer to UNESCO, Mons. Renzo Frana, is with you, and I thank him for all his work over the years with this organization of the United Nations.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the appointment of the First Permanent Observer of the Holy See to UNESCO in the person of Mons. Roncalli, Bl. Pope John XXIII. Since then, the Holy See has carefully followed UNESCO's activities in the fundamental sectors of education, sciences, human sciences, communications and information, so many aspects of culture, "the fundamental reality which unites us and which is at the basis of the establishment and purposes of UNESCO" (*Address to UNESCO*, Paris, 2 June 1980, n. 8; *ORE*, 23 June 1980, p. 9).

2. Your centre facilitates the work and cooperation of the Catholic International Organizations that participate in the important activities of UNESCO connected with education and formation. In your mission, I encourage you to spread your specific knowledge and wisdom through your projects and publications, enabling our contemporaries to take up the serious cultural challenges of our time

and give them responses worthy of the human person.

The great realms of education and culture, of communications and science, entail a fundamental ethical dimension. To respond appropriately, it is necessary to acquire a correct scientific knowledge, to undertake a deep reflection and to offer the enlightenment of Christian humanism and the universal moral values. The family must be the object of special attention, because the family has the first responsibility for educating the young.

3. I encourage you to pursue your work without respite so that there may be a fruitful dialogue between Christ's message and the cultures. I am grateful to you for the service you carry out in the formation of Catholic experts, taking pains to train them seriously and to root them in the faith, suitably preparing them to bring the world a credible witness, nourished by the Word of God and the teaching of the Church. It would be desirable that your research on scientific, cultural and educational topics, carried out in the light of the Gospel, be made available regularly and easily to the Catholics who work in these areas according to the possibilities offered by modern technology.

In choosing to hold your meeting in Rome, you show your attachment to the Successor of Peter and to the Holy See. Touched by this gesture, I thank you for the Church's mission with UNESCO that you carry out generously and attentively, at the service of all men and women.

I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to each and everyone of you, and to all your loved ones.