



The Holy See

*Message of His Holiness John XXIII for the Special Meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organization**

14 March 1963 In our concern with being faithful to the doctrine of Christ and in accordance with the purest tradition of the Church, we have been pleased to promote, since its inauguration in 1960, the «Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign» so laudably launched and pursued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. At a time when, within the framework of this vast Campaign, the «World Freedom-from Hunger Week» is about to begin, and when the «World Food Congress» is approaching, we want to say how timely are these new initiatives, in our opinion, and how much we wish that they may benefit from universal collaboration. The problem is really to put human energies to work on a very large scale. In the minds of its originators, this noble undertaking has only one aim – which would of itself be meritorious and would command respect – to alleviate temporarily what is lacking to peoples who are in the process of development. It aims primarily at encouraging the unanimous effort, of all those in position to do so, to teach human beings how to use fully the superabundant gifts which the Creator has placed at the disposal of humanity. How many are the expressions of admiration, in the Holy Scripture, at the marvels of Creation and the bounty of God, who has bestowed upon man «dominion over the works of (His) hands» and «crowned him with glory and honour» (Ps. 8:5 and 6). This control of man over nature, in the words of the inspired author, is every day revealed to be more widespread. Modern means of investigation provide a glimpse of the still almost undiscovered treasures hidden in the depths of the earth and in the seas. It is man's duty to use the gifts of intelligence and will which he has received in his striving to develop these immense riches. But it is also the immediate duty of society, with the resources at its disposal, to bring concrete assistance to those of its members who are deprived of the minimum essential for the normal growth of their personality. St. Paul's warning to the Galatians is still valid, and now more timely than ever: «Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ». (Gal. 6:2). Considering the prodigious increase in transportation and travel facilities in the modern world, one can no longer say that the hunger and malnutrition prevalent in certain regions of the globe are due solely to the insufficiency of presently available natural resources, since those are superabundant in other regions. What is missing is the coordinated effort of mind and will to organize in such a way as to ensure a fair distribution. Also lacking, among developing peoples, is the adequate development of their own resources. May this World Week for the struggle against hunger – and the approaching World Food Congress in Washington – be a call and a stimulant to all men of good will! May they strive hard to speed up projects of agricultural development, to hasten – in line with the conclusions of the recent Geneva Conference – the application of science and technology for the benefit of the less developed regions. In brief, may they strive to promote everywhere a better utilization and a better distribution of human and material resources. In so doing, they will be sure to win the praise and gratitude of all righteous men, and to merit divine blessings in all their fullness. These we personally, wholeheartedly, invoke upon the organizers of these

meritorious initiatives, and upon all those – persons and organizations – that will participate in them or benefit from them.

**Paths to Peace*, p.303-304.

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