



# The Holy See

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**MESSAGE OF PAUL VI  
TO H.E. EMILIO ARENALES CATALAN,  
PRESIDENT OF THE XXIII GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS\***

*To His Excellency, Emilio Arenales Catalan,  
President of the XXIII General Assembly of the United Nations.*

In 1948, the United Nations, after the tragic experience of the Second World War, solemnly published its "Universal Declaration on the Rights of Man", and during the past year this precious document has been placed before universal mankind as an ideal for the community of man. The realization of this goal, as urgent as ever, is still the principal aim of the United Nations, and it remains the basis of effective brotherly collaboration among men without which a true peace can never be achieved. In Our unforgettable visit to the General Assembly, We associated Ourselves with the program of the United Nations in this important field by calling in the ideal of which the human race dreams in its pilgrimage in time and the greatest hope for the world. We stated that "you proclaim here the fundamental rights and duties of man, his dignity, his freedom, and above all his religious freedom". In substance, you have placed before the world ideals which dedicated men have striven to achieve, a fundamental principle expressed in the Constitution of the United States-"All men have been created equal; they have been endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

This Universal Declaration on the Rights of Man is equally important today; it has indicated a course that cannot be abandoned if mankind sincerely wishes to achieve peace. The events of our days, unfortunately, make it evident that this brotherly collaboration in an atmosphere of respect and understanding is still cruelly contradicted in many parts of the world, by racial, ideological and religious discrimination, by the forceful subjection of weaker nations, by political regimes which deprive citizens of just freedom, by recourse to threats and violence instead of recourse to negotiations to resolve conflicts of self-interest. There is a direct relation between human rights and peace. It is impossible to have true and lasting peace where human rights are unrecognized,

violated and trampled upon.

The Catholic Church will not remain indifferent to responsibility towards the unity of the human family. She seeks not to impose new structures or establish juridic norms for the City of Man, but she does insist that these norms be inspired by the principle of respect- for human rights and by the promotion and preservation of these same rights. On January 1st, the universal Church will sponsor a World Day of Peace, and she will emphasize the theme that promotion of the rights of man is the path towards peace. In this We follow closely the example of Christ who has given to the Church the message of love, from which the norms of moral life derive and which sanctions fully the respect owed to the human person.

We call upon you, Your Excellency, and your colleagues, who represent the aspirations of all men, not to cease your efforts to make the Universal Declaration on Human Rights a reality which will bring about the peace so desired by men everywhere. For Our part, by prayer, in season and out, We shall beg God's blessings upon the efforts of the United Nations for men, brothers of one human family and children of one God.

*From the Vatican, December 4, 1968.*

#### PAULUS PP. VI

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\*AAS 61 (1969), p.60-61;

*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, vol. VI, p.645-646;

OR 11.12.1968 p.1;

ORa n.38 p.3;

*Paths to Peace* p.78.