



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE PAUL VI
TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION***

Thursday, 11 July 1963

Sir!

The organization of the United Nations, of which you are the renowned and efficient Secretary General, is a historical reality of too great importance to leave Us indifferent to this meeting with you, which is, on the contrary, a source of lively emotion.

This is because, Mister Secretary General of the United Nations, the Holy See, which you are visiting today in Our humble person, holds a very high conception of that international organism; it considers it to be the fruit of a civilization to which the Catholic religion, with its driving centre in the Holy See, gave the vital principles; it considers it an instrument of brotherhood between nations, which the Holy See has always desired and promoted, and hence a brotherhood intended to favour progress and peace among men; it considers the United Nations as the steadily developing and improving form of the balanced and unified life of all humanity in its historical and earthly order.

The universality proper to the Catholic Church, with its pulsing heart here in Rome, seems in a way to be reflected from the spiritual sphere into the temporal sphere of the United Nations. The ideologies of those who belong to the United Nations are certainly multiple and diverse, and the Catholic Church regards them with due attention; but the convergence of so many peoples, so many races, so many States in a single organization, intended to avert the evils of war and to favour the good things of peace, is a fact which the Holy See considers as corresponding to its concept of humanity, and included within the area of its spiritual mission in the world.

In recent years, the voice of the Popes, Our Predecessors, was among the first to augur the

formation of a body such as that of which you, Mister U Thant, guide the activities. In his own time, Pope Benedict the Fifteenth desired it; its fundamental criteria were traced with happy foresight by Pope Pius the Twelfth in his Christmas message of nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, and that of September, nineteen hundred and forty-four; then its importance was underlined and its increasingly perfect functioning was encouraged by Pope John the Twenty-third in his last Encyclical Letter, «*Pacem in terris*», the text of which, bearing the autograph signature of the Pontiff, was consigned to you, Mister Secretary, by Cardinal Suenens.

We therefore derive consolation from your visit, and We avail Ourselves of the occasion to renew the expression of Our esteem and of Our hopes for the fundamental programme of the United Nations, especially in regard to the elimination of war, the assistance of developing peoples, and of those in need of defence and promotion, the lawful liberties of individuals and social groups, and the safeguarding of the rights and dignity of the human person.

To these sentiments, then, We add Our good wishes for the true prosperity of the great organization of the United Nations, and for the happy success of its activities, to which you, Sir, are so nobly dedicated.

We pray Almighty God, Our heavenly Father, to grant and fulfil these Our good wishes.

*AAS 55 (1963), p.652-654.

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol.I, p.69-70.

L'Osservatore Romano, 12.7.1963 p.1.

Paths to Peace p.58.
