



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES ****

Vendredi 30 octobre 1964

We are happy to receive in Our residence, and we thank you with all Our heart for this visit which honors Us and permits Us to participate, in some measure, in the 12th session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

We truly feel associated with your meeting, not only because this time you elected, exceptionally, to meet in Rome, but because We are so deeply touched by the painful human problem of refugees. We experienced this same anguish of so many people torn from their first home and roots when We were working in the State Secretariat and following the beginning of the International Office for Refugees, and later the founding of your High Commission. In this, We were merely executing the wise instructions of our unforgettable predecessor Pius XII to serve suffering humanity.

It is a comfort for Us to know that your organization - under the auspices of the United Nations and with the effective aid of many deserving benevolent associations - has been able to provide, during more than ten years of your activity, the conditions needed to permit hundreds of thousands of unfortunates to survive. This humanitarian work continues, and your faith in the justice of this cause permits you to triumph happily over the inevitable difficulties you encounter.

In fact, we should all recognize that aid to refugees is an extremely complex undertaking, for not only must it afford legal protection, but likewise financial and social support, coupled at times with medical and psychological treatment to the oppressed; to which we should add the necessary training of youth and the adaptation to new professions for older members of the human

community.

Your Executive Committee, gentlemen, in its firm wish to help all the various categories of refugees has been able to obtain the confidence and approval of the United Nations General Assembly for programmes allowing you to meet ever-growing needs. Thus, the Office of the High Commissioner has been able to convene highly useful conferences. And it is about to conclude successfully a series of steps which have enabled it to intervene almost anywhere when a difficult situation has been created by the appearance of refugees. The fact that these new groups of refugees have instinctively appealed to you for help is, in itself, a clear recognition of the effectiveness of your moral and humanitarian aid.

As your twelfth session draws to a close and another important stage in assistance to refugees has been reached, We are pleased to tell you how agreeable to Our ears are the noble words of your President and of the High Commissioner, interpreters of your sentiments. You have clearly confirmed your willingness to continue, as intensively as in the past, the efforts needed to provide the asylum of a safe haven to refugees and the warmth of a hearth, which so many unfortunates still lack.

Yours is an act of love toward your neighbours, and your efforts will call forth a world more caring, in which each and all may live in peace, in a safe and well oriented community, imbued with the spirit of reciprocal respect and friendship.

It is from the depth of Our heart that We congratulate you on your devotion to the cause of refugees and formulate the most cordial wishes for the happy conclusion of your task and that We invoke for you, your families and all refugees - unfortunately still so numerous - the abundant grace of Almighty God.

**Paths to Peace p.433-434.*
