



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGE OF PAUL VI
TO THE SCHOOL-CHILDREN
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

Wednesday, 8 February 1967

Dear School-children of the United States,

This is your Holy Father greeting you with affection across the many miles which separate you from the Vatican. Today, we begin the sacred and penitential season of Lent, and We ask you in your goodness and charity to remember the millions of poor, hungry and sick children of the world.

The Pope is the Father of all mankind, and He is saddened to see your little brothers and sisters in far-off lands suffering so much. Many are ill, frail and weak from hunger and malnutrition. What schools they have often have no desks, no windows, no lights and only hardened earth floors. Their homes are ravaged by the elements and are tumble-down. Their sparse clothing hardly protects them against the chilly winds of winter or the burning tropical heat. There are few doctors to care for them when they are sick and little medicine to make them well. Floods and earthquakes have made many homeless. It is for these children whom you hardly know that the Holy Father appeals to you, and He knows that you will be as generous as in the past.

The world needs powerful examples of Christian charity and understanding. By remembering and by renewing in your daily lives your obligations as true followers of Christ you will be giving such an example to the world.

First of all, We ask you to pray for the countless children in other lands who need assistance. Ask God to comfort them and to bless them. Pray that they may see His providence working in all things. In this way you will bring them closer to God.

Lent is a time for penance, and so We ask you to deny yourselves something you may or may not

need. Then you will be able to contribute to the special collection taken up in your school. This will help your Bishops maintain that worldwide program of the Catholic Relief Services which has been most effective in bringing aid to the needy, and especially to the poor children who are sick, undernourished and homeless.

The Bishops need your help, as well as that of the grownups, to carry on this most important work. God will bless your charity. The children, whom you have never seen and from whom you differ in color, religion and customs, will know that you helped them because you loved them. This is the highest form of Christian love.

By making your own contribution to the joint offering of your school during Lent, you will be building peace by promoting and furthering the works of peace - «aid the poor, who still make up an immense multitude of the world's population, help the needy, the weak, the sick, the ignorant . . .». You will come to love and respect the peoples of the world who so want to have harmony and concord. Through the Catholic Relief Services in every part of the world, you will be offering your hand to children in need, and they will clasp it in friendship.

We are confident that you will hear Our appeal, and We are grateful for whatever you will do for your less fortunate brothers and sisters. We now invoke upon you, your good parents, your priests, the religious sisters and brothers and those who teach you, an abundance of heavenly blessings, and in pledge thereof, We lovingly impart Our Apostolic Benediction.