



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE PROMOTERS OF
HUMAN AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES***

*Sydney, Australia
Wednesday, 2 December 1970*

We have made a special point of briefly visiting your institute since it is the first congregation founded in Australia by a person born in Australia. But it is to all teaching Religious that We direct Our greeting while expressing Our esteem for their apostolate and Our deep desire to encourage them in the fulfilment of their vocation as teachers.

We likewise wish to associate with Our greeting your lay co-workers. Their numbers have continually grown, so that they can bring to realization with great success the precious work of education. This encounter-all too short-is not in proportion to the attachment We feel for the cause of the Catholic school, for the Christian education of youth, and for the ever-evolving world of teaching, whether it concerns the communication of secular culture or catechetical instructions. The Catholic school has a particular importance in a secularized world; for the witness given therein is that of consecrated persons who, while having made a radical choice for the kingdom of God, are able with competence to be at the service of the world's progress. We hope that you will not let yourselves be assailed by doubt. Those who serve the Catholic school are still-and, We would say, today more than ever before-great collaborators in the Church's mission.

It is evident that the public authorities, particularly in this country, have responded remarkably to their duty of ensuring the exercise of each man's right to education, and in this it is our duty to congratulate them. Does this mean that the preservation of Catholic schools is no longer

worthwhile? Certainly not: to the extent that the Catholic school, within the context of the liberty so dear to your democratic society, makes possible a form of instruction that is original in its educational value. The Council defined this distinctive character of Christian education when it stated that it has the special aim of creating for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by freedom and charity, of helping the adolescent to live in accordance with his commitments at baptism, and of bestowing a culture illumined by faith (*Gravissimum educationis*, 8).

We know the serious difficulties which you may meet in maintaining your institutions because of limited private resources at a time when progress calls for more and more costly investments in buildings and teaching materials. We believe that the benefits of the Catholic school are worthy of a special effort at all levels to ensure that it can go on being able to respond to the desires of the Church which promoted it, to the just concern of families for a Christian education for their children and to the technical demands of the State which it serves.

In this regard We are happy to note the cordial relations existing between the public authorities and the Catholic schools. We rejoice at the growing forms of partnership being set up between Government schools and independent schools with greater benefit to the education of youth. With all Our heart We invoke the blessing of God on yourselves, your institutes, on the whole body of Catholic teachers and on all of your students.

My dear boys and girls,

When we go on journeys round the world, We are always very happy to meet children like you. You know how Jesus loved people of your age. He loved to have them round him to show them his affection. We have come to see you because We love you too. We wanted to come even more because you are ill. We know that you do not feel well, and We know that you do not like being away from your dear families and your homes. We pray that you will soon get better and be able joyfully to go back to the people you love.

Every child must remember that Jesus was once a child too. Jesus knew everything. But like the other children in Nazareth he wanted to have lessons from his mother, the Virgin Mary; he wanted also to learn a trade from Saint Joseph. Think about the home of Jesus and how God was pleased with it. How happy Mary and Joseph were to see the child Jesus getting on with his work, being the best friend of the other children and saying his prayers with all his heart. That is the example you must follow, children: Jesus is your model and your friend.

We also wish to say a word to the doctors, nurses and all the other people working in this hospital, to assure them of Our esteem and to encourage them to carry on with their admirable work. Christ is your model too, Christ who showed so much sympathy for the sick and infirm and all those afflicted by suffering.

To all of you here present, who in one way or another devote yourselves to the works of mercy, We say again how much importance the Church attaches to this form of charity (Cfr. *Act.* 8). It is especially through dealing with children and with those who are suffering or in need that we avoid the risk-that might possibly be incurred in a social system equipped with very advanced technical aids-of becoming callous.

God bless you, dear children. God bless those who look after you. God bless the people you love and those who love you. May God give courage to those who suffer, and brotherly love to those whom he calls to care for his little ones (Cfr. *Matth.* 25: 40).

We greet you, dear priests, with fatherly affection. You are not unaware of the great place that priests have in the heart of the Pope; with their bishops they are his closest collaborators in the work of salvation. We wish to express Our appreciation of the wonderful work accomplished here in building up this dynamic and generous community which is so attached to the teaching of the Church. You have sown, others reap, but it is always the same harvest with its one and only master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

If age or sickness has caused you to retire from the active ministry, you know that the exercise of your priesthood has not thereby substantially diminished; it has only changed in its expression. By your special conformity to Jesus Christ, you can, today as in the past, carry out his priestly function of praising the Father, through the celebration of Mass and the recitation of the Divine Office. You who are experiencing suffering are being brought close to your Divine Master and being united with him in his redemptive passion. It is, in fact, in Christ and through Christ that suffering has its meaning and finality; when we realize how to endure it patiently, it is transformed into «spiritual offerings, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ» (1 *Petr.* 2: 5; cfr. *Lumen gentium*, 34).

May God bring you comfort, dear brothers in the priesthood. After the example of so many saints who have suffered sickness, may he make of you missionaries of Oceania and of the whole of this earth. With paternal affection in Our heart, We impart to you Our Apostolic Blessing.

Beloved Sons and Daughters,

Our journey has brought Us here to meet you, and it is with joy that We greet you-you who have reached another stage in your lives. We a so wish to greet the Sisters who live here with you and help you, We know the devotedness they show throughout the world, and We are happy to express to them here Our great admiration and to bring them Our encouragement.

Dear friends, the «third age»-as people have begun to call it-is for some people a break which

they sometimes feel deeply. The rhythm of life has slowed down. The kind of work you used to do and which in some way has formed you has changed. You must not have in this period of your life a feeling of failure or disillusionment. Old age is truly a stage in life: it is the fulfilment of adult life. For this technological world, in which the tendency is to consider man only with regard to what he produces, you are a salutary lesson. You teach that there is a dimension of life, made up of a human, cultural, social and spiritual values, whose worth cannot be measured in terms of money, yet it constitutes that which makes men and not machines. The worth of a civilization is measured by the attention it pays to these riches and, consequently, by the guarantees it offers aged persons to be able to live a fitting life as full members of society.

Old age is also the privileged age of freeing oneself from material cares. Your unique experience makes it possible for you to measure the proper value of earthly things. By bringing you close to the Lord in prayer and meditation and by strengthening you in your faith, it gives you the riches that do not pass away. It confers on you a remarkable sense of balance in the face of life as well as in the face of death, which is a meeting with the One who has loved us to the point of dying for us.

May God bless you all. May he comfort you when you suffer. May he help you in that spiritual ascent, in joy and trustfulness, to which we are all called.

Dear friends,

We are happy to have a special meeting with you on the occasion of Our stay in Sydney. A certain number of you have taken part in this journey from its beginning. During these days We have seen you at your work, and We have noticed the fatigue and the sacrifices which it calls for. We express to you Our admiration and Our praise. Besides, We know that you do your task with willingness; public opinion expects it of you-pitilessly, We would say. You play an important role in regard to the great interest your readers and listeners have these days in religious events in the world. Even though you may not be aware of it, you really do contribute by the mere objectivity of your information to saving the man of today from the all too evident risk of being completely taken up with earthly things alone.

We extend a special greeting to the Australian press, whose members are so many and so dynamic. Their courtesy is a reflexion of that of the Australian people, in the midst of whom We are happy to find Ourselves at this moment.

Today your dispatches, your films, your reports and your commentaries speed round the world in an instant. Among the many things said of the press along with the whole of the communications media is that it is World Power Number One. It is certainly difficult to measure its influence: millions of men, whole peoples are affected by your work-and soon it will be all mankind. What a wonderful mission it is for those who place their intelligence at the service of truth and right ! What

a serious, a truly serious responsibility it is for those who abuse their power by supporting prejudices and dividing communities and nations, or who go so far as to turn this noble invention into an instrument of moral perversion.

You are endowed with an acute sensitiveness to the problems of your age. Hence you are not unacquainted with the aspirations of contemporary man, nor are you unmoved by the gulf that unfortunately exists between these desires and their satisfaction. Modern man has riches and many discoveries at his disposal, including those of mass media. Should he not be able to face up positively to his urgent duty of making this world a happy and fraternal one? Our predecessors and We, impelled by the Message which Christ entrusted to Us, have not ceased to encourage concern for others, international solidarity, and brotherhood of the human family-all in the service of development, which is «the new name for peace». These are the key to our human and spiritual destiny. Man knows happiness only when he shares it; he cannot bring his religious aspirations to fulfilment unless he has at least a minimum of well-being.

Here, friends, with confidence in your nobility of spirit and with esteem for your power, we turn to you to give this world of ours reasons for living.

At this moment when mankind as a whole is moving towards the attainment of culture, especially when the transistor brings the journalist's voice into the humblest dwellings, you can be - you must be - the builders of a more just, true and peaceful society. It depends on you more than on many other powerful forces. Be assured that your voice will not be left without an echo. We have trust in man. We believe in the store of goodness in everyone's heart. We know the motives of justice, truth, renewal, progress and brotherhood that lie at the root of so many wonderful undertakings, and even of so many protests and, unfortunately, of violence at times.

It is up to you not to flatter man but to make him aware of his worth and capabilities. Sow the seed of a true ideal, not the pursuit of selfish interests, which end up by lowering and at times degrading him. No, it must be an ideal to make him grow to his true stature as one created in the likeness of God, an ideal to drive him to surpass himself unceasingly, in order to build jointly the brotherly city to which all aspire and to which all have a right. In so doing, you will have the approval of good men, and you will be able to count on God's protection.

The Catholic Church, especially since the fresh impulse of «aggiornamento» that sprang from the Council, is going out to encounter man-the same man whose service is your ambition. For «the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts» (*Gaudium et spes*, 1). Without being bound to any political system or any particular culture, ancient or recent (Cfr. *Ibid.*, 58), the Catholic Church appeals to all its members to undertake, along with all men of goodwill from every race and nation, this peaceful crusade for the good of

man. We hope that in that crusade we will all go forward together.

We invoke upon you and your work the all-powerful blessing of God our Father.

It is a real pleasure for us today to welcome in an especially cordial way you who are the descendants of Australia's first inhabitants. As We express Our affection for you and Our happiness in having your visit, We wish also to say a brief word about your position in today's world.

We know that you have a life style proper to your own ethnic genius or culture-a culture which the Church respects and which she does not in any way ask you to renounce.

The Church proclaims that you, like all other ethnic minorities, have all human and civic rights-in every way the equal of those in the majority. You have likewise certain duties and obligations. By reason of the common good, these necessitate the harmonizing of your activities in a spirit of brotherhood and collaboration for the benefit of the society to which you belong.

In this regard, however, it must be clear - and We would like to stress it - that the common good never can be used legitimately as a pretext to harm the positive values of your particular way of life. Society itself is enriched by the presence of different cultural and ethnic elements.

For Us, you and the values which you represent are precious. We deeply respect your dignity and reiterate Our deep affection for you.

We pray that all the blessings of Christ's uplifting Gospel may be yours in abundance.

We are happy to reply to your greeting and your welcoming wishes. We wish to express Our respect and esteem for your faith in a God who created man and the universe. As you know, the Catholic Church has wished, particularly during its recent Ecumenical Council, to enter into dialogue with the whole world, and especially with religious people-a dialogue making it possible for us to serve harmoniously all men without distinction of race, belief or opinion. The Church's purpose in so doing is to promote peace and well-being, those blessings which God himself desires that men should have.

This is why We are so happy at this encounter. Rest assured that We will keep you in Our thoughts. We pray to God for you who have come here, for your families, for your country, and for all your dear ones.

We rejoiced when we learned how members of the Jewish community in Australia desired to be

associated with the welcome being prepared for Us and that some took part in the work of organization itself. On the occasion of Our visit here We wish to recall a statement of the Second Vatican Council: «Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogues» (*Nostra aetate*, 4). It is Our hope that understanding and respect will lead to esteem and love, and We assure the members of the Jewish community that We have all these feelings in Our heart for them.

We would need more time to give your group the attention which it truly deserves. We are very happy to meet you, you who represent here today the towns and cities of the great nation of Australia, the different colonies of those who have immigrated here and the Red Cross organization.

We have not seen very much of Australia, but in a way it is the whole of Australia that has come to Us in you. Please tell your fellow-citizens how touched the Pope has been by the warmth of your welcome. Please tell them that he wishes them success in the great task of building up this immense country. Let no one forget that upright conduct, both of individuals and of groups, must always be held in the highest esteem for its fundamental worth. It is the essential foundation of harmonious human society. It is the surest guarantee of genuine and lasting human progress.

To you who represent those who have immigrated here, We wish to say that We appreciate how painful it can be to have to leave behind one's loved ones and one's native land to go to a new country. Australia, thank God, has given you a warm welcome and for this We congratulate both the public authorities and the leaders of the Church. Without rejecting your own values, try to live in such a way that, by inserting yourselves into the society that has welcomed you, you may ensure for it that unity which is essential for the good of all. Stand fast by your religious convictions, and in this diverse society be the witnesses to the values found in the one Church of Jesus Christ, that Church which down the centuries has skilfully adopted the most different cultural resources and which has entered into the different civilizations in order to present the Christian message to the world (Cfr. *Gaudium et spes*, 58).

The Red Cross organization is one that We know very well. How many times has it exercised its beneficent activity and worked side by side with Our Caritas Internationalis and its national branches? In this world still tormented by wars and all too often the victim of natural disasters, the members of the Red Cross continue to provide their voluntary aid and their skilful work in the service of good. The Lord must surely bless a work so profoundly in accord with the Gospel spirit. To you all We offer Our encouragement. May God bestow most powerful assistance upon those whom you represent.

We express Our profound gratitude to you for the joy you have given Us during Our stay in

Sydney. We know what minute preparation and unremitting devotion were behind the faultless organization of the various meetings We have had. Thanks to you, it has been possible for Us during Our stay to come close to a people that is hospitable, dynamic, and united in its diversity. You have thus facilitated the realization of the spiritual aims of Our journey, enabling Us to bring to the greatest possible number of communities the message of joy and peace entrusted to Us by Jesus Christ.

May God reward you a hundredfold.

As a father We joyfully give you, your families and all who helped to make Our stay a success Our blessing.

To all of you assembled here outside the Cathedral We wish to express Our paternal affection and Our deep gratitude for all the manifestations of respect and of filial attachment to the humble successor of Saint Peter which have surrounded Us during Our stay among you.

In a special way We would like to thank those who have so freely and ably given their services to ensure that Our visit to Sydney would be carried out successfully.

We express to all of you Our good wishes for your happiness, your peace and your fidelity to your faith.

With these intentions We call down upon all of you gathered here and upon those who have not been able to come to meet Us an abundance of divine blessings.
