



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE QUAKER OATS COMPANY***

*Consistory Hall
Monday, 8 May 1989*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you here today.

The Quaker Oats Company which you represent has a long tradition of growth, not only in corporate or economic terms, but also in regard to humanitarian efforts. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, your company showed genuine concern for those who were suffering hardship, and sought to provide for the financial stability of its many employees. In more recent years, the Quaker Oats Foundation has given generous support to various programs which seek to meet people's needs, including many which have been sponsored by Catholic institutions, churches, schools, hospitals and other agencies. I wish to express my appreciation of this clear sense of social solidarity.

This humanitarian service reminds us that business enterprises have an important role to play in society, and in fostering those spiritual and moral values which lie at its foundation. Those of you who are here today come from various Christian denominations and from Judaism. You are aware of the rich spiritual heritage which we have received from the Judeo-Christian tradition. That tradition calls us to reflect deeply upon the spiritual and moral aspects of all human activity. As men and women made in the image and likeness of God (*Gen. 1, 26-27*), we have been called to a responsible stewardship over all creation. Our faith in God not only provides us with a source of personal strength and integrity, but also challenges us to cooperate with the Creator in the development of a better world. Faith forms our conscience, and makes us realize that any success, in business or elsewhere, is God's free gift. As the Psalmist once put it:

“Unless the Lord builds the house, / those who built it labor in vain” (*Ps.* 127, 1).

Faith thus gives us a perspective for all our activity. From our spiritual roots, too, come the strength and determination to confront the moral issues and crises of our time. Your work makes you sensitive to the tragic problem of world hunger, which in some places has reached catastrophic proportions. “In the modern world... starvation claims so many victims, especially among the very young” (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 44).

The past record of the Quaker Oats Company in meeting many human needs is in itself a stimulus and a challenge to future efforts. The growing awareness of the interdependence that unites individuals and nations in our time requires “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is... to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (*Ibid.* 38). None of us can close our eyes to the conditions of the poor. None of us can close our ears to the cry of those who are innocent victims of economic disasters.

Dear friends: for the blessings we have received from the hand of God, let us be thankful. And let us pray that we may continue to share all that we have received with those in need. Let us make our own the prayer of the Psalmist:

“The earth has yielded its fruits / God; our God, has blessed us./ May God bless us, / and may all the ends of the earth fear him!” (*Ps.* 67, 7-8).

Indeed, may his blessings be with you and your families.

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