



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 MEMBERS OF THE
NATIONAL CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS**

*Sydney, Australia
Tuesday, 1 December 1970*

Dear Sons and Daughters,

At the Second Vatican Council the members of the laity have seen their place in the Church solemnly recognized in a new way. While it is true that, in accordance with Christ's call, certain people fulfil within the Church special functions of ministry, teaching and government, all Christians are recognized to be equal «in regard to the dignity and activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ». All share responsibility for the progress of the kingdom of God (*Lumen gentium*, 32-33). It is therefore a mistake to separate on the one hand an active category, the ecclesiastical authority, and on the other a passive category, the laity. You who direct the National Catholic Organizations have understood this well, and We congratulate you for it.

Your activities are many-sided and diverse, and this reflects very well the richness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed to each one according as he chooses (Cfr. 1 *Cor.* 12: 11). To all your organizations We wish prosperity and apostolic fruitfulness, whether their aim be personal consecration or the active spreading of the Gospel, charitable activity of the working for the renewal of the temporal order. The fields are vast and there is room for a generous response from everyone who wishes to live fully his baptismal commitment and the graces of his state.

It is not possible for Us to tell you at this moment everything that is in Our heart. Allow Us simply to draw your attention to two points.

It is Our earnest wish that your organizations - those at least whose aims and recruitment allow it - should open their doors to youth. Theirs is the age of dynamism. Young people realize the value of dedication for others; they are instinctively drawn to teamwork provided they do not feel that they are being used but rather that they are taking a real part in the work in which they are invited to collaborate.

Although the Church's aims are spiritual, she has a true moral responsibility in secular matters. To her belongs preeminently the task of forming consciences for the sake of the integral perfection, even in the temporal order, of every man and of the whole man (Cfr. *Populorum progressio*, 42).

The family apostolate, social action, Christian commitment in civic and political life, the giving of that aid so badly needed by the Third World-all these are spheres for the laity's activity. Is it not your special vocation to seek the Kingdom of God precisely through the ordered management of temporal things, in accordance with God's plan? It is Our hope that there may arise apostles who - animated by the Gospel spirit - will provide the ferment necessary for the consecration of the world (Cfr. *Lumen gentium*, 31).

In expressing these wishes We are happy to invoke upon you and upon the members of your organizations the blessing of God.