



The Holy See

***APPEAL OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
FOR THE CHILDREN
SUFFERING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD***

Wednesday, 7 March 1973

Dear children,

This is the hope speaking to you from the Vatican.

Each year at this time it is our practice to remind you of the millions of children throughout the world who are in need of your help and the help of your parents. Hungry and sick, many of these boys and girls have no one to turn to, except to the people in richer countries such as the United States. Many times their only source of help is what you make possible through your small acts of sacrifice and self-denial during Lent.

You know, boys and girls, that in some countries of the world there is still violence, and so often it is the children who suffer most. Through your Catholic Relief Services, you can do much to help the children of these countries.

In other parts of the world, also, many children suffer silently because their countries have not shared equally in the world's riches. Millions of these boys and girls have no schools; no doctors to treat them when they are sick; not enough food to keep them healthy. For some, things are made even worse by disasters, such as floods and earthquakes. Our heart goes out particularly to the refugees. We know of those, for instance, who have left their homes to seek refuge in camps where there is little to eat, and where disease and death are ever present. When one is hungry it hurts. When one is hungry and homeless, it hurts even more.

For this reason, each year we are encouraged when we learn of the charity of the generous people of America. You may think that your own part in this great work is not important. This, boys and girls, is not the case. Actually, the little things you do, when added all together, become a mighty force for good. Each little help you give will probably keep another child alive.

We are happy to learn also that this year, in the high schools throughout your country, the bishops are encouraging American youth to become involved in easing the misery of the people of the poorer countries. They are encouraging the young people to support a particular project, a particular work of charity. For example, providing the money needed for digging a well, or supplying tools for a workman, or seeds for a farmer.

Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick and giving drink to the thirsty are God's work. We know you will want to be part of it again. We are pleased that you will share in this Lenten appeal, through the Catholic schools or through your parish religious instruction classes.

Our Blessed Lord will be glad, too, that you have chosen to do this once again, because, by helping organizations like Catholic Relief Services, you show your love not only for your neighbor, but for Christ himself.

Thank you, boys and girls, for your zeal and for your generosity. In Christ's name, we are pleased to impart to you, to your dear parents and teachers, to the priests and religious of your parish, and to all our sons and daughters in America, our affectionate Apostolic Blessing: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.