



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
«AMERICAN JUSTINIAN SOCIETY OF JURISTS»**

Saturday, 12 July 1975

Dear friends,

Once again it is a pleasure for us to welcome the members of the American Justinian Society of Jurists.

You have come to Rome to mark the tenth anniversary of your foundation and to find new inspiration to carry out the aims of your association. In particular, you have gathered to study the theme: "The function and figure of the Judge".

On our part we are greatly pleased to see the solicitude that you have for the administration of justice. We are confident that your discussions on this important topic will be fruitful and that your reflections in this regard will draw inspiration from the great expressions of our Judeo-Christian tradition.

You undoubtedly know what responsibility the Sacred Scriptures assign to the Judge, and how they extol the dignity of his mission. May all of you have an acute awareness of this lofty role at the service of justice and therefore of mankind. We exhort you especially to safeguard the rights of the destitute, and to each of you and your esteemed colleagues we repeat the inspired words: «Open your mouth, decree what is just; defend the needy and the poor» (*Prov. 31, 9*).

And in the privileged role you play to defend the rights of your fellowmen, we hope that you will indeed exercise the full measure of leadership that is yours as judges and therefore as distinguished citizens of your country and of the world community. You are specially qualified by your training and your experience to make your voice heard-individually and collectively-on the

great legal issues that touch the very moral fabric of mankind and all civilization.

With a sense of even greater urgency we repeat today the words we spoke to you on a former visit: «We hope the deliberations for which you have come to Rome will strengthen you in your commitment to uphold human dignity with liberty and justice for all. And it is our prayer that in your work you will always be effective defenders of the sacredness of human life and of man's inalienable right to life. . . . In particular, may your efforts be successful in ensuring for the unborn child the due protection of the law» (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, XI, 1973, p. 728).

And as we encourage you in this role of leadership for the good of humanity, and remind you of the singular contribution that you are able to make, we once again invoke upon you all the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit.