



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF UNDA

*To the Reverend Agnellus Andrew, OFM
President of UNDA*

DURING THESE early days of our ministry as Successor of Peter we are happy to address a message of congratulation and blessing to the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television as its representatives gather in Cologne to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Association's foundation.

It is a pleasant task, and we approach it with great alacrity. Having followed closely the events of the past two months at the Holy See, we are very conscious of the part radio and television play in the life of the world and in the life of the Church, and of the capacity of the media to unite people in the celebration of events which deeply touch their lives. We realize the goodness of God, who has put these extraordinary gifts at our disposal. Also – and we are glad to have the occasion to say this – we feel greatly indebted to the very many radio and television companies which have made it possible in these recent days for the sons and daughters of the Church to know the face and hear the voice of their new Father, Servant and Pastor, and to make, as it were, his immediate personal acquaintance. We express our grateful thanks to each individual producer and technician who has in any way helped in making it possible for us to speak directly to the Church and to the world, thus giving personally the assurance of our love and of our willing commitment to pastoral service.

With special affection and gratitude we address our congratulations to UNDA on this occasion of its Golden Jubilee, and we would wish the representatives of 109 countries, gathered together in Cologne as the guests of our dearly beloved brothers, Cardinal Joseph Höffner and the Bishops of the German Conference, to know that the Pope associates himself with them in their joyful celebration. With them we thank Almighty God for the graces and gifts of the past fifty years and we share also in their sense of indebtedness to the German Bishops for the generous aid and

encouragement that have been given to UNDA since its foundation in Cologne itself in 1928.

In the words of the Book of Revelation: "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first" (*Ap 2,19*).

And we well know that the mention of "patient endurance" will bring poignantly to your minds those many associates of yours who are even now working, and with great courage and dedication, in situations of perplexity, hardship or difficulty. Be assured that the Pope is united with you in your concern for them, in your prayers, and in your pride and admiration for them. May they take courage in the thought that the sign of the Cross is the best possible indication that their work is not without fruit.

The loyalty and faithful dedication which UNDA has demonstrated towards the See of Peter over the past fifty years are not forgotten; they have, in fact, been a real support and comfort to our predecessors. In indicating their trust in the Association, our predecessors have not hesitated to enlist the expert counsel of its members when framing the decrees and instructions which now guide the Church's communications workers in their various media.

In the part of UNDA's Statutes where its aims are set out, two words occur which may well be taken as the starting point for your second half-century's activity. The words are "apostolic" and "professional". Your Jubilee is not only an occasion for celebrating the achievements of the past; it is, as you well appreciate, an opportunity for re-dedication, re-animation, throughout the entire international membership of UNDA. It is a time for a sharpening of motivation. And the motivation which principally impels your work is the evangelization of the human race, which requires a clear and explicit proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ, a proclamation of his teaching, his life, his promises, his Kingdom and his mystery as the Son of the living God and the Son of Mary (Cfr. PAULI VI, *Evangeliij Nuntiandi*, 22. 27). This evangelization must be done through a thoroughly competent and professional use of radio, television and the audiovisual media. And with evangelization are necessarily linked the advancement of the whole human race, the integral development of all men and women in the world. This is a noble and deeply Christian aim, and the Pope is with you in your conviction that it can be served worthily only by a professionalism which admits of nothing carelessly prepared. This is surely demanded by the reverence due to the word of God and by the respect to which audiences are entitled.

In promoting this reverence and this respect among your own members, and in energetically encouraging these attitudes among all those who are bound to you in professional fellowship, whether inside or outside your Association, you will be working towards the achievement of another very important UNDA aim, namely, to ensure a truly human and Christian spirit in all media activities.

Have no doubt that your labours and efforts are necessary in our world today. The Church needs

you, appreciates you, and confidently depends on you, in your specialized area of service to the Catholic Faith. And on this occasion of Jubilee, the Church's new Pastor embraces you, thanks you for the past, and re-commissions you, in trust and hope, for the future. He blesses you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

From the Vatican, 25 October 1978.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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