



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION*

Saturday, 9 July 1977

You are welcome in this house, with all those who accompany you. We are always happy to receive you. We wish to listen to the voice of the authorized representative of the United Nations Organization. We like to witness the efforts of this Organization and gather the fruit of your daily experience, that is, the echo of the concerns of Governments and peoples, of their hopes and also of obstacles to peace. It seems to us equally important to let you know our thought on the problems of which Catholics, and the Holy See in particular, are most deeply aware, and to assure you of our efforts, to support the human work of justice, peace and development which remains the ideal of the United Nations.

We have unceasingly manifested our esteem and our trust for the way opened up by this Organization, in a spirit of free negotiation and collaboration among all peoples. Oh, certainly, we are conscious of the limits, of institutional or practical order, which reduce its possibilities of effective intervention in difficult situations. We would also like the resolutions, taken by the delegates of the States at the headquarters of the Organization, to be determined always by the objective good of all, above all of the populations most affected by want, hunger, injustice or ill-usage, and not by selfish or nationalistic perspectives or by purely economic interests. This is to suppose a political will of the States, impartial and clear-sighted, firmly resolved to prevent conflicts or find reasonable solutions for them, and to put into practice, effectively, what is demanded by human rights and solidarity. Should not this will be shared by everyone?

But all this merely emphasizes more the beneficial and irreplaceable role of the United Nations Organization and its specialized institutions. We are happy to pay tribute to the way in which you yourself carry out your heavy and delicate task, as Secretary General, in which you have recently been reconfirmed.

We know the patience you show, your multiple and tenacious efforts of mediation, according to the mandate received and to the whole extent permitted, to unravel the tangled skein of violence or mistrust, or to cause the humanitarian sense to prevail, in numerous critical points of our globe. We are also following with interest the preparation of the extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on disarmament, in order to make the latter more effective, in the overall framework of the efforts already undertaken for the same purpose. We hopefully wish that the Organization's possibilities of action may be further improved, thanks to juridical mechanisms more calculated to carry out effectively, in legitimate respect of the sovereignty of peoples, what the universal common good requires. Above all, we wish the United Nations to be par excellence the expression and the rampart of the human rights it so solemnly proclaimed nearly thirty years ago.

An extra effort of conscience would be necessary to make these rights the criterion of a really human civilization, and really to bring about, not excluding any race or any people, the solidarity that is necessary among brothers, all created in God's image. You know the efforts and intentions of Christians consistent with their faith in this field: the Church wishes to exert herself unceasingly to improve consciences and open hearts. And this work is inseparable from the prayer that we raise to God to obtain his Spirit, without whom men cannot succeed in becoming friends and in living together in respect and love.

We are happy to make known to you again in this way, Mr. Secretary-General, our esteem and encouragement, our wishes and our hopes. We pray to the Lord to bless you and those who cooperate with you.

*ORa n.29 p.6;

Paths to Peace p.60.