



The Holy See

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATIONS***

To Ambassador Brunson McKinley

Director General of The International Organization for Migrations

On the occasion of the Eighty-second Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migrations, which this year marks its Fiftieth Anniversary, I express to you and your colleagues my good wishes and my deep sense of appreciation for the service rendered by the Organization to migrants throughout the world during these fifty years.

Although it was founded to deal with the problems of migration in one part of the world and only for a limited time, the IOM gradually adapted its structures and activities to deal with the challenges of migration through the world in an enduring way. And the growing number of nations and institutions which have sought membership of the Organization testifies to the esteem in which it is held internationally. Among these has been the Holy See which, as an Observer, has followed with great interest the IOM's broadening commitment through the last half century. On many occasions too the Holy See; through its institutions and various Catholic organizations, has been able to cooperate actively with the IOM.

Today migration is taking place in all kinds of ways, and the intermingling of people from different cultures means that great efforts must be made to help immigrants to become positively integrated in this new milieu. It is encouraging to know that the IOM, through its many programmes, is already working to this end; and I especially want to recall here the Organization's invaluable contribution to the battle against trafficking in human beings by helping the victims of this reprehensible trade to be restored to their freedom and dignity.

In these troubled times, the challenges before you are larger than ever, not least in seeking to supplement the legislation of individual nations with the introduction of international norms capable

of preventing unilateral decisions which do particular harm to the weakest countries. The Church stands with you in spreading awareness of the fundamental truth that, beyond all differences, all men and women are brothers and sisters in the one human family.

Assuring you, Mr. Director General, that the Catholic Church will not fail in its commitment to people separated from their homeland, I invoke upon you and all those involved in the work of the International Organization for Migrations the abundant blessings of Almighty God.

From the Vatican, 22 November 2001

IOANNES PAULUS II

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