



The Holy See

*LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II FOR THE WORLD LITERACY DAY 1979**

On the occasion of the celebration of the International Literacy Day 1979, I send you my warmest good wishes for the complete success of this day, hoping that it will strengthen the literacy campaign launched by UNESCO more than a decade ago in close collaboration with its activities for the total and harmonious development of man and respect of his dignity.

With these wishes and congratulations I am happy to give evidence of the interest of the Holy See and my own personal interest in such an important activity for the future of many human beings. Very much preoccupied as was my predecessor Pope Paul VI with the vastness and gravity of the plague of illiteracy in the world, I would like to encourage all those involved in literacy programmes who devote their energy to this problem and whose efforts give so much hope.

The theme "Through the literacy of parents, we prepare a future for the children" was chosen in conjunction with the International Year of the Child. As it proclaimed, it concerns both the parents who are the immediate beneficiaries of literacy who will then have the tools to exercise the inalienable rights and to fulfil more efficiently their role as educators, and the children themselves who will benefit from the cultural development of their parents.

The literacy campaign this year is therefore addressed primarily to the family where both parents and children enjoy rights and assume special duties, founded on those higher values which give its full meaning to their common life. Thus they will be led to evaluate material goods with more objectivity, to profit by them without compromising their dignity, to share the family circle and with all the members of the society to which they belong.

It is to be hoped then that, without neglecting the schooling of children and continuing the efforts exerted up to now, special attention will be given to the literacy of parents. This will be an effective way to assuring both the individual and the collective development of the family, the fundamental cell of society. The latter will also be interested in this since the parents, when they have become literate, can give their children the irreplaceable basic education which reaches its full development in the formation given in the schools and can also increase their chances of promotion.

In this hope, I am happy to have this opportunity of the International Literacy Day 1979, to renew my wishes to all those who are devoting themselves to this great work of human fraternity, and I pray the Omnipotent God to shower abundant blessings on them and their efforts. **IOANNES PAULUS PP.**

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**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English n. 39 p.11.Paths to Peace p.136-137.*

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