



The Holy See

***LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD LITERACY DAY 1986****

World Literacy Day, which has been celebrated for the past twenty years, invites us annually to a deeper reflection on the objectives already attained, and also on the goals still to be achieved. These aims call for persevering efforts by all who have the serious duty to find a solution to the sad situation of the many people who because of their illiteracy, are kept in a state of dependence which prevents their progress.

First of all, we should note that the results achieved permit us to resist every temptation to discouragement in the face of the immensity of the task; indeed there are very many who now hold in their hands the instruments of their own promotion and of the development of their country, especially in the regions most in need. Thus, they also discover the precious value of human solidarity at all levels.

However, the problems still awaiting solution are even more vast than the victories which have been won in this field. It is necessary to continue, and even to multiply, the efforts which have been undertaken. People throughout the world must become more aware and more deeply convinced that, in the fight for peace, the struggle against illiteracy is an important factor.

This Literacy Day, celebrated during the International Year for Peace, gives us the opportunity to draw attention to the contribution of literacy in drawing peoples together and helping them to understand each other. Whoever desires peace must also work to create this possibility of better communication, understanding and harmony among the peoples which literacy brings.

My fervent wish is that the forthcoming Literacy Day may be celebrated in great hope, and especially that it may be marked by a renewed commitment to literacy.

I wish that people be freed from fear and from the threats of armed conflicts that could be apocalyptic; may they rather learn, instead of opposing each other, to intensify the bonds of brotherhood between them, thanks to the media of communication that modern civilization offers. May they all make their own contribution and work effectively to construct a better future, able and willing to use to the full all the material, moral and spiritual possibilities with which humanity is so providentially provided!

I pray Almighty God to bless the efforts that so many men and women of good will are making to this end.

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