



The Holy See

*Address of His Holiness John XXIII to the United Nations Conference on New Sources of Energy**

28 August 1961

We are very grateful for the kind visit which you have paid to us during the United Nations Conference on New Sources of Energy which has brought you together in Rome from so many different countries and at which you have been working all these days.

Your visit demonstrates to us that, apart from the scientific and technical aspect of your learned research, you are also aware of the human, moral and spiritual aspect which it assumes by the very fact of being focussed on man and his genuine well-being.

The Creator has bestowed abundant energy on the world, and over the ages man has applied his genius to harnessing and using it for his needs. But in our times, in what may be called the technical age of man, the possible uses of energy are increasing enormously: not only energy of the «traditional» kind but also energy which comes from sources which have so far been used little or not at all, such as the sun or the wind or even the waters and vapours hidden in the bowels of the earth: solar energy, wind energy, geothermal energy.

Your discussions will focus on these new possibilities, not so much in order to consider the abstract principles as to draw up an inventory of existing concrete achievements in various regions of the universe which may be applied with success elsewhere. And you are concerned above all, we know, with the well-being of mankind and you wish in particular to help the peoples of the underdeveloped countries, whose enormous needs constitute today a ceaseless appeal to all men of feeling.

On many occasions, and most recently at considerable length in the Encyclical *Mater et Magistra* on the social question, we exhorted our sons of the Catholic Church, and with them all men of good will, to show a greater awareness of their duties towards these less favoured brothers.

We feel, in fact, an intimate and profound satisfaction at the thought that your work generously focussed on serving the poorest, will also contribute to this «great work of mercy». People will rightly praise you for it and – what is even more important – God will reward you: for whoever works for the good of his Brothers in a nobly selfless spirit gives glory to God and gains His grace.

Indeed, does not your work keep you in constant contact with His almightiness? Are not the still deeply mysterious forces which you are investigating His work? True men of science – as experience teaches – easily recognize the immensity of the Creator and are quite ready to practice Christian humility. They practice with simplicity and uprightness this «fear of the Lord» – timor Domini – which the Holy Scriptures never cease to praise and which they teach everyone is the alpha and omega of true wisdom. This very morning, during the reading of the Breviary and while Our spirit was already moving among you, We came on these words so full of meaning and encouragement from the book of Ecclesiasticus, which We would like to leave with you in conclusion: «Corona sapientiae timor Domini: Wisdom's garland is fear of the Lord, with blossoms of peace and perfect health. Knowledge and full understanding she showers down; she heightens the glory of those who possess her. (...) If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments and the Lord will bestow her upon you» (Sirach, 1:16-17 and 23).

We could not formulate a better wish for you at the end of your kind visit. And it is with all Our heart that, as We assure you again of the pleasure that it has given Us, We call down God's best blessings on you, on your work, on your families and on the countries which you represent.

**Paths to Peace, p.474-475.*