



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE DISABLED**

Wednesday, 27 October 1971

Dear friends,

We are very pleased today to greet all of you, who have come to Rome to participate in the Conference of the International Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled.

We have been informed of your interest in promoting legislation in favour of the handicapped and of your desire to work for the effective recognition of the rights of the disabled. We express Our profound admiration for the goals that you have set up for yourselves and praise your efforts in this direction.

You are trying to awaken men to the needs of those persons for whom society must make a special effort to insure the protection of their dignity and the attainment of their human fulfilment.

As We express Our esteem for the aim of your activities and Our respect for you, We wish to give you Our encouragement. In doing so, We are thinking of the many categories of persons who are in need of help and whose lives can be enriched by the selfless and responsible dedication of qualified persons such as yourselves and those whose professional help you elicit in different ways. We are thinking of the good that can be done through proper legislation. Above all, We are thinking of the persons themselves: the mentally retarded, the emotionally disturbed, the exceptional children with their multiple and varied needs-and so many others.

Apart from the evident and laudable humanitarian value of your goals, We see in the field of your endeavours a close relationship with the mission confided to Christianity by Christ. He himself is

described in the Gospels as having compassion on the crowd (Cfr. *Matth.* 15, 32) and giving himself totally to doing good (Cfr. *Act.* 10, 38).

Yes, dear friends, be assured of Our benevolence and support as you strive to instill consciousness in today's society of the many needs of so many disabled persons. May this decade be truly one of rehabilitation.

We are pleased to hold up to a world that is in search of true and lasting values-especially to youth-the goals of fraternal concern, of justice and charity that are yours.

May the Lord himself sustain your efforts and make them truly productive. Upon all of you and those whom you seek to serve We invoke God's choicest blessings.