



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE
INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION**

Wednesday, 29 September 1971

We are grateful to You for interrupting your Celebration Day discussions to come and visit us, for it gives us the opportunity to express our warm appreciation of the highly useful work done by the two Catholic organizations whose jubilee it is, and to encourage them to continue with no less zeal in the future.

The International Catholic Migration Commission and the now century-old St. Raphaels-Verein have a proud record of achievement. Each on its own level has been of immense assistance to those who have left their homelands to seek refuge or employment elsewhere. They have always been zealous to show these migrants and refugees the active love which the Christian vocation calls for.

The Christian Church has always been mindful of its Founder's warning that Judgement will turn also on whether we welcome him in the strangers we encounter (Cfr. *Matth.* 25, 35, 43). It has made much of the natural virtue of hospitality, setting up Abraham as an example of one who, in welcoming strangers, entertained angels without knowing it (Cfr. *Hebr.* 13, 2). The pilgrim people of God are also reminded by Scripture that they are all no more than strangers and nomads on earth, on their way to a heavenly homeland (Cfr. *Hebr.* 11. 13-16).

All who are in need have a claim on the aid of Christians. The need of many refugees for both bodily and spiritual assistance is very grave. The problem is made truly dramatic by the numbers involved. A broad movement of solidarity is called for. Your agencies must encourage and channel such a movement, in collaboration with other organizations devoted to this worthy end.

Your jubilee congress happens to coincide with one of the greatest and most dramatic movements

of population known to human history. You can understand that, in recalling your work for refugees and migrants, Our thoughts cannot but go to the millions of human beings who are at present seeking refuge in India.

There has been a great outburst of solidarity. An impulse was given by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who is coordinating official action in favour of the Pakistani refugees. The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration has placed at his disposal its vast experience in problems of displaced persons. The international community has already responded with generosity. But it must intensify its efforts yet further and prolong them over a considerable period.

For Our part, We have not ceased to urge the Catholic relief and welfare agencies to take their full part in bearing this common burden. For this purpose We have called on Our Council "Cor Unum" to undertake, together with the Catholic welfare organizations and qualified representatives of the Christian communities in the countries directly concerned, a study of how the Church can increase its endeavours towards finding a solution for the serious situation. We take this occasion to express our satisfaction with what has already been done, and also to insist on the need to do still more, The problem, unfortunately, is still far from being solved.

We count on you and on all men of good will to redouble your efforts in this cause. May the Lord strengthen you and guide you. Invoking his aid, We give you and your fellow workers in the International Catholic Migration Commission and the St. Raphaels- Verein Our wholehearted Apostolic Blessing.