



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION
ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES***

Saturday, 21 January 1984

Dear Friends,

1. It is a pleasure for me to welcome today the members of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, under the Chairmanship of Mr Willy Brandt, and the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, chaired by Mr Olof Palme. These two Commissions have brought together experts and leaders from around the world, with an impressive experience in various fields, in order to study some of the major problems of contemporary civilization.

Your two Commissions have examined questions which contain many of the important challenges that humanity must face at the end of this millennium. Your coming together here in Rome provides me with an opportunity to emphasize again the necessary links that exist between the two sets of problems which each Commission has addressed, and between the solutions both to the North-South questions and to the problems existing in the East-West context.

On several occasions, especially in my Message for this year's World Day of Peace, and in my address to the Diplomatic Corps, I have called the attention of world leaders and people of every walk of life to the interconnection of these two great concerns.

2. Any endeavour to contribute to the establishing of a more just and fraternal international order must take into account the reality of the present world. Today, the challenges and the problems which affect people everywhere transcend national and even regional boundaries. No longer can leaders of nations shape their policies solely with regard to their own national interests. Decisions made for the good of a country or region in the economic, social and political sphere necessarily

affect other peoples, nations and regions. If today "the social question has become worldwide" (Pauli VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 3), then the concrete programmes of nations and regions must spring from a conscious awareness of that fact and seek to measure, from the beginning, the impact these projects will have on the peoples and nations directly and indirectly affected. There is no question that the means and the skills are available; it is the task of leaders today to utilize them and to show to their people how this global outlook is ultimately the best guarantee for themselves and for the other peoples of the world.

There are very complex technical, scientific, social and political factors that must be addressed, each with its own proper importance, if the current world situation is to be improved. We would be deluding ourselves to think that some simple universal formula could be applied that would rectify the situation and restore a world order of justice, fraternity and peace. The answers to problems have to be worked out carefully and put into operation patiently. They have to be tested and checked to ensure that they respond to needs and are truly adequate solutions. Such work demands the best from a vast array of experts working together for the common good. It means correcting the systems where needed or even building new structures where they are called for.

3. However, there is yet a deeper aspect that cannot be ignored. For there are inner exigencies in each of these initiatives that must be attended to, and to which I would like to draw your attention today. This is what I Meant when I said in this year's Peace Day Message: "Humanity's helplessness to resolve the existing tensions reveals that the obstacles, and likewise the hopes, come from something deeper than the systems themselves" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II, *Nuntius ob diem I mensis Ianuarii anni MCMLXXXIV, paci inter nationes fovendae dicatum*, 1, die 8 dec. 1983 : *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VI, 2 (1983) 1280). No system is capable of satisfying all the yearnings of the human heart. Every system is subject to growth or decline because it is subject to the aspirations of the human beings which control it. For this reason, it is paramount that everyone recognize that the structures we seek to correct or create must be capable of advancing the freedom and dignity of the individuals and the peoples involved.

This means that man can never be reduced to an object, or to a single dimensional reality as "homo oeconomicus" or "homo faber". It likewise means that man must be kept at the centre of every project so that the structures we build or reform will permit the greatest amount of freedom and dignity for every person affected by the institution. Implicit in this is the vision of man as transcendent and transcending, as developing himself through a growth that brings him outside himself, of realizing his own potential through participating with his brothers and sisters in community, and ultimately through the achievement of his relationship to God who is the Father of us all and the ultimate source of each person's life and dignity.

If the leaders and shapers of our societies at the end of this millennium keep before their eyes this image of every man in his full potential, then groups like yours will have a greater possibility of contributing to a just sharing of the earth's resources in a community of nations that have learned

to live in harmony and peace. For this noble goal, I commend your efforts and offer the assurance of my prayers for their success.

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