



The Holy See

CLOSING OF THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

ADDRESS OF POPE PAUL VI TO THE WORKERS

8 December 1965

In the course of this council, we, the Catholic bishops of the five continents, have, among many other subjects, reflected together on the grave questions posed for human conscience by the economic and social conditions of the contemporary world, the coexistence of nations, the problem of armaments, of war and peace. We are fully aware of the repercussions which the solution provided for these problems can have on the concrete life of the working men and women of the entire world. Thus, at the end of our deliberations, we wish to address to all of them a message of confidence, peace and friendship.

Very loved sons, rest assured first of all that the Church is aware of your sufferings, your struggles and your hopes, and that she appreciates highly the virtues which ennoble your souls—namely courage, dedication, professional conscience, love of justice—and that she recognizes fully the immense services which, each in his own place and in positions often the most obscure and the most ignored, you render to the whole of society. The Church is grateful to you for this and thanks you through our voice.

In these recent years, she has never ceased to keep before her eyes the increasingly complex problems of the working world and the echo which recent pontifical encyclicals have found in your ranks has proved to what degree the soul of the working man of our time was attuned to that of his highest spiritual leaders. Pope John XXIII who enriched the patrimony of the Church with his incomparable messages knew how to find the road to your heart. He, in his own person, gave a shining example of the Church's love for the working man as well as for truth, justice, liberty and charity, on which is founded the peace of the world. We wish also to be before you witnesses of this love of the Church for you working men, and we declare to you with all the conviction of our

souls: The Church is your friend. Have confidence in her. In the past, regrettable misunderstandings have, over too long a period, maintained a spirit of mistrust and lack of understanding between us, and both the Church and the working class have suffered from this. Today the hour for reconciliation has sounded and the Church of the council invites you to celebrate this hour without suspicion.

The Church is ever seeking to understand you better. But on your part you must endeavor to understand what the Church means for you, working men, who are the chief artisans of the prodigious changes which the world is undergoing today. For you know full well that unless a mighty spiritual inspiration animates these changes, they will cause disaster for humanity instead of bringing it happiness. It is not hatred which serves the world. It is not only the bread of this earth which can satisfy man's hunger. Thus, accept the message of the Church. Accept the faith which she offers you to light your path. It is the faith of the successor of Peter and of the 2,000 bishops assembled in council. It is the faith of the Christian people. May it be your light. May it be your guide. May it bring you to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, your Companion in work, Master and Savior of the whole human race.