



# The Holy See

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## ***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION\****

*Monday, 28 April 1969*

It is a joy for us to greet you this morning in our residence. Our welcome goes first of all to U Thant, the indefatigable Secretary-General of the United Nations who received us so graciously in New York on 4 October 1965, and who now presides over your Administrative Committee on Coordination and has just carefully explained to us the precise goals of your meeting in Rome and the purposes of your visit to the Pope. Our greetings also go to the Heads of the specialized agencies of the United Nations and to all the committee members. Gentlemen, you who are in charge of all the international organizations which constitute the family, so to speak, of the United Nations, we know of your competencies and your responsibilities. It is also a great satisfaction at this important meeting this morning to greet among us the distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps who represent to the Holy See the great family of peoples. To you all, our sentiments of deference and respect.

This felicitous meeting gives us first of all the opportunity to restate our great esteem for the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It also allows us to affirm our hope for your work whose object is nothing less than the material progress and the social and moral development of peoples which we have so much at heart. We are anxious to thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for the noble words which you have so kindly expressed to our commitment in this area, particularly for our Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, and the initiatives which have followed and will follow it.

If few people speak of your Committee – because few know of its existence – its action however can be decisive in this great work of development. Yours is the coordination of action undertaken and programs executed at different levels and in diverse sectors of international activity. Now, as you know, the gigantic enterprise which is development can only be undertaken with all the strength at the disposal of humanity in service to humanity. We say it again and again without

tiring: "The development of which we are speaking does not extend solely to economic growth. To be genuine, growth must be integral, it must clearly provide for the progress of each individual and of the whole man... Consequently not merely this or that person, but all without exception are called to promote the full development of the whole human society" (*Populorum Progressio*, nn.14 and 17).

Among these forces, it is indispensable to recognize the primary and irreplaceable position held by the mind. You yourself, U Thant, have correctly emphasized that development could not be realized without a radical change in the mentality of many, and in the attitude of peoples and their governments. The issue is awareness and a will to action. The Church, for its part, as you know, commits its energies to help people to better build and manage the earthly city, not from desire for power, nor in search of prestige, but to be "faithful to the teaching and the example of the divine founder" in a desire for disinterested service (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, nn.12 and 13).

In the words of your noble interpreter, we have noted down the concerns of the Second Decade for Development. To this end, your Committee meeting these days at the headquarters of FAO rightly takes up program planning and the coordination of all of the activities. For ourselves, we would like to say a word, if you allow it, about this Decade. Apparently the success of the first Decade was not very spectacular. Still, at least an awakening took place in the masses themselves that development is an absolute necessity, that it constitutes an irreversible phenomenon, and requires the effort of all, both the developed and under-developed. Because – we reaffirm it – "this is the objective which must be achieved. Since world unity seems daily more operative it must allow all peoples, to use the phrase, to be the architects of their own fortune." (*Populorum Progressio*, n.65). An ever greater awakening is achieved in this way, and it is like a new spirit which must be created in the international community around the concept of integral development in solidarity. We also would want to say that the efficacy of the Second Decade must be directed as much to quantity as to quality. Human resources, human development are the questions-in summary, the human person. When all is said and done, the only true wealth is the human person, and if there is a desire for more, it is to be more (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, n.6).

At the conclusion of this meeting, we are anxious to tell you again, Gentlemen, how much our heart is set on your effort, and how much the Church for its part is devoted to helping human persons to grow in their humanity by appropriate means, enhance their value, and perfect themselves. (*Populorum Progressio*, n. 15).

In this matter, we want to note the work of our Pontifical Commission "Justice and Peace", a committee fundamentally constituted for human advancement whose members we wanted to be associated with this meeting; the foundation of SODEPAX with the World Council of Churches; and very recently, the organization of the Populorum Progressio Fund which we would like to be a source of new initiatives and generous accomplishments. (1378) And why not confide in you our joy on the eve of our next visit, in the beginning of June, if God permits, to the International Labour

Organization in Geneva on the occasion of its 50th anniversary?

Gentlemen, from the fullness of our heart, we tell you solemnly today of our great, twofold hope at this moment of human history. First, we hope that the governments of the most developed peoples, or those in conditions of relative well-being, will want to continue or decide generously to contribute always more effectively to the cause of developing countries. For, today, words are tiresome, and more and more, deeds are expected.

Further, our hope is also in the ardent, generous, enthusiastic and disinterested young people; may they make their own the beautiful ideal of the United Nations, "together with each other, not one over the other, never again some against the others, but always for each other" (*Address to the 20th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations*, 4 October 1965). This way, the world will take on a new face; it will be truly human and fraternal in friendship and in peace.

These are our thoughts this morning which we have had the pleasure of confiding to you at this reception calling the abundance of blessings of the Almighty "Father of all human persons" upon your generous activity in the service of humanity.

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\*ORa n.19 p.3;

*Paths to Peace* p.214-215.