



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE CATHOLIC LAITY**

*Manila, Philippines
Sunday, 29 November 1970*

In order to have a special meeting with you it was Our wish to devote for you a few moments, in spite of quite a heavy programme. Because of your diverse activities in the apostolate, you are the object of the Church's particular consideration. Animated by the grace of baptism, of confirmation and, for some of you, of marriage, you have responded to the call of God who asks each Christian to be «at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself» (*Lumen gentium*, 33). May God be thanked for this great grace, that your hearts are encouraged to persevere in your commitment to burn with the spirit of Christ and to exercise your apostolate in the world as a kind of leaven (Cfr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 2).

The Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Lay Apostolate, which you all know and which today forms in a sense the charter of the whole lay apostolate, insists on the spirit with which that apostolate must be lived. «The apostolate is carried on through the faith, hope and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church» (*Ibid.*).

LIFE OF FAITH

The temptation would be to place our faith merely in the carrying out of certain religious acts. We know how fond the Christians of the Philippines are of external demonstrations of their faith-and rightly so. You are not unaware that you must go further: your faith must be enlightened by study of the Sacred Scriptures, of the Church's teaching, and in particular of the decisions of the recent Council. To be a witness capable of drawing men to God, your faith must find expression in your life. Because they are Christians, lay people engaged in the apostolate must be the best citizens, the

most honest ones and those most concerned for the common good. «Neither family concerns nor secular affairs should be excluded from their religious programme of life» (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, 4).

LIFE OF HOPE

Asia, the most populous continent of our globe - Asia is on the move. Millions and millions of men aspire today to better conditions of life and to the satisfaction of their profound religious restlessness, which is a thirsting for God. The immense obstacles that slow down or impede their advance towards this integral development carry the risk of causing feelings of despair. «The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation», declares the Council. «As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens, using their own particular skills and acting on their own responsibility. Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice characteristic of God's kingdom» (*Ibid.*). How could they reach that goal, if they were not impelled by hope, by the assurance which is founded on God's strength and help. Delays, difficulties or failures do not unsettle or overcome a person who is animated by this God-given certitude.

LIFE OF CHARITY

Jesus Christ teaches us that love of God cannot be separated from love of one's neighbour. The apostle must seek a charity that is ever more real, ever more universal. His love for his brothers, especially the weakest and poorest, will have its root in the love which God has for all, particularly for the least of those who are his (Cfr. *Matth.* 25: 40). Love for God is not something for oneself alone; it must be shared. The committed layman will be urged on by charity to study the concrete situations of his brothers; he will display imagination in the application of solutions to problems and he will show concern for the unfolding of the real values of his people's culture, whether the values be artistic, intellectual or religious. Having assimilated the Church's teaching, he will be faithful to the aim of every authentic social apostolate: a humanism open to the values of the spirit and to God, who is their source (Cfr. *Populorum progressio*, 42). He will keep before his mind «that the new command of love is the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world's transformation» (*Gaudium et spes*, 38). You live in a relationship of trust with the hierarchy. Adding your collaboration to their apostolate, in docility and dialogue, you make use of your special experience and your own responsibility, and you are aware of having a vocation to sanctify the world in the very exercise of the duties of your state. You will thus work with men of goodwill to build a city based on brotherhood, where a man will be respected for his unique dignity as being one created «in the likeness of God», and where personal, family and social life can be orientated to Jesus Christ, «the goal of human history» (*Gaudium et spes*, 45; cfr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 20; *Gaudium et spes*, 40-45).

We commend your generosity to the Virgin Mary, who is so much loved here. The Mother of God, whose glory comes entirely from her Son, will guard your commitment and will pray that your apostolate may respond to the deep hope of men, and thus cause this great land, with its deeply religious soul, to shine with the brightness of the good news-the source of justice, truth, liberty and love.