



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF SOCIETIES
FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED**

Friday, 5 February 1971

Dear friends,

We want to tell you in all sincerity that it is a real joy for us to receive you today, the members of the Executive Council of the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped.

In this regard Our first wish is to express Our admiration for you and for your work. We know how much is involved in helping these handicapped people, whose sufferings cause so much sadness to themselves and to the community. Your work shows your deep respect for human life itself, as well as your firm conviction of the transcendent dignity of the human person. We know too that there is need for unlimited compassion and patience in the exercise of what is in fact an art and a very advanced therapeutic and pedagogical technique. It is a labour of love that you accomplish with selfless dedication and at great economic cost.

We wish to say how deeply We appreciate your efforts, which manifest a true human and Christian vocation, and how much We esteem the exercise of your exemplary charity, which is the object of Our particular praise and special consideration. The humility with which your work is done makes it of even greater value.

We therefore desire with all our heart to offer you Our encouragement in the difficult and delicate task which you have undertaken. We realize that results are often scanty and that your activities sometimes bring weariness and disappointment. Lack of sufficient personnel and economic support may tempt you to become discouraged or even to abandon what you have so meritoriously begun.

But you know well that your work is irreplaceable; your conduct brings honour to the human family. Your contribution is indeed the generous expression of that order of charity-the value of which is confirmed by Christ himself in the Gospel-wherein nothing is lost and where not even a cup of cold water given from love will go unrewarded (Cfr. *Matth.* 10, 42). May such a promise sustain all those who selflessly devote themselves to this often thankless task.

Dear friends, these are some of Our thoughts on this occasion. As We express them, We invoke most cordially upon you and your collaborators, upon your precious work and upon those whom you serve in fraternal love the choicest blessings of the Lord of life.