



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL "COR UNUM"

Tuesday, 28 November 1978

Dear Friends of "Cor Unum",

I am very happy to receive you here, at the conclusion of your seventh plenary Assembly. Several of you belong to episcopal Conferences, those which are able to offer material aid or those which have needs to make known; most of you represent charitable organisms set up directly by these Conferences or constituted to carry out mutual aid and sharing, in a Christian spirit and according to a particular aim, on the national or international plane.

Since you have been called to work in a "pontifical" Council, it falls upon me to tell you the deep gratitude of the Holy See, all the greater in that I know you are already very busy with the multiple tasks of your particular institutions, tasks which do not brook delay in being carried out. And yet you grasp the necessity of coming assiduously to the Assemblies and meetings of this Council. The Pope personally, the Holy See, the universal Church rely on these meetings, summit meetings, of Christians eminently engaged in the service of human advancement and charity, men and women who can let them benefit from their knowledge and their zeal on the pastoral plane, and also from their competence as experts in the technical aspects of mutual aid, always envisaged according to the Church's concern with charity. Yes, I deeply encourage you in this active and regular participation in the work of the pontifical Council.

The report on the activities of Cor Unum show clearly how the spirit of coordination which motivated the foundation of this institution and which remains its *raison d'être*, is progressing and maturing. It seems that this result has been widely promoted by the working groups which the Council has organized among the different members, consultants or other experts, on precise subjects or aims. This formula makes it possible to hope for more and more fruitful results. Certainly, the local Churches are the first ones concerned at the stage of giving or receiving, preparing or carrying out, and their participation is necessary. But it seems no less necessary that

all those concerned in the sharing should consult and sustain one another, beyond bilateral exchanges, in the context of the universal Church, for it is a question of a really universal responsibility and mission of the Church. And the pontifical Council Cor Unum is precisely the normal and effective meeting and coordination point for all welfare and advancement efforts in the Church. This tells you the trust that my predecessors put in this work, a trust which I am happy to renew to you today.

I cannot, in the course of this short talk, tackle the numerous aspects which you yourselves have examined and which you must have at heart. We are all quite convinced that it is charity according to Christ which must motivate our actions of human advancement: the gospel read this year for the feast of Christ the King remains its charter. We must also take care to set advancement carefully in the context of evangelization, which is the fullness of human advancement, since it proclaims and offers man's full salvation.

Then, too, a particular but essential aspect of your action consists in maintaining the impetus of generosity. You know the urgent situations which occur, whether it is a question of natural catastrophes or catastrophes caused by men, by their acts of violence or their obstinate selfishness. Such situations often bring about, thank God, immediate bursts of generosity in the consciences of men enamoured of solidarity, all the more so in that the media of information then give wide coverage to the sensational character of the facts. But if there are catastrophes the effects of which can be eliminated by a decisive action of short duration, this is not generally the case: needs are prolonged often for long periods. And one of your tasks is then to keep awake or reawaken generosity and the concern to inform, as long as the needs of our brothers last.

May the Holy Spirit enlighten and strengthen you in the magnificent work entrusted to you! You contribute to giving the testimony which characterizes disciples of Christ best: charity, universal charity, the charity that knows no frontiers or enemies. I willingly bless you, with all those who collaborate with you.

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