



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE NATIONAL DIRECTORS OF THE PONTIFICAL MISSION AID SOCIETIES

Friday, 11 May 1979 Dear Brothers and Sons, I am very happy to meet the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies. I know that every year you meet round Mons. Simon Lourdusamy, the President of the Superior Council of these Societies, to allocate the sums you have helped to collect, which are distributed entirely to Christian communities in need. On my side, it is the first time I have had the pleasure of receiving you and encouraging you. The work of solidarity you are carrying out is a magnificent and necessary one. It is typical of the real charity that must reign among all members of the Mystical Body of Christ. It is a concrete expression of ecclesial fellowship, about which people like to talk so much today. An example is found in the very first Christian generation, when the Apostle Paul invites the Churches to participate in the collection in favour of the "saints" of Jerusalem who were at that time in a critical material situation. It is above all a necessity in order that evangelization may be carried on with adequate means in the young Churches or in Churches which are sorely tried. Missionary dynamism, it is true, lies in persons, animated by the Spirit of Pentecost, anxious to bring the Good News to all their brothers and sisters in the world, exactly because it is a question of their salvation and of Christ's will. There may even exist a very strong religious vitality, while means are poor, because it is based on the holiness of evangelizers and the active participation of Christians. But precisely, true zeal cannot help seeking, not luxury or ease, but at least a decent subsistence and fair remuneration for Gospel workers; catechetical means worthy of an education to faith that is adapted and deep; possibilities for correct formation of priests, Sisters, catechists, married couples, and lay apostles; structures of pastoral coordination which permit exchange, reflection, concerted action, particular care for the young, assistance for those in want, the setting up of places of spiritual renewal, etc. Now, all this aid must come from Christians themselves: from those of the community concerned in the first place, who must aim at providing for their own needs as far as possible, but also from communities that are better off from the material point of view. The latter, opening up boldly to missionary solidarity—whether it is a question of individuals, families, parishes, dioceses—draw benefit themselves in apostolic dynamism; they become witnesses of the religious vitality of the younger members, which may be an awakening for them. It is also necessary that public opinion should understand well this necessity of helping mission Churches. That is your main task. Last century, a magnificent movement arose when the great missionary Societies came into being. Today, generosity is often manifested in an admirable way, but you must take care to maintain it and broaden it, particularly by associating the young generations with it, perhaps with new methods. For you see, maybe, that certain communities which are, however, quite rich, are too much concerned with the economic difficulties of the present and with their own problems, or are less aware of missionary duty, though they are touched by the material misery of starving countries. The Pontifical Mission Aid

Societies which you are directing at the national level must, therefore, carry out first of all this work of education to charity, and to missionary charity. I am anxious to tell you how much the universal Church appreciates your task and, presiding over the charity of all the Churches, I thank you deeply on their behalf. Do not let yourselves be discouraged. Improve your action. Consolidate missionary cooperation continually. Not only do you prepare in this way the atmosphere for greater generosity for sharing and exchanges expanded to the plane of means, but you also bring forth missionary vocations. On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, we prayed for vocations. If they are necessary everywhere, how much more so in mission territories, where, for lack of courageous and systematic evangelization, the ground remains fallow, or rather, alas, it becomes the field of ideologies alien to Christian faith. Yes, your educative concern must aim also at bringing forth missionary vocations, of priests, religious men and women, and laity, in old Christian communities as in young communities. The latter, moreover, whose Directors of Mission Aid Societies I have the pleasure of greeting, are experiencing here and there an exemplary reawakening of vocations. May the Holy Spirit enlighten and strengthen your zeal! May the Blessed Virgin obtain for you his graces which will enable you to open souls to charity! Receive my affectionate Apostolic Blessing. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana