



The Holy See

**LETTER OF PAUL VI
TO THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

*To Our Venerable Brothers,
the Archbishops and Bishops
of the United States of America*

Once again We turn to you our brothers in the Episcopate of the United States of America, and through you to the Catholics of your country.

We know that soon it will be time once more for you to make a Lenten appeal to your people on behalf of a world in need, on behalf of the poor, the hungry and the suffering of distant lands.

We know the special collective efforts that you are all making for the eradication of poverty at home, and yet you are not forgetful of the millions of others around the globe who live in want. It is Our conviction that your endeavor is truly motivated by the love of Jesus Christ. It is Our sincere hope and purpose to encourage the Catholics of America to stand firm in this motivation and to be faithful to the generous tradition that is theirs.

More than ever is it necessary for the People of God to be concerned for all their brothers and sisters—for men and women everywhere, since the charity of Christ embraces all. His command moreover is clear; Saint John repeats it to us: “If God has so loved us, we must have the same love for one another” (1 Jo. 4, 11).

In so many ways today there is “a renewed consciousness of the demands of the Gospel” (*Populorum progressio*, 1) a fresh awakening in the Church. We know that a new social awareness is found among your people and it is Our prayer that this may truly prove authentically Christian. We pray also that they will remain united as Catholics in their tradition “eager to do what is right” (Tit. 2, 14) and conscious of the need of helping to uplift their fellowmen in brotherly

solidarity.

One of the urgent applications of this solidarity is to reduce the inequality that exists between those who have and those who have not (Cfr. *Populorum progressio*, 24). This was also spoken of long ago by Saint Paul, who exhorted the Corinthians to give according to their means and thus reach “a certain equality” (2 Cor. 8, 14). It is this balance that We bring again with urgency to the attention of your beloved people. We do it in the name of Jesus Christ and in the name of everything that Christianity stands for. Without this essential element, it is difficult to see how the Church can give a worthy witness to the world.

While opening Our heart to your people and setting before them the needs of the present time, We renew to them also the expression of Our confidence as they face with love the responsibility and the challenge that are theirs. Above all We renew to them Our deep affection in Christ Jesus.

With Our encouragement to the People of God in the United States We impart to them and to you, dear brother Bishops, Our special Apostolic Blessing in the Lord.

From the Vatican, January 9th, 1971.

PAULUS PP. VI