



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI
ON THE 5th «INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LITERACY» ***

Mr. René Maheu, Director General of UNESCO

On the occasion of the celebration of the annual literacy Day, we are anxious to tell you again of all the interest we take in UNESCO's remarkable effort in this field, and to renew to you the assurance of our support and the cooperation that the Church is concerned to make in this area which meets one of the greatest needs of our time.

UNESCO has pursued tenaciously, particularly through carefully evaluated pilot projects, the improvement of literacy methods and its extension. Far from letting itself be discouraged by the difficulties met with, it drew from them a stronger determination in the struggle against illiteracy and gauged more accurately what is at stake.

We are particularly attentive to the place UNESCO gives, in this enterprise, to the training of teachers for the literacy campaign. It seems more and more an essential condition of efficacy and that is why this concern is increasingly shared, in numerous Catholic organisms, by those working in favour of literacy.

In this international Book Year, we are pleased to note the importance your Organization attaches to the composition of the texts, both for the literacy courses and for the practice and improvement in reading afterwards. It is our heartfelt wish that these texts, at the same time as they provide useful knowledge, will be suitable, in spirit and content, to contribute to the moral and spiritual progress of readers.

We also rejoice to see that, while continuing in its specific efforts to spread literacy, UNESCO is increasingly concerned to set them and integrate them in the general framework of educative tasks. The latter, in fact, make up a whole, the elements of which must be harmonized with a view to greater efficacy and at the same time, to the complete formation of man. We tell you therefore,

Mr. Director General, how much we appreciate the initiative recently taken in this direction.

Formulating our best wishes for the rightful success that this grey literacy campaign deserves, so warmly call the abundance of divine Blessings on those men and women who are dedicating their generosity and their competence to it.

From the Vatican, 4 September 1972.

*ORa n.40 p.6.