



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO THE 6th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION **

Venerdì, 23 novembre 1951

We take with pleasure, gentlemen, the opportunity you offer us today to express to you in heartfelt manner the cordial interest which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations awakens in Us, and our esteem for those who give themselves to it with ardour. We can not praise too highly your beneficent work and above all the great lesson in courage which you give to the world. For it requires courage to pursue with holy obstinacy a difficult task.

At the sight of the ruins piled up by wars or revolutions, all over the globe, of cities crushed and of country-sides devastated or deserted; at the sight of the natural scourges which desolated huge regions and of the unheard-of miseries which follow everywhere; at the sight of the populations forced to flee at random, without shelter or resources, before the rising of invading waters often more fearful and more destructive than the volcanic eruptions and the earthquakes of yesterday; the temptation is strong (and many, alas, succumb to it) to give in to discouragement; to waste in lamentations, understandable assuredly, or in unjust recriminations against those who can not help, the strength which would permit one to struggle and to react.

For you, on the contrary, this general distress is a powerful spur to your initiative; and your Organization sets to work to remedy things with much wisdom, skill and practical methods, and unlimited devotion. Without ever losing sight of the situation in its entirety and in its details, you have given yourselves to analyzing it so as to distribute, among multiple services and various countries, the specialist tasks.

In truth, this situation is very complex! It is necessary to provide for so many needs, to confront so many difficulties, to triumph over so many obstacles of every sort and in local or regional conditions so widely different!

In effect your problems concern, all at the same time, the production, conservation, allocation, transport and distribution of the commodities of prime necessity; and the most productive possible exploitation of the immense riches of earth, sea, forests, and watercourses, of agriculture, fisheries and cattle.

Is it not deplorable to see, since so much time (and in certain cases since the beginning) countries admirably favored by nature but remaining practically unproductive for lack of more advanced methods or tools necessary for the utilization of their natural riches? Or to see other countries completely deprived of these and other indispensable commodities; and burdened with products eagerly wanted elsewhere but for which they have no use and no transport with which to deliver them to markets?

The list of such anomalies and problems which can only be solved by an active international understanding and by the collaboration of high expertise in every field, is sadly long.

This, gentlemen, is what your efforts aim toward, with a zeal worthy of every praise, in a spirit of universal brotherhood. You gladly do what is humanly possible; but above human possibility there glides divine power, ready to back up paternally your good will and your effort, awaiting only confident prayers that it be done.

And so, we urgently raise our petition, calling down upon you, upon your work, upon your co-workers and your families, the benediction of heaven, as a token of which we give you, with all our affection, our Apostolic Blessing.

**Paths to Peace* p.295.