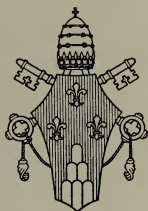


LETTER TO  
PAOLO CARDINAL MARELLA  
ON NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

POPE PAUL VI



This year a world exhibition will be opened in New York to celebrate the third centenary of that most flourishing and illustrious city of the United States of America. No doubt happy results will match the lively anticipation of this event since every care and attention was given ardently, sustained by a common effort, so that all nations of the world could vie with one another—a spectacle truly worthy of admiration—in showing the research, the discoveries and achievements of science, of the arts and of technology in which each nation distinguishes itself according to the capacities of the best minds which they have.

Such a noble undertaking deserves our full approval. For in fact by its very nature it seeks to bring an opportunity in which all nations, setting aside rivalries, aggressive attitudes and suspicions, will work in noble competition toward the construction and diffusion of all that adds to the

advantages, to the ease and to the beneficial tranquillity of social life.

Because of our apostolic ministry it is true that we greatly esteem means which defend and strengthen the common good. But we all the more cordially approve of them when religion—there is nothing more worthy of veneration and more salutary—places a regal crown, as it were, on the conquests of man and on his most outstanding activities. And this is precisely what is taking place in the present circumstances.

In fact, an unusual element is being added to the grandiose exhibition, an element which, while unusual and new, has been completed with happy results so far and with radiant hope—that is to say the exhibition of the activities in which the Church is engaged.

The Vatican Pavilion, built with great skill and mastery, will offer to visitors' eyes the life of Christ, illustrated by splendid works of art; the manifold means used in teaching the doctrine of the Church; the undertakings and cares of its many forms of charity; its sanctifying efficacy, spread over the whole earth; every form of vessel and vestment destined for divine worship, and many aspects worthy of being known.

In addition it will be possible to admire there, placed with great prominence, the statue of the Virgin of the Pieta, supporting the dead Christ on her knees. With this piece of sculpture, Michelangelo, who easily surpassed every other artist, surpassed himself, when with sublime art as a sculptor and no less with religious devotion inspired in him from on high, he sculpted the figure of the Madonna which no one of sensitive feelings can admire without being deeply moved.

By its extraordinary presence, may this marble statue, which confers so much splendor on the Vatican basilica

and which has been transported for a short while beyond the immense expanses of the ocean, attract to itself glances full of admiration from a great number of people and produce in their hearts a lively and deep impression which may then remain permanently carved on their memories. May it attract them from the visible to invisible realities, and in a mysterious language, made rather of silence, speak to them of the Christian Faith, the mother of heroism, the nourisher of virtues and the generous sower of joy and beauty.

Accordingly and so that the opening of the Vatican Pavilion at the New York World's Fair should have greater solemnity, we have decided to send as our representative a member of the Sacred College of Cardinals. And after carefully considering the matter, we elect and appoint you, beloved son, so that you may preside in our name at the opening ceremonies and, as official interpreter of our thoughts, address to those present words of praise, satisfaction and encouragement.

Therefore, after invoking the name and help of the Lord, you will praise the magnificent organization and wish it a fruitful, splendid and lasting harvest of outstanding results. And since you are provided with eminent gifts of intelligence, erudition and great culture, we do not doubt that you will be able to bring to a successful conclusion this office of honor which is being entrusted to you.

For this purpose, so that the good wishes and hopes which you are to extend may be fulfilled, we impart to you the apostolic blessing to draw upon you the heavenly help of the Lord, and through you we extend it particularly to most beloved Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, to all those who will attend the solemn opening, to the religious and civil authorities, to the judiciary and to all the faithful.

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