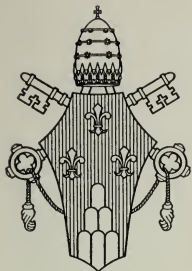


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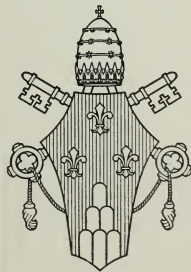
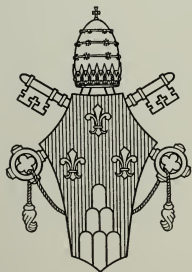


CATHOLIC CHURCH. POPE, 1963-
(PAULUS, VI). ON VATICAN COUNCIL II
AND ON WORLD PEACE.



ON VATICAN COUNCIL II AND ON WORLD PEACE

POPE PAUL VI





ON THE
SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL
AND ON WORLD PEACE

POPE PAUL VI

Address Given on His Name Day

June 24, 1965

We thank you sincerely for your wishes which you are offering to us personally with such courtesy, and which have been so nobly interpreted and expressed by your cardinal dean in the name of the entire sacred college.

We thank you wholeheartedly. Our spirit draws great comfort from them. We would almost rather not admit it, adverse as we are—because of natural feeling and deliberate resolution—to having others interested in our person.

But the need to feel fraternally understood and spiritually sustained by you becomes stronger as we gradually

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assess and appreciate your generous service and as the experience, two years old now, of the duties of our apostolic office is gradually becoming more complex and grave. Yes, this is the reality which is commensurate, not only with the littleness of our powers but also with the quantity and quality of the problems in every field of the life of the Church as well as of the contemporary world.

We look with serenity at the complex problems which weaken and weary our spirit and the spirit of anyone who observes with vigilant and responsible attention the scene of present day history, because we know that it is typical of human life in the flow of time and that the transformations worked by modern progress in every sector of life give rise to new problems of every kind, made more acute for us, who are bound to remain firm and faithful to a conception of the world and to a body of doctrine whose precepts are not only unchanging, but also perennially present and therefore fruitful for ever new and consistent expressions.

On the one hand, there is an intensification of the effort of the Church to understand better the divine design in which we participate and to which we are pledged, as a result of our Christian vocation, our apostolic mission and our final destiny. On the other hand, there is more urgency in our concern for pursuing the surrounding and escaping world to which we owe our understanding, our interest, our care and our comfort, in a word, our service, which is rendered all the more necessary, in a manner of speaking, the less it is desired and, on the other hand, the more it is consoling and providential.

The bark of Peter sails in a rough sea. Everything moves, everything is a problem. You know it very well. And therefore your collaboration is most precious and meritorious, since it is accompanied by the spiritual communion which you now profess to us in the love of Jesus Christ, Our Master and Lord, in prayer for the urgent necessity and in dedication to common service.

You also know which among the many ordinary questions are the extraordinary ones which engage our attention more. There are too many to list. But we recommend the principal ones from among these to your attentive interest and prayers.

We are studying the statutes of episcopal conferences, from the proper functioning of which we hope to derive one of the means of better collaboration of our brothers in the episcopate, which must ever more strengthen the inner unity of the Church, honor the collegiality of the bishops in communion with this Apostolic see and render more uniform and efficient, in ordinary circumstances, the pastoral action of the Church, strengthened by the awareness of the one Faith, by the emulation of the manifold forms in which it expresses itself historically and locally and by the most active solidarity of Christian charity.

This is a delicate and complex question which is linked with the more general question of the revision of the Code of Canon Law, already begun in the creation of organs which will have to implement it and in the collecting of material which is to be submitted to the most thoughtful examination. Moreover, it is also connected with those improvements and changes to be made in the delicate and traditional organism which is experienced in the central government of the Church and which is called the Roman curia.

It is always possible and necessary to be better. And this is what we are trying to do by means of gradual restoration, even though it may not always appear as new and arbitrary.

As you know, two other very important questions engage our vigilant care: the canonical discipline of mixed marriages (a delicate question which requires some further reflection) and the teaching of the Church regarding norms of the birth rate. This latter is a theme we mentioned on this same occasion last year, promising to speak of it

again more fully and authoritively after the studies to which we submitted it had reached a conclusion, making use of the varied and combined competencies of a numerous and excellent commission. The commission worked worthily but has not yet completed its enquiries which we do not wish to interrupt but for which we are solicitous with all respectful concern, so that we hope before long to be able to say a few words on a theme of such vital importance, supported by the light of human science while we ask of God that it be the light of His wisdom.

We shall say nothing here of many and heavy extraordinary problems of an administrative nature which are keeping the competent offices vigilantly active, such as the radical and indispensable restoration of the Lateran Palaces and the planned construction of the new hall for general audiences. While they make us feel the blessed restriction of our limited financial resources, they do not distract us from our proposal of multiplying as much as possible our help for world hunger and the missionary, pastoral and charitable needs which are reported to us from many sides. In this respect the words of the Lord admonish us: Do not be anxious (Matt. 6, 31), and we are consoled by the signs of the piety and generosity of so many of our sons who are concerned not to let the Church want for temporal means, which testifies to their heart and blesses their hand.

Rather we mention two main questions which weigh on our spirit and which now mark our pontificate in the eyes of all. We mean the conclusion of the ecumenical Council and peace in the world.

In fact, among the events of which the goodness of the Lord has desired us to be the witness or participant in this past year, the development of the third session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has found a prominent place, at the end of which and following the deepened and complete elaboration made by the venerable assembly of the Fathers, we had the good fortune and joy to approve and promulgate three important documents: the Constitu-

tion on the Church and the Decrees on Ecumenism and on the Oriental Catholic Churches.

It does not seem necessary to us to dwell and underline the significance of these texts and the vast influence which they always will exercise on the life of the Church.

This is already attested to by the numerous comments, analytical studies and applications which have been made and those which are still to be made even more fully or completely. This, the luminous conciliar teaching, will be a reason and foundation for the renewal of the individual and collective awareness of the divine and mysterious nature of the Church, of vocations, of the dignity and order of its members, as well as of the universal mission of salvation entrusted to it by the Lord and which it faithfully fulfills through the course of centuries and generations.

We have reason to be well pleased because of this general reawakening of interest in ecclesiological doctrine, desiring that it may lead to an always fuller and more profound understanding of the conciliar decrees and to the exact fulfillment of the norms they contain.

During the course of this year there also went into force the reform of the sacred liturgy laid down in the respective decrees of the preceding Council session for the purpose of making it easier for the faithful—as is already happening—to draw closer to the sources of a more authentic spirituality and a deeper and more fruitful understanding of the contents and significance of the sacred rites. We cannot therefore but rejoice in the manifold undertakings of the liturgical apostolate, desiring that they may correspond faithfully to the spirit and letter of the conciliar constitution and of the relative instruction, as well as to the norms propagated by the competent ecclesiastical authorities, so that the fruits which the faithful will draw from them may be certain, well ordered and abundant.

Still in regard to the activity and orientations of the Ecumenical Council, we believe we also ought to recall as

particularly significant the institution of the Secretariat for Non-Believers, a sign of the interest with which the Church regards the problems of all men, even those furthest away from her, in the desire of obtaining a more exact and deeper knowledge of them so as to be better able to offer aid in the loyal search for true solutions.

Now we are awaiting and preparing assiduously for the fourth and conclusive session of the Council, in which various schemas of decrees which have not yet been discussed will have to be debated, while the examination of others must be reopened or completed.

Every one of you, my lord cardinals, knows how much we have it at heart to bring to a happy conclusion this providential and solemn Council. Its adherence to normal rules of procedure, the importance of the deliberations already made, the climate of fervor stirred up in every strata of the ecclesiastic bodies, the conversation full of respect and promise begun with the separated brethren, the attention aroused in the world for the Catholic Church—these are already results of very great value which enable us to perceive and feel the help of the Holy Spirit given this Apostolic See and the entire body of the Catholic Church. We trust these beneficial fruits will be enormously increased by the work and the final decrees of the forthcoming fourth session.

Just as the Council began in exultancy and trust at its first session, so we wish that it should end in the most serene and fraternal concord, in the mutual promise of friendship and solidarity, in the well ordered harmony of the organic structures which compose this Holy Church of God, in confirmed trust in its traditions, its laws and its spiritual and pastoral methods, and action, in the deep and almost ecstatic awareness of the most blessed mystery it carries within itself, in increased vigor for the fulfilment of its humble and divine mission of service, apostolate and salvation in the midst of mankind. It is necessary that the

Council end well, in speedy and constructive work, in a peace filled with the spirit of Christ.

For this reason we have encouraged the work of the various commissions, to which we must already pay the tribute of our thanks for the assiduous toil undergone. For this reason we have sought that the schemas of the conciliar questions still pending should be most accurate and sustained by free and thorough preparatory discussions and for this reason we ask you, my lord cardinals, to continue your most attentive and devoted cooperation with us. This invitation of ours extends naturally to all our brothers in the episcopate, to all members of the great synod, as well to all those who can in different forms contribute to its serene development and to its happy conclusion: consultants, experts, publicists and faithful.

Let the harmonious and positive action of all these sons be with us. Let their prayers be with us so that the historic hour we are about to experience may have its light and its blessing.

We also rely not only on the presence, for us desirable and a matter of honor, of the observers of the separated brethren who will intervene at the conciliar reunions, but also on their courteous goodness and on the common hope that one day every obstacle which still prevents us from celebrating together the perfect unity to which Christ calls us may crumble as it should.

The Council, we hope, will be able to speak in a definite way regarding the themes proposed in its program. This will not end all the questions concerning the life of the Church. Indeed, the Council itself opens many new and great ones which, once the Council is over, we will take up reverently and seek to treat and solve, not without the cooperation and the counsel of the episcopate, as well as with the cooperation of Religious and of the faithful themselves who have the qualification to do so in the best ways. Life goes on!

There is then the other major question which, although indirectly, concerns and engages our apostolic ministry as we said—peace in the world.

Many times in recent months we have raised our grieving voice at the fact of sorrowful conflicts which, while they were and are the cause of deaths and bloodshed for innocent populations, threatened to extend themselves and perturb peace even more deeply.

Thanks to the infinite benignity of the Most High, nothing irreparable has happened. But the threat is far from over. Indeed it has become more serious, and new fires of discord have been kindled in other parts of the globe.

Therefore, let no one resent it if we again preach the cause of peace. It is still in danger. It is necessary to halt, to speak to responsible men while there is time. The spark not yet extinguished can provoke a fire whose proportions frighten the very imagination.

Humanity still has fresh in its memory the misfortunes and still carries in its flesh the scars of a general conflict. It looks with trepidation at events, and desires that it be spared new and most sorrowful trials.

We cannot hide our uneasiness. Our spirit, the spirit of all men worthy of the name, shrinks with horror before the prospect of a war which may employ those terrible instruments of destruction which science and technology have discovered. It would be a tragic, irreversible, fatal eventuality. It would be the end, not of difficulties, but of civilization.

Let those who wish to prolong or contribute to the prolonging of a conflict which cannot have sufficient justification bear in mind the lessons of history. Events may get beyond men who think they can dominate them.

War—and the experience of this last one also proves it—does not solve problems. It creates new and more com-

plex ones. Salvation lies in frank, honest and loyal negotiation.

Therefore we wish to express our satisfaction to those statesmen who show loyal and honorable intentions for peace and who also take positive steps, some of them truly unusual and daring, to draw contending parties together and induce them to enter into negotiations, substituting them for armed conflicts and working them out in new forms of balance, of mutual respect, of observance of treaties and of brotherly cooperation among free peoples. May our encouragement sustain these noble efforts and may our prayer render our wish efficacious and beneficial for all.

Thus the expression of our gratitude goes to all those who have responded to the proposal we made during our journey to Bombay last December to turn over at least part of the savings which individual nations can realize by adopting plans for effective disarmament to aid needy and hungry nations in the world and developing nations. Our suggestion to institute an international fund with these means and for this purpose has been well received in principle by competent and authoritative quarters, so as to give rise to the hope that the undertaking may have a practical and most beneficial and exemplary implementation in the not too distant future.

The heart opens to comforting visions of a better future for the peaceful and fraternal coexistence of peoples. Yet this does not prevent it from suffering bitterly because of the bloody and ruinous struggle which rages in Vietnam and which causes so many sorrows for those populations to whom we have sent several times, through the active and generous Catholic hierarchy there, our words of consolation and our good wishes for peace. Likewise to the Congo, tried by ferocious internecine conflicts, we have not failed to send our appeal for concord and peace. Likewise to the Dominican Republic, which we still hope will find again in civil and Christian concord the ways for its free and re-

newed prosperity. Another young nation, Algeria, keeps our spirit in suspense these days. To that people also go good wishes for fruitful, civil concord.

My lord cardinals, we have tested your patience with this long speech of ours. But your goodness encourages us to pour into your souls our apprehensions and our hopes. Let your indulgence sustain us and let your fidelity to the cause of Christ and of the Church and to the cause of the concord and prosperity of all peoples fortify us. And let our apostolic blessing speak to each of you as well as to the whole sacred college of your devotion and our gratitude.

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National Catholic Welfare Conference

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