



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DELEGATES OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE
ON ITALIAN MIGRATION**

Monday, 3 May 1982

Dear friends,

I extend a cordial welcome to all of you who make up the American Committee on Italian Migration. You have gathered for your Symposium in Rome, together with the Chairman of your Board, Bishop Swanstrom, and with Bishop Pernicone; at the same time you are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of your foundation.

1. During the past three decades you have worked in the important area of your country's immigration policy. As citizens you have striven to contribute to the betterment of society, according to Christian principles and with a view to uplifting the lot of millions of men, women and children. The Church cannot but praise everything that effectively promotes equality and justice for all people in *the area of immigration* - an area that so closely touches the good of the human person.

2. Some of the many values that you have rightly sought to protect are the human dignity of each individual, universal brotherhood, the sanctity of the family and the family's need to be together. From your experience you know that when these values are fostered, a great new force is mobilized in favour of the common good; the result is individuals and families working together with a sense of mission, working together to sustain and reinforce the larger family of the nation, which in turn is called to consecrate all its energies to promote the welfare of its members and at the same time the cause of worldwide solidarity and universal peace. As regards *the requirements of families*, the last Synod of Bishops offered principles, which when applied will give new dynamism to the whole of society. All efforts made to help the family fulfill its role as the vital cell of all society deserve the greatest consideration.

3. An important part of your activities is *the help that you offer to Italian immigrants* once they have entered your country. This aspect of your association is very significant and it opens up a horizon that is as vast as the inventiveness of Christian charity. Encouragement for those beginning a new life in a new land, personal interest in people's problems, social assistance to those in need and the warmth of human friendship are services that more than justify an association like your own and commend its purpose. And what a splendid thing it is when all these services are rendered in the name of Christ, who is alive and wants to continue through you his mission of loving concern for humanity, with which he intends to identify until the end of time. Jesus himself testifies: "As often as you did it for one of the least of my brethren, you did it for me".

4. Your Symposium also offers you the occasion to travel to the earthquake area of southern Italy. I am happy to have this opportunity to thank you for your active interest in the problems of *the people affected by disaster* and for the generous donations that you were instrumental in raising for the alleviation of their needs. All of this speaks of worthy aims and practical initiatives.

5. Your visit to Rome and to others parts of Italy likewise enables you to expand your appreciation of *the rich centuries-old culture* of the Italian people, so many of whom have entered into American society, bringing their enriching contribution to the American way of life.

Upon all of you and your families I invoke the blessings of Almighty God. I pray that during your visit you will be confirmed in your faith and in the challenges of Christian love.