



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS

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President of the Conference

of International Catholic Organizations By means of this letter I send warm greetings to you and those participating in the General Assembly of the Conference of International Catholic Organizations taking place in Rome from 30 November to 6 December 2003. I am confident that the theme chosen for your Assembly, "Make Human Society More Humane, Gospel Values Leading from Violence to Compassion", will prompt much useful discussion on how International Catholic Organizations can take an ever more active role in building an authentic worldwide culture of peace. An important aspect of this task is increasing the awareness that *human rights* are necessarily accompanied by corresponding *human duties* (cf. *Message for the 2003 World Day of Peace*, No. 5). The Gospel in fact clearly teaches that we have an unmistakable responsibility towards others — towards God first and foremost, and towards our fellow men and women (cf. *Mk 12:29-33*). The more this awareness grows and people throughout the world recognize and accept their obligations with regard to others, the more will the cause of harmony among peoples be served. This is the sure foundation upon which a true and lasting peace can be built. In the course of your Assembly, you will also have an opportunity to reflect on your mission as International Catholic Organizations within the larger family of Catholic associations. In this context, I encourage each of your institutions to review its statutes in light of the Code of Canon Law, making whatever amendments may be necessary to ensure that a true spirit of willing service to the Universal Church will ever prevail within your ranks. For "the spirituality of communion, by prompting a trust and openness wholly in accord with the dignity and responsibility of every member of the People of God, supplies institutional reality with a soul" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 45). Praying that Almighty God, "who calls us from oppression and conflict to freedom and cooperation for the good of all" (*Message for the 2003 World Day of Peace*, No. 10), will send upon you the guiding light of his Spirit, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and strength in our Lord Jesus Christ. *From the Vatican, 28 November 2003.* **IOANNES PAULUS II**
