



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS PP. XII
TO THE 9th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION***

Sabato, 9 novembre 1957

Today we have the pleasure of receiving you, gentlemen, on the occasion of the Ninth Conference of the FAO now being held in Rome. You have under consideration several questions concerning the functioning of this organization, as well as the current difficulties of agriculture and the program of action which you propose in order to bring remedies to it.

In examining the present situation, you have perceived a disquieting fact and one which requires an urgent solution: the phenomenon of the weakening of agriculture in the world economy. You note that, in internal exchanges as on the international level, the market shows everywhere a tendency unfavorable to the interests of farmers. While the prices of manufactured goods continue to rise, those of agricultural products have been diminishing progressively since 1952. Thus the farmer's purchasing power shrinks little by little, his situation becomes more precarious; and an unfortunate consequence, above all in Europe, the depopulation of the countryside is accentuated, provoking a new series of both social and religious problems. This state of things sharply worries us because it menaces a population which is numerous, brave, and deserving; a population whose qualities of stability and fidelity to the best traditions are more than ever necessary to maintain balance in a society in rapid evolution.

It is certain that the given elements of the question are very complex and the remedies difficult to apply. But you will render an eminent service to farmers if you succeed in opposing the advance of this phenomenon of deterioration and in starting a movement of rectification. We wish with all our heart that your organization may increasingly unite the participating nations in a generous effort, free of considerations of other sorts that would tend to thwart its action and even at times to render it ineffective. Too many people are still suffering from hunger for us to delay, from motives of special interest, the work which aims at helping them.

As a token of the support of the Most High, we invoke upon your present Conference and on your activities outside it, for yourselves and all your families and friends, our Apostolic Blessing.

**Paths to Peace*, p.299-300.

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