



The Holy See

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI,
SIGNED BY CARDINAL VILLOT,
TO PROFESSOR CRISPOLTI, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL
ASSOCIATION**

Dear Professor Crispolti,

This Second World Conference of the International Catholic Rural Association has happily coincided with the Tenth Anniversary of your Association, and I am pleased to assure you of the Holy Father's continuing interest in your activities. It is, indeed, only a few days since, in the course of a general audience, he repeated the encouragement which he gave to the organizers of the present Conference when he learned of it in February.

In the discussions which you have just concluded you have examined the role of agriculture and of the rural population in development. You are, I know, well aware of the importance of this theme not only for rural development itself, but for development as a whole. The consequences of industrial development divorced from an understanding of the needs and structures of the rural population are a source of worry. You can give valuable help to avoid the perpetration in other countries of errors already committed in this regard in the industrialized world.

In studying, among other problems, the scourge of hunger, which so acutely affects such a large percentage of the world population, you have taken up a challenge facing the whole of society, but of particular importance to those dedicated to agriculture, who provide so great a part of the world's foodstuffs. Part of the answer to this problem of hunger in the world is to be found in solving the socio-economic difficulties of the rural world, by placing a proper value on agricultural products—a value which will reflect the efforts and the risks of the farm workers—by guaranteeing a worthwhile revenue to the latter and by improving the lot of women, who form over half of the rural work force and will necessarily have a most important part to play in rural education and development.

The need also to conserve the rural heritage which God has given to man leads you to confront the current problem of ecology. This respect for nature brings the rural worker close to God, for it reflects his respect for and his worship of the Creator. Such an intimacy with God and the collaboration with his plan for the growth of the fruits of the earth can be a leaven in your spiritual lives. It can be especially attractive to young people, who find such appeal in simplicity of life.

The Church is grateful to the members of your Association for all they do in helping men and women in rural areas to find their true spiritual identity. His Holiness praises and encourages this apostolate of the countryside and in testimony of his continuing affection in the Lord he willingly imparts to you and to all the members of your Association his Apostolic Blessing.

With my own good wishes, I remain Yours sincerely

Cardinal VILLOT

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