



The Holy See

CLOSING OF THE SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

***ADDRESS OF POPE PAUL VI
TO THE POOR, THE SICK AND THE SUFFERING***

8 December 1965

To all of you, brothers in trial, who are visited by suffering under a thousand forms, the council has a very special message. It feels on itself your pleading eyes, burning with fever or hollow with fatigue, questioning eyes which search in vain for the why of human suffering and which ask anxiously when and whence will come relief.

Very dear brothers, we feel echoing deeply within our hearts as fathers and pastors your laments and your complaints. Our suffering is increased at the thought that it is not within our power to bring you bodily help nor the lessening of your physical sufferings, which physicians, nurses and all those dedicated to the service of the sick are endeavoring to relieve as best they can.

But we have something deeper and more valuable to give you, the only truth capable of answering the mystery of suffering and of bringing you relief without illusion, and that is faith and union with the Man of Sorrows, with Christ the Son of God, nailed to the cross for our sins and for our salvation. Christ did not do away with suffering. He did not even wish to unveil to us entirely the mystery of suffering. He took suffering upon Himself and this is enough to make you understand all its value. All of you who feel heavily the weight of the cross, you who are poor and abandoned, you who weep, you who are persecuted for justice, you who are ignored, you the unknown victims of suffering, take courage. You are the preferred children of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of hope, happiness and life. You are the brothers of the suffering Christ, and with Him, if you wish, you are saving the world.

This is the Christian science of suffering, the only one which gives peace. Know that you are not alone, separated, abandoned or useless. You have been called by Christ and are His living and

transparent image. In His name, the council salutes you lovingly, thanks you, assures you of the friendship and assistance of the Church, and blesses you.