

## **John Paul II Laments Plight of the World's Refugees**

### **"Grave Offence to God," He Says**

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 15, 2003 (Zenit.org) - A situation that forces people to flee from their homes and become refugees is an offence to God, says John Paul II.

"From God, who is communion, derives the vocation of the whole of humanity to form one great family, in which the different races and cultures meet and are mutually enriched," the Pope said today as the Church celebrated the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

"Every situation in which human individuals or groups are constrained to flee from their own land to find refuge elsewhere, stands out as a grave offence to God and to man," the Holy Father said, before praying the Angelus with several thousand pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square.

With these words, the Pope commented on the theme of World Refugee Day, which this year is dedicated to the reality of refugee youths. The event will be observed this Friday.

"Almost half of the refugees in the world are children and youths," John Paul II said. "Many of them do not go to school; they lack essential goods; they live in refugee camps or even in detention."

He added: "The drama of refugees exacts from the international community a commitment not only to address the symptoms but above all the causes of the problem, that is, to prevent the conflicts by promoting justice and solidarity in every realm of the human family."