



The Holy See

SCREENING OF A FILM ON PIUS XII ENTITLED "UNDER THE ROMAN SKY"

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Hall of the Swiss, Papal Residence of Castel Gandolfo

Friday, 9 April 2010

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to have seen the first screening of the film *Under the Roman Sky*, an international co-production that presents the fundamental role of Venerable Pius XII in saving Rome and many persecuted people between 1943 and 1944. Although it belongs to the popular genre, it aims to reconstruct those dramatic events and the figure of the "*Pastor Angelicus*", taking into account the most recent studies as well. I thank Mr Paolo Garimberti, President of the RAI, for his courteous words. I also extend a grateful thought to Mr Ettore Bernabei, to the other Producers, and to all who have collaborated to create this significant work that we have just seen. I greet with affection the Cardinal, the Prelates and everyone present.

These works conceived for the wider public, using the most modern means and at the same time aiming to illustrate figures or events of the past century have a special value, above all for the new generations. For those who studied certain events at school and have perhaps heard talk of them, films such as this one can be useful and stimulating and can help increase their knowledge of a period which is not far off but which the pressing events of recent history and a fragmented culture can cause to be forgotten.

Pius XII was the Pontiff of our youth. With his rich teaching he knew how to speak to the people of his time, pointing out the way of Truth, and with his great wisdom was able to direct the Church toward the horizon of the third millennium. However, I am eager to stress in particular that Pius XII was the Pope who, as the father of all, presided in charity in Rome and throughout the world, especially in the difficult period of the Second World War. In a Discourse of 23 July 1944,

immediately after the liberation of the City of Rome, he thanked the Members of the *Circolo San Pietro* [Circle of St Peter] for their collaboration, saying "You help us to satisfy more extensively our desire to wipe away so many tears, to alleviate so much suffering", and pointed out as central for every Christian St Paul's exhortation to the Colossians (3: 14-15) "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one Body" (*Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, pp. 87-88).

The primacy of charity, of love which is the commandment of the Lord Jesus: this is the principle of, and the key to, the interpretation of all the work of the Church and *in primis* of her universal Pastor. Charity is the reason for every action, every intervention. It is the overriding motivation that prompts thought and practical action and I am glad that this unifying principle also emerges in this film. Permit me to suggest this key of interpretation in the light of the authentic testimony of the great teacher of faith, hope and charity which Pope Pius XII was.

As I renew the expression of my gratitude to all, I take the opportunity to address my best Easter greetings to you, as I warmly bless those of you present here, together with your collaborators and your loved ones.

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