



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII TO CATHOLIC ARMED FORCES FROM GREAT BRITAIN*

*Hall of Blessing
Tuesday, 1 August 1944*

Dearly beloved sons, your hearts are filled, We are sure, with a sense of joy and gratitude for this opportunity of visiting the life-centre of Christendom, where the Prince of the Apostles once governed the holy Church until martyrdom sealed his love and loyalty to Christ. It is a visit that must awaken many salutary emotions. One is suggested by the liturgy of this very day, in which the Church commemorates an event in the life of that noble-hearted Apostle, Christ's first Vicar on earth: the time when Herod had thrown Peter into prison hoping thus to cripple and kill off the nascent Church, and an Angel of the Lord entered the dungeon, the chains fell from off the prisoner, and the Angel led him forth to freedom. But it was freedom to work, to preach the revelation of God to man and to administer the holy sacraments unafraid, freedom to suffer, freedom at last to die for Christ and His immaculate Bride. With what gratitude and benediction the faithful must recall the all-powerful and all-wise providence of God, which from the beginning on down through all the centuries has protected the Church that He founded on Peter, and that resting on Peter's successors is to continue the same until the end of time. How their love of the Church and obedience to her laws must be quickened by the realization of God's directing and protecting arm always supporting her!

You are going now to pray at the tomb of St. Peter. Pray for the Church; pray for Us, Who rejoice, oh so deeply, to be able to greet you here, to welcome you and to tell you with Our own lips that the love and solicitude of Christ for His flock still beats within the heart of His Vicar. to share the sufferings and sorrows of all, their fears, their hopes and all the little, homely joys that come into their lives. With grave concern, especially these days, you will be praying for your own, your native land, that you love and for those in peril there; and with Christian charity you will include in your prayers all who throughout the world are victims, — innocent, helpless victims — of this dread war. And for those We also raise Our soul in supplication to God, while with all the affection of Our

paternal heart We bless your loved country and impart to you and your dear ones at home the Apostolic Benediction.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, VI,
Quinto anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1944 - 1° marzo 1945, pp. 59-60
Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana

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