



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS
FROM THE UNITED STATES***

Thursday, 11 July 1946

You are very welcome indeed to Our Vatican City State, American Editors and Publishers, homeward bound from your visit to the various countries of Europe. Soon you will be back again in your native land and it will be your endeavor to make known to your large reading audience what you have seen and learned, to evaluate the principles and aims of the men who are shaping these events and to forecast, as far as it may be possible, the consequences of the same. To do this rightly a free press is necessary.

Freedom may easily become a catchword for the unwary and superficial; for the serious-minded and conscientious man it is a condition fraught with impressive responsibility. The few minutes at Our disposal do not permit Us to attempt to analyze its content; yet it is obvious and fundamental to observe that man, endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice between good and evil, is not thereby given the right to choose the evil; but he is privileged freely to choose the good, which is his duty, and thus merit the reward eternal reserved for him by God. Freedom of the press, like any other freedom whether of action or of speech or thought is limited; it does not allow a man to print what is wrong, what is known to be false or what is calculated to undermine and destroy the moral and religious fibre of individuals and the peace and harmony of nations. It should guarantee a man against being shackled by material or selfish interests, when he pursues the laudable purpose of exposing truth and vindicating right and justice. Certainly a first postulate of such freedom is to have access to the truth.

How often experience has proved that in the long run good is never served by a distortion of facts. The world will not be lifted out of the quagmire of inhuman suffering and injustice in which it is agonizing, so long as suspicion, distrust and shameful ambitions conceal the truth from those who are entitled to know it for the common good of all. And the common people have their rights in this matter. You gentlemen of the press have an honourable vocation of vital importance for society.

Living up to its dignity and its exacting demands you are in a position to exercise an influence, not fully appreciated by all, in the solution of the world's intricate and tragic problems. Our sincere and earnest wish is that you measure up always to this vocation; and with this We are very happy to invoke God's blessing on you all and on your dear ones at home.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, VIII,*

Ottavo anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1946 - 1° marzo 1947, pp. 171-172

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