



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII TO THE NEW MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Monday, 30 June 1947

Mr. Minister:

It is with sincere feelings of gratitude and esteem that We reciprocate the good wishes which the King, your gracious Sovereign, has so kindly expressed for Us through you, his new representative to the Holy See. The recall of your predecessor, whose person and services We learned to value highly, and your appointment as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary come at a time of grave and universal concern. The international atmosphere is tense with suspicion; arising in part from conflicting ideals and leading to alarming distrust; the human soul having survived the horrors of a war without parallel in history, is being torn and tortured between fear and expectancy.

That the King's choice at such a moment should have fallen on a diplomat whose many years of responsible activity have enriched him with experience and knowledge of men and events, on which to draw for the successful fulfilment of his present mission, is a cause of great satisfaction to Us. And the words which you have just spoken, reflecting the earnestness with which you enter on your mission, give assurance that the friendly relations between the Holy See and your country, which in the course of very eventful years have developed and been confirmed, will be maintained by you with the same solicitude the same exquisite tact and delicacy, which characterized and did honour to the tenure of office of your worthy predecessor.

At a time when the voice of passion and prejudice all too often smothers the voice of reason and humanity, when feelings of resentment, sad but not unexpected legacy of a bitter war, stand in the way of that mental re-orientation so vitally necessary for an honourable peace, when serious obstacles and delays are constantly interfering with the definite laying of the just basis of such a peace, We find relief and encouragement in your statement that His Majesty's Government, while striving unwaveringly and insistently for true peace, is one with Us in hopes and aims.

During the war the British people endured what was almost beyond human endurance. They did so, not only in defence of their own lives and liberties, but as the vanguard fighting for those human ideals and human freedoms which must be dear to every right-minded man. Though victorious in the field of battle, they have not yet done with suffering and sacrifice in pursuit of their goal. Indeed the post-war years have found them with mounting burdens and problems which are equalled only by their fixed determination to master them through dignified self-discipline.

With a clear perception of reality, which one would like to see shared by others, the British people take into account the fact, that any further delay in initiating the work of reconstruction is to the disadvantage of both victor and conquered. The disastrous consequences of such delay would fall at first and most heavily on the latter; but inevitably the former, too, sooner or later would suffer because of it. Fortunately the British people are not alone in realizing this fact, not alone in their readiness to face up to its logical conclusion. Far-seeing statesmen and clear, dispassionate thinkers in the new world, for all its vast industrial power, have brought it to be common knowledge with their people, and in many other countries also experienced unbiased men are coming to admit its cogent truth.

We can only express the ardent wish, that this concept of the task of reconstruction - there is no other at once realistic, honourable and Christian - which presents it as an organized plan of renewed cooperation, supplanting former enmities, may make headway in the councils of the nations' leaders.

In the hope that your noble nation may soon be able to report perceptible progress in advancing the cause of afflicted humanity and of an enlightened sense of Christian principles, We invoke God's gracious protection on the King, on the Royal House, on His Majesty's Government and the entire British people. As their chosen representative you may always count on Our complete confidence and ready help.

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AAS 39 (1947), p.266-267.

L'Osservatore Romano 30.6-1.7.1947, p.1.