



# The Holy See

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***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII  
TO SOME MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION  
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES \****

*Sunday, 4 December 1949*

Rome, which welcomes you, honourable members of Congress, is a city with a long, long memory. Its venerable monuments recall eras of human history during two thousand years and more : the tears and laughter, the heroism and cruelty, the pagan power and grandeur, and then its purification and ennoblement by Christian civilization and culture. This massive pile just outside the window, with its incomparable dome admired by the world for more than three centuries, carries the mind back beyond the magnificence of the renaissance and the years of new-world discoveries to the triumphant days of Constantine, and then further back to when the first Apostles of Christ's nascent Church were hounded and tortured by the imperial tyrants, because they taught that the human immortal soul created to the image of its maker gave him an inherent dignity and rights, that no earthly power dare challenge in justice.

Such teaching could not but seem revolutionary to Nero and to every despot down the years; it awakened a realization that man has certain liberties independent of the State. It was revolutionary, no doubt. The revolution dated from that first Christmas night in Bethlehem of Juda; when Eternal Truth came, man among men, to lift men up to the realization of their glorious destiny as children of God and in His sacrificial love laid the sure foundation of their hope. But it was a revolution that righted humanity, did not distort it. And no policy, domestic or foreign, can safeguard human rights and secure man peace with just freedom, unless it take its inspiration from that same Truth and be activated in a spirit of His love for all. Destroy faith in Him, in God, and liberty receives a mortal blow. No fact today has been more patently demonstrated.

But the Spirit of Christ still breathes gently on His world; and above the din of machine and of strife His strong, appealing voice is heard and being hearkened to. May His blessings enrich your lives

and bring peace and love and grace and joy to your homes; and may His teachings illumine and strengthen all who share the responsibility of civil power.

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