



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AGLI ALUNNI DELLE SCUOLE CATTOLICHE DEGLI STATI UNITI****

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Yes, it is the voice of the Holy Father that you are hearing, Our dear children, your Father from Rome, Who comes again this year to greet you and to give you the little message He has just for you. This year We want to begin by telling you a story. Perhaps some of you read it this morning with the priest at Mass. Long, long ago a young man was riding on horse back, full-speed along a country road, when suddenly a blinding flash of light from the sky struck him; he fell to the ground; then he heard a voice, a hidden voice but clear. Saul, Saul, it said, why dost thou persecute me? And Saul, gazing up from the road, answered: Who art thou, Lord? And the voice replied: I am Jesus whom Saul persecutes.

Our Catholic school-children, We are sure, know who Saul was. He was the great apostle, whom you call Paul, and whose conversion you are commemorating today. Yes, he had to be converted, because he was not always a saint. He was first an enemy of the Church and that very day he was struck from his horse, he was on his way to arrest the Christians of those early years of the Church and have them put into prison. But that was because he did not know: he did not know that when he was persecuting the followers of Christ, he was really persecuting Christ. He was surprised when he heard the voice say: I am Jesus whom Saul is persecuting. He did not know he was persecuting Jesus; but he was. Jesus said so. As soon as Saul knew that, he at once stopped being the harsh enemy and became the ardent lover, lover of Jesus first and then, because he loved the Lord, lover of all his fellow-men. Jesus had suffered and died to make salvation possible for all men, did He not? Paul then wished to live henceforth and work and suffer and die to help all men gain that salvation.

Our dear children, for all your love of Jesus, you will probably not be called on to do the hard things St. Paul was chosen to carry through; but you do want to give proof of your love by making some sacrifice for the good of others. You have the chance right now, by responding generously,

as you did in former years, to the appeal of your devoted pastors and bishops. They know what has been happening in many parts of Europe and Asia. They hear the children weeping, and they long to stop their tears. They see them dying before their time; those that can be saved, they see, will be orphans of that earthly love your mothers and fathers lavish on you. How dreary the earth appears to them! How the dread future prepares to allure them to sin, to hate, to despair! Now don't you hear the hidden voice and clear, speaking to your heart : my child, my child, why dost thou neglect me? Who art thou, Lord, you ask; and the voice replies: I am Jesus whom thou art neglecting in the tortured, abandoned, defenseless children of the world. Oh, once you realize that, if you love Him, you will certainly hurry to help them. Of that We are sure.

But how, you ask. Go to your dear mothers and the Sisters who with infinite patience give their lives to teach you how to become holy Catholics and loyal citizens of your country, and they will tell you how in your own little way you can swell the Bishops' Fund for Children. Perhaps you will give up some sweets and pleasures, so you can fill the mite-boxes more quickly; or even you will do without some comfort and added finery you expected to have, so that a shivering child may have at least a warm dress. The season of Lent will soon be coming and its spirit of penance in memory of Christ's passion will urge you to be generous. But above all, We would beg of you to pray, to pray for those needy children and orphaned babies. Can you go to daily Mass during Lent and offer the Holy Sacrifice for them? How many of you will go to Holy Communion each day? Then, when Jesus is your own personal guest within you, you will tell Him how much you love the children throughout the world, especially the innocent child-victims of cruel war, and for your eager love He will send them aid. If you do this, know that you will also be consoling Our paternal heart, that is so heavily oppressed by sorrow and anxiety for the little ones of Christ.

One last word: We are going to give you Our blessing now, Our very special Apostolic Blessing, with this fond hope and prayer, that it will draw down into your souls and the souls of all your loved ones from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, all-burning with love for men, those precious graces that under the protection of your Blessed Mother Mary will keep you free from sin, make you strong in Faith, and courageous to profess that Faith in your conduct always.

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