



The Holy See

*DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII AL NUOVO MINISTRO DI GRAN BRETAGNA**

Sabato, 23 giugno 1951

Mr. Minister

In extending to Your Excellency a very sincere welcome as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of George VI of England, Our first thought most naturally is of His Majesty, whose royal Letters you have been privileged to present to Us. The cordial greetings, which His Majesty has wished to renew for Us on this auspicious occasion, have deeply moved Us, and We hasten to ask you to convey to him the expression of Our good wishes together with Our prayer that God may shower on his royal person and all the members of the royal family heaven's choicest blessings.

Your Excellency has referred, and with reason, to the conflict of ideas and aims that divides the world today politically and ideologically, with both sides advancing certain claims, though obviously in a very different sense, and all too often with a view to cloaking ulterior designs. We believe that your remarks have an exact application to those two prized objects, so long a time on the lips of all and that are at the centre of public discussion : freedom and peace.

Freedom, as a basis of normal human relations, cannot be interpreted as an unbridled liberty, whether there is question of individuals or parties, of an entire people, the collectivity as they say today, or even of a totalitarian State, which will use every means, with utter disregard, to make sure of its purpose. No, freedom is something quite different. It is the temple of the moral order erected on harmonious lines; it is the aggregate of the rights and duties of individuals and the family — some of those rights imprescriptible even when an apparent common good might challenge them —, of the rights and duties of a nation or State and of the family of nations and States. These rights and duties are carefully measured and balanced. by the demands of the dignity of the human person and family on one side, and of the common good on the other.

Peace cannot be established by forcing the weak to submit to the strong. No, only the actualization of genuine freedom can produce true peace. During the war-years We took occasion to point out the basis and the demands of a true peace, raising Our voice in earnest appeal to the nations of the world, and especially to their leaders, to stifle and crush all feelings of rancour and hate, all unholy self-seeking and mutual distrust, resolved in a spirit of fraternal cooperation to pay homage in their lives and conduct to the principle, that a word given is a sacred thing, that mere force never confers a right, that truthfulness, courtesy, justice and an equitable distribution of wealth are indispensable to a world at peace. Certainly a consummation ardently to be hoped for; yet it seems to recede farther and farther away; many there are, who hardly dare to hope to see it attained.

And in very truth, the last decades, with a perspicacity suggestive of an almost apocalyptic judgement of the world, has demonstrated and warned that freedom and peace are spiritual values, that can be won only by a faith in a personal God and an unconditional acknowledgement of the moral law of Christianity. They give tangible proof that where that faith is lacking, the temple of freedom and peace rests on sand, both concepts have lost their significance.

It is then, Mr. Minister, all the more gratifying for Us to know that Your Excellency is at home with that faith and that fundamental truth, and Our joy is deeper for your assurance that the Government and the peoples, whom you represent, possess ideals and pursue aims similar to those proclaimed by this Holy See.

The reference made with such delicate feeling by Your Excellency to your immediate predecessor refreshes pleasant memories of a gentleman of noble mien, whom, in the providence of God, death snatched so unexpectedly from the circle of those, whose admiration and esteem he had deservedly won-While one sorrows for the loss, the long and distinguished career of Your Excellency in posts of high responsibility, giving proof at once of your government's trust in your eminent talents and of your successful response to that trust, gives Us full assurance that under your direction the tradition of mutual comprehension and friendly cooperation upheld by your predecessor will be ably carried on, to strengthen the ties that bind His Majesty's realm to this Holy See. Your Excellency may rely on Our complete confidence, while We pray that God will bless your labours and make your stay in Rome happy and fruitful.

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

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