



The Holy See

IL RADIOMESSAGGIO AGLI ALUNNI DELLE SCUOLE CATTOLICHE DEGLI STATI UNITI D'AMERICA Secondo una commovente tradizione, che risale al 1945, nel primo giorno di Quaresima il Sommo Pontefice Pio XII suole indirizzare un Suo speciale paterno Messaggio, per mezzo della Radio, agli alunni delle Scuole Cattoliche degli Stati Uniti con l'invito a intensificare la loro generosa carità e le loro preghiere a vantaggio di milioni di coetanei che, in varie parti del mondo, e ancora in conseguenza delle guerre, si trovano in gravi strettezze e necessitano di molteplici aiuti. Alle ore 9 del Mercoledì delle Ceneri, 19 febbraio 1958, nelle dette Scuole, dagli Stati dell'Est a quelli dell'Ovest, si succedono le trasmissioni che portano ovunque la nuova, affettuosa ed animatrice parola del Supremo Pastore.

Sua Santità parla al microfono nella Sala detta di San Giovanni al- l'Appartamento Pontificio. Sono presenti le Loro Eccellenze Revnie i Monsignori Federico Callori di Vignale, Maestro di Camera e Angelo Dell'Acqua, Sostituto della Segreteria di Stato; e Revfito Monsignor Mario Naselli Rocca di Corneliano, Cameriere Segreto Partecipante; il Padre Antonio Stefanizzi S. 7., Direttore della Stazione Radio del Vaticano; e il P. Tommaso O'Donnel S. 7., annunziatore per la lingua inglese. Intervenuto anche e Rewho Monsignor Andrew Landi, Direttore per l'Italia dei « Catholic Relief Services - N.C.W.C. ».

Is it possible that another Lent has come round and We are asked once again to speak to Our dear school-children in America? Surely nothing pleases Us more than to talk with the young ones of the cherished flock belonging to the divine Shepherd. During the year hundreds and hundreds of children come to see Us here in Rome and out in the hill country nearby; We talk to them and often they answer Our questions. We cannot do that this morning, because you are too far away. But at least Our voice can travel across the ocean, and in one way brings Us really into your classrooms.

And what is the message it carries for you? Let Us tell you briefly. Next week you will begin the month of St. Joseph. Now We have decided this year to entrust to him the charge of all We fondly wish and hope for from you.

St. Joseph, as you have all learned at home and at school, was a very holy man. He had to be, because he was married to the Virgin Mary, the purest, the holiest, the most exalted of all God's creatures. More than that, the Eternal Father confided to the care of St. Joseph His own onlybegotten Son, become man on earth, Jesus Christ. Mary was the Mother of Jesus, the tenderest and most loving of all mothers; and though Joseph was not His father, he had for Him,

by a special gift from heaven, all the natural love, all the affectionate solicitude that a father's heart can know. With Mary, his wife, he shared all the joys and sorrows, the plans and anxieties that come to a mother in bringing up her child. Day after day, at home and in the carpenter shop, his eyes rested on Jesus; he protected Him against the dangers of childhood; he guided His advancing years, and by hard work and with religious devotedness he provided for the increasing needs of the Mother and the Son.

What a beautiful family life there was at Nazareth! You call it the Holy Family and rightly so. In that small house you find Jesus, holy more than anyone can imagine, Who has come to help you and everybody become holy and pleasing to the Father. There you find His Mother, your Blessed Mother; and, as you know, from the first breath she breathed and all during the days of her life her soul was simply one marvellous, indescribable thing of beauty, like a precious jewel whose every facet reflected clearly, unobstructed, the infinite holiness of God. And then there was Joseph, modest, self-effacing, yet exercising authority over that family. How holy he must have been! Under his fatherly protection and ceaseless, tireless care the young Boy grew into manhood, Who later, on Calvary's cross, dying, would restore life to man, and draw all men into oneness through grace with Himself. With Him as their Head they should then form one big, big family scattered all over the world. You call that family the Church, the one, true Catholic Church, of which you are members, and that membership is your richest treasure on earth.

Now let Us ask you, dear children, if Joseph was so engaged heart and soul in protecting and providing for that little family at Nazareth, don't you think that now in heaven he is the same loving father and guardian of the whole Church, of all its members, as he was of its Head on earth? We hear you answer: yes. And does he not know that, oh so many of its children are terribly in need of help? They need help for their souls,—the grace of repentance, the grace of perseverance, the grace of humble, unstinted surrender to the holy will of God; and Joseph turns to Jesus, of old his Boy of Nazareth, and at once graces flow abundantly for the souls of men. They need help also for their bodies: fathers are out of work, mothers are bending beneath burdens far too heavy, children are without sufficient food and clothing and medicines when ill; and Joseph turns to you. Yes, it is to you he turns. He must look to you to aid and encourage those children, who are also your little brothers and sisters. We know you will not fail him. Your devotion to him will spur you on to make little sacrifices and big ones too, so that the vast human family, that Jesus yearns to unite in faith and charity, will know that St. Joseph is still the alert and generous guardian and protector, working now through his loyal clients. And so, as We said at the beginning, with confidence We commit to him the charge to bestir the unselfish affection that fills your hearts for those who need and ask assistance.

We leave you now, dear children; but first We wish to give you a proof of the fatherly care We have for all of you. And so with the full affection of Our heart We impart to you, to your dear parents and all at home, to your teachers and pastors Our Apostolic Benediction. May it draw down into your souls the strong grace of abiding fidelity to God and His Church; and never forget

that St. Joseph is always standing by to protect you.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XIX,*
Diciannovesimo anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1957 - 1° marzo 1958, pp. 779-781
Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana. A.A.S., vol. L (1958), n. 4, pp. 174-176.

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