



# The Holy See

---

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII  
TO THE UNDERSECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE  
FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA\***

*Saturday, 17 August 1946*

One of the most touching of all the miracles which the Saviour of mankind performed during His sojourn on earth was that of feeding the multitude in the desert. Realizing in His goodness that the people were exhausted, He sought to appease their hunger, and when other means failed, by His Omnipotence, He made five loaves and two fishes serve so that five thousand men, besides women and children, « did eat and were filled, and they took up what remained, twelve baskets of fragments » (cfr. *Matth.* 14, 15-21).

The inhabitants of many lands are still suffering through want even of such elementary nourishment as bread. We cannot ask for miracles, for God in His Providence wishes mankind to use ordinary means regularly to procure subsistence; neither may we turn a deaf ear to the appeal of the underfed. To us, as to His Apostles, the Master says: « Give you them to eat » (*Matth.* 14, 16) and our hearts are moved by His appeal at their misfortune.

You have come to Italy, Members of the Agricultural Department of the United States, to study the production of cereals in this country, and you will go hence to communicate the result of your investigation to the International Food Congress. This closer contact with the land will give you a better understanding of the situation and will enable you to devise ways of accelerating normal production, while at the same time you will help tide the people over the necessary period of reconstruction. We welcome you to Our Vatican City State as you pause in your mission of mercy. Our voice has been raised in supplication during all these harrowing years, asking succour for the afflicted nor shall We cease to seek aid for the distressed. In these troubled times, when the clouds of doubt and uncertainty darken the skies, it is all the more necessary that men of courage, of vision and of pity for distressed humanity, who, thank God, still abound, keep the flame of Christian charity burning bright so that hearts may be warmed in its glow and tear-dimmed eyes see therein the promise of a better future. May the blessing of heaven be on you and on all those

dear to you. Our earnest prayers shall follow your endeavours and may God in His goodness bring your effort to a happy issue.

---

*\*Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, VIII,*  
Ottavo anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1946 - 1° marzo 1947, pp. 209-210  
Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana.

*L'Osservatore Romano* 18.8.1949, p.1.

---