



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII TO A GROUP OF ENGLISH CATHOLIC MILITARIES*

Friday, 11 April 1947

It was certainly a very happy and pious thought that prepared this presentation to Us of a statue of Our Lady of Walsingham. We really find it difficult to express how pleased We are with this gift. It brings to Us England's Loreto. It quickens remembrance of the joy that thrilled the soul of Mary, « when Gabriel said at old Nazareth Ave ». We shall keep it close to Our person; and when Our eyes rest on it, there will rise from Our heart a fervent prayer that the Blessed Mother may win the favour of her divine Son for you, who have had the pleasure of making this presentation and the privilege of affording Us a deep and holy joy; a prayer for those, too, whom you re-present in a special way, and for all the Catholics of the realm; yes, and for the entire English nation and its gracious Sovereign.

Because Our Lady of Walsingham belongs to England. And it was the 15th century poet-laureate of the celebrated chapel now long since destroyed, who sang, that England belongs to Mary.

O England great cause thou hast had for to be
Compared to the land of promission;
Thou attainest by grace to stand in that degre
Through this glorious Lady's supportacion,
To be called in every realme and region
The holy land, Our Lady's Dowry.
Thus art thou named of old antiquity.

(cfr. *Walsingham, the English Loreto*, in *The Month*, London 1901, vol. XCVIII, p. 236).

Dare one doubt that Our Lady still looks down with maternal love on the island, where for centuries innumerable pilgrims came to lay aside their burdens at her shrine, « where grace is dayly shewyd to men of every age » (*ibid*, p. 243), and departing carried within the inner reaches of their souls a heavenly peace, born of child-like faith, which heals the heart and draws the veil from before the

vision of pure, unending joy?

As a token of Our sincere gratitude, with paternal affection We impart to you, to all in any way associated with you in this act of filial devotion to Christ's Vicar, and to all whom you have in mind and heart, the Apostolic Benediction.

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

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Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana

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