



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO A GROUP OF SENATORS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
MEMBER OF A COMMISSION OF THE ARMED FORCES****

Thursday, 17 November 1949

We are pleased to note that lawgiver and soldier move in friendly companionship. That is as it should be. Law, however wise, can hardly hope to prevail — so weak or perverse is human nature — unless it has the backing of a reasonable force. But the true function of that force will be to protect and defend the rights given to man by God and just law, not to whittle them down and crush them.

A sage, old Roman philosopher has said, not altogether without reason, the very fear of war is worse than war itself. Yet that fear will never be absent, so long as within the great family of nations there is even one member, which rejecting the moral sense of inalienable human rights, uses sheer force to reduce its citizens to a condition of chattels dependent on a State that recognizes no power above or beyond itself.

Even within a nation, as you honorable members of the Senate need not be told, the only genuine guarantee of peace is to be sought not in force, but in the soul of a nation ; that is to say, in the inner life of its people, which will be exerted perseveringly in the defence of the family, of the children, of the worker and his employer; so that all, guided by the Christian principles of justice and charity, may enjoy the blessed fruits of brotherly love and make, each, his due contribution to the common good.

The Christian principles of justice and charity — how indispensable they are to a world seeking peace! Founded as they are and must be on religion, they are two strong pillars upholding civil Society. Let it be wrenched from them, and what a sorry mess a State makes of its noble function! Who then is not alert to the paramount importance of providing that these principles be instilled

into the minds of the little ones at home, and be developed in them through their school years?

In your travels through Europe you have no doubt been pleased and proud to witness the strides made towards the restoration of normal life in countries devastated by a long and pitiless war. God grant that this rehabilitation may reach down to the soul of these and all peoples, yes of those too who in their tragic blindness are persecuting the Church of God, and bring them all under the benign headship of Christ, where alone they will find peace and security.

While We hope your brief stay in the eternal city will be very enjoyable, We pray that in all places and at all times the blessing of God may descend on you and your dear ones.

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