



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO A GROUP OF DIRECTORS AND EDITORS OF NEWSPAPERS***

Monday, 23 January 1950

This audience will not, perhaps, be listed under the strict category of Holy Year audiences. And yet while welcoming you right heartily to Our Vatican City State, We cannot but reflect, there is a contribution you can make to the attainment of a coveted goal set for this Holy Year.

This year, We fondly hope and pray, will mark a great return of the world to God through Christ; and this return, if accomplished, is going to be made along the path of truth. When the individual man is recognized by all in his true stature as image of God gifted with inherent rights which no merely human power may violate; when the State is recognized in its true nature as divinely instituted to protect and defend its citizens, not to enslave them; when the whole world unites in open profession of the inescapable truth of its dependence on God, the universal Creator; then mankind will have made definite strides back to God, and by the same token back to prosperity, peace and security.

Can you advance this noble enterprise? Assuredly yes! Because truth needs a voice; and the most potent voice reaching the general public is still today that of the press. Who does not know that a journalist can deliberately falsify facts, or by lifting them out of their context can distort their true meaning, or can suppress truth that in justice clamours to be heard? And the net result is that the masses are misled, human tragedy is incurred, and civil strife and even wars are engendered, simply because an unworthy member of your profession for one reason or another has been recreant to his grave responsibility to truth.

Yes, that responsibility before God and man is grave indeed. Never before, We dare say, has it been more exacting than today, when communication has become so easy and far-reaching, and the influence of the ordinary citizen is being felt more and more in the government of nations. That influence in proportion to its weight imposes a duty to acquaint oneself with the true facts; and

that duty confers a right to be told the truth. Your present journey through Europe is in search of the truth concerning certain international transactions, because you rightly rate this truth high in importance to your country, and, be it added, to the rest of the world.

We are, then, happy to use this occasion to compliment your profession on many priceless benefits it has brought, to the great human family, and to encourage each and every one of its members in the resolute purpose to serve with unyielding loyalty the cause of truth in charity. No society that rests on foundations of hypocrisy and falsehood is secure.

As We pray that the blessings of peace and security may descend on the world, We assure you, gentlemen, of Our most sincere good wishes for yourselves, for those who are near and dear to you, and for your largehearted country.

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