



The Holy See

*DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII AL NUOVO MINISTRO DELLA LIBERIA**

Mercoledì, 28 febbraio 1951

Mr. Minister!

The solemn presentation of the Letters of Credence by the terms of which His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Liberia, after the retirement of your worthy Predecessor, appoints you to the post of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Holy See, has provided Your Excellency with an occasion for the expression of convictions which cannot but claim Our fullest attention and warrant Our hearty assent.

Your reference to the fact that the Free and Sovereign Republic of Liberia is intent on taking its place among the Christian nations makes plain Your Excellency's persuasion that genuine belief in God, the profession of Christian truth and fidelity to the fundamental tenets of the Catholic faith are indissolubly bound up with the sincere and constant assertion of human nature's most authentic and exalted values.

At the outset of your noble mission Your Excellency quite properly gives emphasis to a basic truth which is often forgot ten, and oftener perhaps deliberately buried in silence, especially today when far too frequently the border-lines dividing truth from error are dimmed and confused, with ensuing harm to the community no less than to individuals.

True religion and profound humaneness are not rivals. They are sisters.

They have nothing to fear from one another, but everything to gain. Let each remain loyal to the law of its being, while it respects the vital needs and varied outward manifestations of the other, and the resultant harmonizing of two forces will endow any people engaged in the fulfillment of its appointed tasks with the most valuable incentives to real prosperity and solid progress.

For sundry reasons, familiar to anyone acquainted with the history of Liberia, the number of Catholics there is still relatively small. All the more gratifying, then, is the fact that they have been able — thanks largely to their achievement in the field of education and of charity — to gain the esteem and confidence of their countrymen of different beliefs, as also the good will of the civil authorities.

We cherish, therefore, the fond hope — relying above all on the enlightenment and fairness of the President of the Republic — that the membership and organizations of the Catholic portion of the Liberian people may continue to be guaranteed that freedom of movement and action to which they are entitled.

Our beloved Catholic sons and daughters will surely know how to appreciate and make use of their acknowledged liberty with dignity and alertness to their responsibilities.

They will feel themselves honoured to turn to the advantage of their native land, so dear to Us as well, the full measure of that well-being and cultural and social progress born of a sound accord between the religious conscience and the national ideals of a people which, like that you represent, has behind it a past that still is young, and a future so boundless before it.

With these sentiments We pray you, Mr. Minister, to transmit to His Excellency, the President, to the members of the Government and to all the dear people of Liberia, Our greetings and best wishes for their happy and peaceful development, the while We invoke upon them all, and in particular upon your Excellency, favours in rich abundance from on High.

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