



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
ALLA SIGNORA AMELIA 'M'A NTSEBO SEEISO GRIFFITH
REGGENTE DELLA NAZIONE DEL BASUTOLAND****

Castel Gandolfo - Venerdì, 27 settembre 1957

Your Excellency!

The satisfaction and pleasure with which We greet you, honoured and illustrious Chiefs of Basutoland in the company of the Paramount Chief Regent, may be gauged by the letter We but recently addressed to Our Venerable Brother-Bishops throughout the world concerning Our beloved Africa. It was Our affectionate interest in your vast continent that prompted that letter; every line of it was dictated by Our paternal solicitude for the true progress of the African peoples in their seeking human prosperity and spiritual peace in possession of the truth. It told of Our pride and joy in the expansion of the Church over the last decades especially, and how We are witnessing the flowering of the seed planted generations ago and nurtured over the years by the arduous toil and hidden sacrifices of hundreds of missionaries, priests, Religious men and women, catechists and devoted lay-leaders, whose names add a resplendent glory to the pages of African history.

Yet for all Our deep consolation at the magnificent task accomplished, We are acutely conscious of the magnitude and urgency of the work yet to be done and Our heart is not without anxiety. The social, economic and political evolution, which with quickened pace is stirring the lives of so many peoples of Africa, inevitably exposes them to unhealthy influences, that may well have serious consequences for their future. It were sheerest folly for civil Society to act as if there were no God, or as if He cared nothing for the creatures of His omnipotent love. Leave out God and justice is as a word written in the waters of the sea. Hence with reason We alerted the African peoples to the deadly poison of atheistic materialism, followed as it is without fail by death, —death to human rights, to freedom and genuine happiness, and also to the need of discerning accurately where the fullness of God's revelation is to be found. Because that revelation, confided by Christ to the

Church He founded on Peter, « the Church of the living God, pillar and foundation upon which Truth rests » (*I Tim.* 3, 5), was given for all peoples and every individual, and it is meant to light the way for leaders in a State and guide them in their noble function of assisting its citizens towards the harmonious development of their natural powers and to the attainment of the perfection which is due to their nature. Now that perfection, that ultimate destiny of man, as you know, carries him beyond the narrow and fading horizon of this visible creation into a life that will know no ending with the Creator.

When reflecting on these truths We turn Our eyes to your country, most welcome guests, Our consolation increases, Our anxiety is allayed. An intelligent people, you received a special blessing from God in a saintly missionary of heroic stature, Fr. Gerard, and in a Paramount Chief, Nathaniel Griffith Lerotholi, who for a quarter of a century ruled by word and example according to the lofty principles of Christian justice and charity. Those same principles guide your present Paramount Chief Regent, who has introduced you into Our presence, and one is then not surprised to hear the story of your progress, steady and orderly. May it continue along the way that leads to enduring peace and authentic prosperity. We know that in your capital city you have established a School of University Studies that carries Our name. We wish it all success, and We like to hope that it will have a long life to remind students of generations yet unborn, that the Pope, Christ's Vicar, in far-off Rome, loves them, prays for them and expects great things from them in the very best interests of their people and all Africa.

Our Apostolic Blessing accompanies Our good wishes, May it draw down upon your people, upon you, illustrious and honoured Chiefs, and all those near and dear to you at home, abundant graces from God.

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