



The Holy See

A UN PELLEGRINAGGIO DI VARIE DIOCESI DEGLI STATI UNITI

In speciale Udienza è ricevuto, venerdì 3 ottobre 1958, un numeroso pellegrinaggio di fedeli — circa 700 persone — provenienti da New York e da altre Diocesi degli Stati Uniti, e guidati ed accompagnati da Sua Eminenza Rev.ma il Signor Cardinale Francesco Spellman, Arcivescovo di New York. Il distinto Gruppo proviene da Lourdes, ove ha partecipato a solenni manifestazioni in onore della Vergine Immacolata nell'anno centenario delle prodigiose Apparizioni; e, in Roma, ha assistito, seguendo l'Em.mo Preside, a speciali sacri Riti nella Basilica Vaticana, nella Basilica dei Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, Titolo Cardinalizio del Porporato, e nella Ven. Chiesa del Gesù. I pellegrini, preceduti dalle due bandiere, pontificia e nazionale, si dispongono nel cortile interno: alle prime file fanno corona all'Em.mo Cardinale Spellman, i Prelati, i Sacerdoti e Religiosi e i dirigenti tecnici del Pellegrinaggio.

A WORD of heartfelt welcome to Our Beloved Son, New York's very eminent and zealous Cardinal Archbishop, and to Our dear sons in the priesthood, and to all the members of this large pilgrimage, Our children all, dear to the Vicar of Christ. You have come a long and tortuous way to Rome, fond mother of your souls. Over ocean and inland sea, with visits to cities of men and shrines rich with sacred memories, you have already seen much of this world. And your travels are not yet over. Earth and sky, hills and valleys, centres of different nations with their ancient monuments and modern inhabitants — your eyes have feasted on them all. And when mysterious night, stealing over the shoreless sea, drew back the dazzling curtain from across the sky, creation widened on your view, as the heavenly host of stars and planets came out to reflect the glory of their Creator. What a vast and beautiful world, you reflected, this visible world!

But October is a month that checks the vision for a moment, reminding one's inner spirit that there is another world, a world invisible yet as real as the one you see and quite as close to you.

Yesterday the Church has celebrated the feast of the Holy Angels. They are inhabitants of this invisible world, that is all around you. They were in the cities you visited as guardians of God's providence, they have been companions of your journey. Did not Christ say of the little children, who were always so dear to His pure and loving heart: « their Angels in heaven are always looking on the face of My Father who is in heaven? » (Matth. 18, 10). And when the children

passed on to youth and then to adult-life, did their Angels desert them? No, indeed! « We sing of the guardian Angels of men », the liturgy of yesterday (Hymn, i Vesp.) has it, « God-given as companions from heaven to steady frail human nature on life's path, lest it be led astray by the allurements of the evil spirit ». This same thought recurs again and again in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. No one is so humble, but he has Angels to attend him. So glorious, so pure, so wonderful they are, and yet they are given to be your fellow-wayfarers, charged to watch carefully over you, lest you fall away from Christ, their Lord. Not only they wish to defend you against dangers lurking along the way; they are also active at your side with a word of encouragement to your souls, as you strive to ascend higher and higher to closeness to God through Christ.

Dearly beloved pilgrims, receiving you at the beginning of this month of October, We could not refrain from leaving with you a brief word of paternal exhortation to awaken and sharpen your realization of the invisible world about you — « for the things that are seen last for a moment, the things that are not seen are eternal » (2 Cor. 4, 18) — and to foster a certain familiar acquaintance with the Angels, who are so constant in their solicitude for your salvation and holiness. You will spend, God grant it, an eternity of joy with them; begin to know them now.

To you, then, and to all your dear ones, with all the affection of Our heart We impart the Apostolic Benediction. May the Angels carry Our prayer for you before the throne of God, and through the intercession of their glorious Queen be the bearers to you of countless graces from your divine Saviour.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XX,*
Ventesimo anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo - 9 ottobre 1958, pp. 413-414
Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana