



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII TO AMERICAN MILITARY CHAPLAINS*

Friday, 30 June 1944

We have granted many most gratifying audiences during the past few weeks; but this one, as you will easily understand, fills Our paternal heart with a very particular joy and consolation. For you are Our beloved sons in a very special way. The Supreme Pontiff, heir to those simple, solemn words of Christ spoken to His first Vicar on earth: « feed My Lambs, feed My Sheep », must carry a burden of responsibility that is placed on no other human shoulders. Christ Jesus has paid the infinite price of His own most precious Blood to redeem all men; His Vicar is charged with the task of bringing men to avail themselves of this loving act of salvation; and you, beloved sons, under the solicitous guidance of your Bishops, share with Us this truly divine task, you are Our helpers, you are Our joy and Our crown. Just now in this tragic hour of human history, called from the regular life of the parish or from the calm retirement of the student and professor you have hurried with eager, unselfish zeal in pursuit of souls that have been caught up in the maelstrom of war and thrown into the perils of battle and the temptations of a soldier's life. No ordinary shepherds of souls are needed here. Your Bishops and Religious Superiors know how immensely important and how arduous is this apostolate and they have given of their best for it. It is arduous, very trying at times for the soul as well as the body. At such times renew your resolution to devote yourselves wholeheartedly to your sacred trust. Win the hearts and the souls of your men by the integrity and holiness of your lives, and a devotion to their spiritual good that does not count the cost. Keep your eye ever on the divine Shepherd, that most ardent Lover of souls; catch up inspiration and courage from the great apostles Peter and Paul; and as you continue your magnificent apostolate for your dear men, be assured that Our prayers are accompanying you, and as a token of divine assistance and heavenly grace We impart to you and your dear ones at home with deep affection of Our fatherly heart the Apostolic Benediction.

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