



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO ARMED FORCES FROM GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND****

Sunday, 9 July 1944

Dearly beloved, come from Great Britain and Ireland, We welcome you to Rome and to Our Vatican City State, yes and to this very house of the Common Father of Christendom. You have observed that through a gracious Providence, making use of the generous comprehension and good will of heads of nations and military leaders, Rome has been spared almost entirely the destruction of buildings caused by war. For this the world is grateful. We say the world, because Rome is the repository of treasures that belong to the patrimony not of one city alone, but of all civilization; and its sacred tombs and shrines for generation on generation have been an attraction, a solace and an inspiration to deeds of strong faith and Christian heroism.

For real heroism is needed in the battle of Christian virtue even more than in the clash of arms. The principles of Christ are written, clear and precise, in the Sermon on the Mount, — principles of faith in God and obedience to His law, principles of purity of life, of justice, of charity, of a love that embraces all mankind and directs a united effort to the greater common good of all; but man cannot aspire to shape his life according to those principles without a sustained struggle that calls for self-restraint and self-sacrifice. And yet unless men, unless nations do accept those principles of Christ as their guide and norm, vain will be all their hopes of a worthy and lasting peace. Strain your spiritual energies towards the attainment of that splendid victory over sin and selfishness in the world; and God will bless you, as We also bless you now with the deep affection of Our heart. And while We thank God for the special protection granted to Rome, We do not forget that your loved country is one of those lands that have known only too well the desolation and sufferings of war. We have prayed for it, and We ask God to bless it and all your dear ones waiting for you at home.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, VI,*

Quinto anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1944 - 1° marzo 1945, p. 71
Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana

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