



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS***

Thursday, 11 April 1946

The uniform you wear recalls a history of human service, wherein one may read page after page of laborious sacrifice of time and resources and self dedicated to the relief of the unfortunate victims of war and other national or world calamities. Behind your small group and similar groups are the millions, old and young, whose deep sentiments of human sympathy and effective charity make possible the work of the American Red Cross, and have found, We may trust, an echo in the grateful hearts of suffering fellow-beings in the four quarters of the world.

But recently a story has reached Us from a devastated region in a distant Mission field. A Sister was working with enormous difficulty and fatigue to extricate a poor woman and child caught beneath fallen timbers and threatened by a racing fire. "But why," asked the struggling sufferer, "why should you, a stranger and foreigner sacrifice yourself for us?" The missionary Sister, pointing to the figure on the cross that hung from her neck, answered gently: "because He sacrificed Himself for all of us." Work of sympathy and relief inspired by such divine charity is lifted up to a sublime signification and transformed into a humble yet certain claim to God's good pleasure and reward eternal.

With your work over-seas well done, it is only natural that you are looking forward with joy to your return home. But your work of charity is never done. St. Augustine reminds you that "charity holds us debtors always. It is the one debt which, though daily paid, remains always due." (In Ps. 36 serm. 3 n. 18 — *Migne* PL, t. 36 col. 393). Be angels then of charity, — bright, warm, cheering rays of the sun of God's love for all men, — in your families, in your neighbourhood, in your country, through-out the world. Peace must find its sure footing on universal charity. As a pledge of Our own paternal affection We pray God's choicest blessings on you and on all who are near and dear to you.

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