



# The Holy See

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***RADIO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII  
TO THE PUPILS OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF AMERICA\****

*Wednesday, 19 February 1947*

Our loving greetings to you, dear children of the Catholic schools of America. You are more than two million strong in the elementary classes. Add to your number another half million of your older brothers and sisters in the High Schools and Colleges, and what a massive testimony you present to the faith of your mothers and fathers, to their spirit of self-denial and generosity in safeguarding that faith for you, their dearest treasures. You can never thank your parents enough for sending you to your Catholic schools, where you are being taught how to become good citizens of your country and faithful, holy children of your Church.

This is the first time We have ever addressed Our words to you, dear boys and girls; and there is a special reason why We do so now. Let Us tell you what it is. You are very happy in your beautiful schools, some small, some very big. You have light and heat, and all the books you need to learn your lessons well. When school is over, you put on your warm over-coats, wrap up well and go out to play even in the snow; because your shoes and stockings are strong and protect you securely against the cold and wet. When evening comes, you will sit down to a warm supper that mother has prepared to make you grow up healthy and happy.

But you must know that there are other millions of children here in Europe and out in the far East, whose life is very different. They are young boys and girls just your age, and they too should be growing up happy and healthy. Instead, they are falling victims to dread disease, they are hungry, some of them are starving, and many of them are going to die so very young. They shiver in the cold ; their clothes are thin and worn ; many have only rags to cover their frail bodies, have no stockings, no shoes. And their mothers, who love them just as much as your mothers love you, can give them only a little bite to eat at the end of the day.

What is sadder, thousands of these children have no fathers or mothers to take care of them. They died during the terrible war; and these children now walk the city streets, wander over country

roads little conscious of the perils around them, and at night must look for some shelter in cold cellars or are crowded together in rude barracks, only to begin another lonesome, aim-less, dangerous day when the sun comes up again.

And what dangers are awaiting them! There are often no attractive schools for them. They are not taught, as you are, by devoted religious, Sisters and Brothers, all the wonderful things about God: how He created them for Himself; how He loves them and sent His only begotten Son to redeem them and help them get to heaven; how they must love God, be good and obey the commandments of God and all that the Church teaches them. They feel that they have been abandoned; and how easily they learn to do what is very wrong.

You remember that charming scene in the life of Jesus, when the children gathered around Him and would not let Him go; and some of His friends wanted to drive them away; but He said: no, let the children be, do not prevent them from coming to me. And with love He laid His sacred hand upon their heads in blessing.

Today the millions of suffering children are looking with appealing eyes to the Vicar of Jesus. Let them come to Us; let no one hold them off. We love them all with the love of Christ, and We cannot rest so long as the pangs of hunger make them cry out for help and their immortal souls are in peril of being set upon by the enemy of God. Charitable benefactors throughout the world, and especially the Catholics of America have sent Us thousands of tons of food and clothing, which We have been distributing among those in greatest distress. Bounteous funds have been placed at Our disposal to save the children from the street with all its evil and to provide for them a decent lodging and home, where they may be educated into honourable and God-fearing citizens. But still more is needed. That is why your bishops and priests in their untiring generosity are asking all to make yet one more effort to head off sickness and hunger and soul-starvation from the homeless, helpless, harried peoples of Europe and Asia. And We have been told that you, dear boys and girls of the elementary schools, want to do your little part in this beautiful mission of mercy. That is why We wished to speak to you today. We wished to thank you for that noble desire and to encourage you to do your best to make this drive the most successful of all.

Lent begins today, and you will be wanting to offer some little penance to the Lord you love dearly and whom you wish never to offend. This penance will allow you to save your pennies and dimes, and they will buy the bread or the medicine that will help to save the life of some less fortunate child, and protect him from the danger of sinning against God. And how God will love you for it, and will bless you and your future and all those at home! As a proof of Our great joy for your holy resolution to share some of your comfort and happiness with the children who have none, and as a token of Our affection for each and every one of you, We will now impart to you, to your dear parents, to your devoted teachers and to all who assist in this truly Christ-like campaign the Apostolic Benediction.

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