



The Holy See

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

Saturday, 31 May 1947

It is a cause of joy to Us that the honourable Chairman of the American Red Cross and his distinguished associates have been able to come to Rome and make immediate, personal contact with the Holy See. Traditionally a home of charity and benevolence for all mankind, the Holy See today is to an incredible extent burdened with the difficult task of extending relief, as far as is possible under God's providence, to countless sufferers, especially in the devastated, wartorn regions of Europe. We are pleased to say, that in carrying forward this work of Christian love during the past few years the Holy See has experienced helpful cooperation from the American Red Cross.

If We would express a thought, which is always with Us and which you may carry back to the members of your organization in the United States, it is this. Through the many years of its existence the American Red Cross has won a deserved reputation, among other things, for its prompt and effective relief on the occasion of great, natural calamities. To suffering communities paralyzed by floods, fires, earthquakes or other disasters, your willing workers have brought immediate succour, skilled organization and the first steps of civic reconstruction and rehabilitation. You have known how to mobilize rapidly the powerful forces of human cooperation.

But the disasters which today clamour to you for aid are not caused by the mere blind forces of nature. They are the result of man's own errors: the bitter fruit of sin, the dread consequence of his disobedience to God's law, and his deafness to the voice of God's love so eloquent in a most compassionate Redeemer. The embers of material fires are soon extinguished, the waters of material floods soon recede; but the fires of human enmities, the waters of spiritual devastation still persist and keep adding to the burden of general misery.

For the complete success of your work, therefore, it is essential that you ever keep in mind the ultimate aim of all relief work, which is not only to alleviate physical suffering, but by means of this

material relief to facilitate the spiritual life of man, to make it possible for families, parents and children alike, to rise from conditions that jeopardize the virtues of a healthy home and civil society and tempt to utter despair, and thus to lift up their hearts to their Heavenly Creator, the Author and End of all life. This is the aid most necessary in the restoration of peace.

The maintenance in your organization of such a lofty and spiritual aim will preserve you from any of the materialistic errors of the day and will inspire you and your associates to ever greater sacrifices. On you and your dear ones, on your associates and the work of Christian charity the American Red Cross may accomplish We pray God's blessing.

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