



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO PUPILS AND TEACHERS OF THE
«OVERSEAS SCHOOL OF ROME»***

Wednesday, 10 March 1948

No small part of the pleasure We take, dear friends, in welcoming you warmly to Our presence this morning, on the eve of Good Shepherd Sunday, springs from the happy circumstance that your devoted family of parents and teacher have chosen to present to Us personally the children for whom you have opened the doors and campus of your new school at Rome.

Or is it just possibly the other way round? Have the children perhaps brought their parents and teachers along, to tell Us how easy it is for them to realize, even should their elders forget, that home and school are meant to be two sanctuaries, as it were, in the same holy temple?

In either event, it gives Us an added comfort and confidence to greet you here together. For children whose minds and hearts are opening to their spiritual need to grow in wisdom and grace while they advance in age, as well as for mothers and fathers who enlist the precious aid of the teacher to help them meet that need, the school must indeed be a holy place for much the same reason that the home is holy.

Maxima debetur puero reverentia — « We owe the utmost reverence to the child » (*Juven. Sat.* 14, 37) is a perennial invitation, as well as a warning, addressed to parent and teacher alike by the classic wisdom of pagan Rome, ages before the great pedagogue of the Christian Orient Saint Gregory Nazianzen reminds you both that the direction and formation of the young is *tecne tecnòn, kai epistème epistemòn*: « the art of arts, the science of sciences » (*Or. II, Apologetica - Migne P. G. t. 35 col. 425*).

Even the delicate irony of your genial Shakespeare points up this holy design for home and class-room when it fits into the < woeful pageant >> of the seven ages of man, played too often on stage of the world.

« . . . the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 Unwillingly to school » (*As you like it* - Act. II, sc. VII).

Children who don't whine because their school has been made a holy and wholesome place in which to live and play to love and learn — and blessed they will be if it is a place where they may love and learn of Him Who is our Way, our Truth, and our Life; parents and teachers alert to their sublime privilege and profession of suffering the little ones to come unto Him (cfr. *Matth.* 19, 14) for light and strength during the years when mind and character are formed; these actors on the stage of life are playing a glorious part, not in a pageant of woe, but in the faithful drama of peace, redemption and resurrection for men and nations of good will.

May your hearts and homes, your school and your country be spared the unholy horror We have lived to witness and lament in Christian Europe, as children by the hundreds are torn at a tender age from the arms of their parents and the hallowed halls of their little schools at home to be formed or deformed by alien teachers at the bidding of their sacrilegious captors.

From these and all other evil, dear children, parents and teachers, may the blessing of the Lord of justice and love de-liver you, and help you, with all your dear ones at home and at school *cor unum et anima una* — one family united in His love.

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