



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AL CANCELLIERE DELLA REPUBBLICA FEDERALE DI GERMANIA****

Giovedì, 5 luglio 1956

We are indeed happy to welcome you, Mr. Chancellor, to Our residence together with distinguished members of the government and of the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The conduct of public affairs is always a serious and difficult task, but it has been doubly or even triply so for you, Mr. Chancellor, throughout the seven years in which you have held office.

In the history of peoples and States there have been few examples comparable to that of the rise of your people and of your state from the complete ruin left by the last World War. Such an independent resurrection presupposes very high qualities indeed in a people. But such a revival would truly not have been possible without a superior leadership, especially where foreign affairs are concerned. For confidence in Germany had been lost and her equality of rights with other nations was not recognized – everything had to be recovered step by step.

This is where so much of your personal service, Mr. Chancellor, lies. But it does not lie in this only. Your loyalty to Germany and your loyalty to the European community are one.

It gives Us great pleasure to be able to say this in this moving hour of your visit to Us.

To be sure, not everything has yet been attained. All of the spiritual wounds made on both sides by the war are not yet healed. Your fatherland is still awaiting the solution of burning questions and the easing of conditions which impose an almost superhuman burden.

To the German people, faced with these questions and conditions, We recommend perseverance, foresight, and patience – qualities We have in past years seen in your chancellor whenever he has

had to attack such problems.

Impatience is not a healthy atmosphere for mastering political problems, especially when they are of an international type. The history of Germany since the First World War shows what national unhappiness and unrest can mean in the political sphere.

For Our part, We hope that the still pending questions concerning the eastern part of Germany will be handled step by step in general accord with consideration for the various states and families and their rights, and that the solutions thus found will be the basis for a just peace.

We lived long enough in Germany and have been intimately enough concerned with the affairs of your country for forty years to venture to tell you how much your country needs to return spiritual, religious, and moral values to the forefront, and to protect and nourish them, lest the predominance of materialism deprive the German people of the best in their character.

On this historical point, the feeling of confidence between Church and state is particularly significant.

If the Church has always attached great importance to this, it is first of all because she hopes to assure to the faithful, who are also Catholic citizens, the peaceful exercise of their religious convictions in the family, in education, in the school, and in other realms of community and professional life.

The Church also knows, however, that the entire population can profit from an influx of that moral strength without which the Church's existence would be called into question.

With regard to your nation, where the relations between the two powers are regulated by a concordat, We can point out the fact that the history of Germany confirms, century after century, the truth of Our words. And for the last decades, We believe We may be permitted to recall how much support and strength the Catholic portion of your people has brought to the fatherland by bringing about a peaceful balance between the dangerous extremes in good as well as in evil days.

May this happy relation between Church and State remain unbroken and undiminished.

In this hope We pray you, very honorable Mr. Chancellor, to bear to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Our greetings, and to the whole people of Germany Our warmest wishes.

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