



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AI PARTECIPANTI ALLA XII SESSIONE
DEL «NATO DEFENCE COLLEGE»****

Giovedì, 7 novembre 1957

You afford Us this morning, Gentlemen, the happiness of greeting and blessing the practitioners of an ancient, noble and yet sometimes strangely unappreciated calling. Our welcome is all the more cordial for the circumstance that you represent a group of sister-nations—all of them dear to Us—whose policies, even in their military aspects, profess to be those of lovers and defenders of the peace.

Beyond every consideration of technical competence and efficiency—important as these obviously must remain—surely it is on your fidelity to the loftiest possible ideal of *public service* that the community of nations should be encouraged to count with confidence.

Let them be heartened to recognize in you not merely the expert manipulators of the engines of destruction, but convinced—and prayerful—apostles of peace; not merely armed *forces*, but authentic armed *services*, sworn to the defense of those divine and human values—embodied so simply and sublimely in the law of nature and the Christian plan of life for family, church and state—by which men must live, for which they are content, and even proud, to die.

That you, Gentlemen, may make of *your* service to God and community a potent contribution to the preaching of the Gospel of peace among men, is Our fondest paternal prayer as We invoke upon you all, your Staffs, your families and dear ones, the Apostolic Blessing.

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