



The Holy See

A studiosi degli Stati uniti in visita a Roma, Giovedì 3 luglio 1958, Sala del Trono

ONCE again We bid welcome to a group of teachers, seekers after truth in history, letters and art. And truth is beauty, is it not, reflecting, as it does, the infinite beauty of the God of all perfection. Your pursuit has led you to Rome; and one well understands that. Have not the centuries, the milleniums left left the very air of this eternal city pervaded by memories of power and magnificence and imperial universality? « Romanae spatium est urbis et orbis idem », the Roman poet has it (Ovid Fast. 1. 2 V. 684) (The area of Rome and the world is one and the same). The stones of her monuments, of her streets and open spaces speak of world-conquest, when the glory that was Greece became the glory that was Rome (cfr. Horat. Epist. 1. 2, V. 156-7). It would seem that the splendour of the Roman Empire was destined to last for a thousand years. Yet those fragments of marble and bronze and the pages of priceless manuscripts of undying literature only tell the story of times buried in the deep past and of a force long since spent. Such is the universal law that governs all that is but human and earthly.

But there is another Rome which, We are sure, you have discovered,—a Rome settled by the humble fisherman come from Galilee's lake on the foundation of a God-given faith, that down the long centuries has not only endured, but always the same has grown stronger and stretches its rule farther and yet farther, lifting up the culture of nations and peoples quite beyond the reach of a pagan mind, and guiding men along the road to peace and brotherly love.

You have come to the centre of this Rome, dose by the tomb of that humble fisherman, and We are happy to have been able to grant your request to be received by Us. May you carry from your studies in Rome an abiding memory that will refresh and elevate the spirit over many years.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XX,*

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