



The Holy See

*LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT**

16 March 1940

The pleasure which was Ours on the twenty-seventh day of February as We received in Solemn Audience the Representative of Your Excellency was enhanced by the autograph letter which he bore from you and placed into Our hands. We are sincerely grateful for this further evidence of your solicitude for the restoration of peace among nations now estranged as well as for the expressions of cordial greeting which you have been pleased to use in Our regard.

We confess to have been sensibly affected as We beheld before Us your own Representative come upon a noble mission of peace and healing, to seek with Us ways and means of giving back to a warring world its rightful heritage of concord and the freedom to pursue in justice and tranquillity its temporal and eternal happiness. In a moment of universal travail, when hope contends with fear in the souls of so many millions of men, We have been greatly encouraged by the vision of new possibilities of beneficent action opened up to us through the presence near Us of your distinguished Representative. Since the obligations of Christian charity towards the needy and the dispossessed have ever constituted a prior claim upon Our affections and resources as they have upon those of Our Predecessors, it is with particular satisfaction that We welcome Your Excellency's endeavors for the alleviation of suffering. Our contemporaries follow with their heartfelt prayers, and posterity will hold in honored memory, all those who, undeterred by immense difficulties, dedicate themselves to the sacred task of staunching the flow of youthful blood upon the fields of battle, and to the comforting of civilian victims despoiled and afflicted by the cruel conditions of our day. Blessed, indeed, are the peacemakers.

And although one who with discerning eye surveys the present international scene can have no illusions as to the magnitude of the role which has been undertaken, We are convinced that it is in the interest of all that We should go forward with Our labors to the end that the days of grievous

trial be shortened, preparing and straightening the way, levelling the mountains of anger which bar the road to understanding and filling up the valleys of distrust and suspicion which divide man from man and nation from nation. Thus may We hope that the natural law, graven by the Creator on the hearts of men, may soon, as it must ultimately, prevail as the universal rule of human conduct over arbitrary whim and sordid interest which here and there have usurped its place, and that in consequence the rising generation may be saved from the moral illiteracy with which they are threatened. And thus, when all shall have come finally to realize that violence is futile and that hatred is a sterile force, a wearied world may rejoice in a peace built upon the solid foundation of justice and firmly held together by the bonds of fraternal charity.

We renew to Your Excellency the expression of Our gratitude for your greeting while, in the light of happy remembrance, We pray for your continued well-being and for that of the American people.

**Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale, vol. 1 p.399-400.*
