



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER PIUS PP. XII
TO THE CHILDREN OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

To Our Dearly Beloved Children of the Catholic Schools
in the United States of America

Dear children of America:

Once again this year at the beginning of Lent We come to you, beloved children, for a little talk together. But this year the influenza, or as you so often call it, the « flu », has found its way even into the Vatican here in Rome, and We, like so many of you, have had to stay in bed for a while in order to get well and strong again. That is why the doctors say that this year We should not speak to you over the radio. But at least We wanted to send you this short letter.

You children of America have been so good and generous these past few years in giving your gifts to help your brothers and sisters in the lands across the sea! We know that our dear Lord has blessed you for this many times over, because He acts just as if you gave your gifts of clothes or food or money to Him. « Whatever you do to one of these little ones », He said, « you do to Me ». And of course nobody can ever « get ahead » of Our Lord in giving. So He certainly blesses you much more in return, for He gives you the love and kindness of your dear Mother and Father, of your brothers and sisters, of your good teachers; He gives you your grand Catholic education and, best and most wonderful of all, He gives you Himself, when He comes into your heart in Holy Communion. No, Our Lord never forgets a favor done to one of these « little ones » of His across the sea.

And this year too they need your help again. Too many of them still are hungry and cold and homeless. Too many still need medicines, and vitamins and milk. Too many, just your age, have to wear clothes that do not protect their little bodies from the wind and the rain and the cold. And now just lately, because of the terrible floods in Holland and England and Belgium, many more

thousands of children have lost their homes and everything they once had. So your clothes, and coins, and canned goods, and whatever else you can give, as your teachers will explain to you, will mean so much to them.

Do not say, « But my offering is so little. What is this for so many poor children? ». Remember, each one of you perhaps can give only a little. But there are many thousands of you, and when everything is collected and put together, it makes a great deal, just as the mighty ocean is made of many drops of water, though each one of them is very tiny.

So We know you will be generous, dear children, with your gifts, and still more with your prayers and sacrifices. For the most important thing of all, even more important than keeping your poor little friends warm and healthy and well-fed, is to keep them good and free from sin. So you must pray hard that their misfortune does not make them bad, or lead them in their trouble to forget our dear Lord. Perhaps you can say at least one extra Hail Mary every day during Lent that Our Lady, their Mother as well as yours, guide them and keep them safe from sin. Offer your little acts of sacrifice for them. Try to be especially good and obedient during Lent for them. Receive Our Lord often in Holy Communion, and when you have Our Lord in your heart and are praying to Him for your Mother and Father and your brothers and Sisters, remind Him too of these other children of His who need His help so much.

Pray too for Us, who here in Vatican City from a Father's heart send you and all your dear ones a Father's blessing.

From the Vatican, 10th February 1953.

PIUS PP. XII

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