



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO A GROUP OF HIGH OFFICIALS FROM UNITED STATES****

Wednesday, 16 June 1947

You have come, gentlemen, from an important meeting of the international organization that is charged with improving the condition of the working-man. No doubt you find it a vast and seemingly unending task; but it is one which challenges all that is noblest in the human heart. We cannot give too high praise to your aims.

History is witness to the grave concern with which the Church has always treated this question. Not that the Church has a mandate directly to regulate economic life. But the social and economic orders cannot be divorced from the moral, and it is her privilege and duty to affirm and proclaim the unchanging principles of morality. They rise above the storm-tossed sea of social controversies as beacons, whose piercing light should guide every attempt launched to bring a cure to social sores.

The honest working-man does not wish to improve his position by trampling on the liberties of others, which should be as sacred to him as his own. But deep down in his heart there is the rightful desire to independent and secure possession of what is necessary to provide for himself and his family a way of life in keeping with his dignity and his conscience. That is why the Church will always defend him against any system that would deny his inalienable rights, which derive not from any civil society, but from his own human personality, and would reduce him to the state of complete subjection to the bureaucratic clique holding political power. We are sure that you, gentlemen, will agree that any organization for improving the condition of the working-man will be a mechanism without soul and hence without life and fecundity, unless its charter proclaims and effectively prescribes first, respect for the human person in all men, no matter what their social position; secondly, acknowledgement of the solidarity of all people in forming the human family, created by the loving omnipotence of God; thirdly, the imperative demand on society to place the common good above personal gain, the service of each for all. When the spirit of man is reformed and stabilized according to these truths, the condition of the working-man will be improved. No

power of the State will reform the spirit of man. That is the sacred office of Religion. And the State whose foundations rest on Morality and Religion will be the surest protector and defender of the working-man.

We pray God's blessings on your earnest efforts in this field; and may His choicest graces descend on you and all who are dear to you.

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