



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII TO THE AMBASSADOR OF INDIA*

Wednesday, 6 July 1949

Mr. Minister.

With heartfelt satisfaction We accept the greetings which Your Excellency as first Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the new State of India, extends to Us in the name of your Government and of your noble people.

This hour takes on the solemn and impressive features of a really historic event.

New dispensation and developments, which perhaps, have long been coming to birth, the second World War rather hastening than causing their appearance, now encompass vast areas of the earth. The distant East, above all, has emerged politically, socially and spiritually to a position of first rank where it is confronted, of course, with duties and responsibilities of a formidable sort, but faces also precious opportunities to further the prosperity and peace of humankind.

In this movement towards new alignments, now in its initial stages, your country along with others is called upon to play an important role, as no alert observer can fail to note.

The new India, which has sent Us in the person of Your Excellency a representative so able and accomplished, is endowed with immense potentialities in view of the transformations looming on the horizon of the near and distant future. Her Population and natural resources, her actual and latent productive capacity, along with an imposing spiritual heritage, are assets destined surely to fulfill a special function in contact with the other cultures.

An essential element in your spiritual heritage is the earnestness and respect of the religious sentiment, the profound awareness, in the soul of the Indian people, of their dependence on the

divine.

He to whom Your Excellency proudly refers as « Father of his Nation » has bequeathed to its people a legacy of great price: a staunch faith in the rightful ascendancy of the spiritual over the material.

Your Excellency has recalled, in warm and grateful words, the spirit of labour and sacrifice which for centuries has marked the achievement, an Indian soil, of many of Our spiritual sons and daughters.

No one who recognizes, as they do, in the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount an inviolable law of life, and in Him Who proclaimed it the Divine Master and Model sublime, will allow his ideal of generous and unselfish service to be affected by the successive changes in form and content which the political events of recent years have brought in their wake. As always: to-day and to-morrow, even as yesterday-following the example of Christ and obedient to the teaching of His Vicar who embraces all peoples with equal affection-these children of Ours will harbour no higher aim and boast than to be of service, and by their service to clear the path to real prosperity, peace and happiness for the noble people to which they belong or among whom they labour.

It is a sorry characteristic of our times that there prevails in not a few places a concept of life and society that is vitiated by an excess of materialism or perverted by an outright denial of spiritual values.

From the painful effects of such deviation and degeneracy the peoples themselves are the first to suffer. This is the way they lose not only their liberty but also their dignity. Hence it becomes all the more necessary and urgent that the rulers of States and peoples, who recognize in the supremacy of the spirit over matter one of the fundamental laws of their existence and the groundwork of their hopes for the future, should join their forces of individual and collective vigilance to stem the tide of materialism, which must needs overflow in the spirit of violence and servitude, by erecting the barrage required to keep the moral patrimony of mankind intact.

In this spiritual alliance of those who are opposed, out of intimate conviction and conscience, to the domination of the spirit by the forces of matter and violence, Divine Providence has assigned to the country of Your Excellency a position of grave responsibility, but also one rich in distinction and in promise of success.

God grant that the new State of India, in point of effective and lasting accomplishment, may measure up to the expectations and high hopes of the world!

Such must indeed be Our trust as We heartily reciprocate the good wishes of the Indian Government and people brought to Us by Your Excellency. We give you the assurance likewise, at

the outset of Your exalted mission, that you may count upon Our constant understanding and support in all matters designed to develop and strengthen the official relations begun under such happy auspices.

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

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