



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO XII
PER IL I CENTENARIO DELLA RICOSTITUZIONE DELLA
GERARCHIA CATTOLICA IN INGHILTERRA E NEL GALLES****

Domenica, 1° ottobre 1950

Venerable Brothers and dear sons and daughters gathered together in the city of London to celebrate the Hierarchy Centenary Congress:

with the keen interest of a loving Father We have watched from afar the splendid ceremonies that have been enacted on the auspicious occasion of the centenary of the restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in England and Wales. That ancient Hierarchy was first established by Our august Predecessor St. Gregory the Great, and for nearly a thousand years it was linked to this Holy See by the bonds of filial obedience: a thousand years, during which a glorious legion of saints honoured your country and a wholesouled devotion to the Mother of God made it worthy to be called « the dowry of Mary ».

When those bonds were severed and by a mysterious providence of heaven the blackness of night settled down on the Church of Augustine and Thomas and Edmund, of Wilfrid of York and Hugh of Lincoln, then it was, God raised up that generation of amazing heroes, trained in the school of a crucified Leader to fear neither rack nor rope, who came to sustain the flickering light of Faith that would not die. With what veneration and hallowed memories one prays before the painting of the King of Martyrs in the Venerable English College chapel, while before the mind's eye there pass a Sherwin, a Campion, a Southwell and a host of others cleric and lay. They died, and the Faith in England lived on.

Almost three centuries passed, and Our predecessor Pius IX of blessed memory decided the time had come for the Catholic Church in England to resume its proper place in the normal constitution of the Church, and by the Apostolic Letter « Universalis Ecclesiae » he re-established in England and Wales the Hierarchy of Bishops Ordinary, each to rule the Catholics in his own diocese.

Today you pause to measure the progress made during the hundred years now drawing to a close, and We wish you to know that in spirit We are in your midst as you kneel before your sacramental God to offer your prayer of thanksgiving. We thank Him for the numberless graces that He has showered on Our beloved sons and daughters through the frequent and wide-spread ministration of the sacraments, through the daily renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary in the churches which are constantly increasing in number throughout the land. We thank Him for the two thousand and more Catholic schools that stand as monuments to the generous self-sacrifice of the faithful. With gratitude We recall the many religious houses of both men and women that have been established, and all the charitable institutions, hospitals, orphanages, rescue homes, which each bishop has set up in his own diocese, where loving care is lavished on the sick, the aged, the orphaned or abandoned children by so many devoted religious sisters, brothers and the laity. We rejoice that Catholic men of letters have played their honoured role in the Universities; have made a distinguished contribution to Christian culture through the apostolate of the printed word, and in the sphere of journalism have helped so effectively and are helping to disseminate the truth. The zeal of the Hierarchy and of a loyal, industrious clergy and laity has indeed crowned the fond hopes Of Pius IX with joy of fulfillment.

It were too long to call the roster of all those who deserve a grateful remembrance today; but We cannot pass over in silence two names that add particular lustre to the pages of your nineteenth century history: John Henry Newman, most human, most eloquent expositor of the word of God, whose immortal sermon keeps fresh the memory of the First Synod of the restored Hierarchy; and Henry Edward Manning, champion of the working-man, herald and apostle of an age of increasing social justice and harmony.

We know full well, Venerable Brethren, that this progress has not been achieved without difficulties and trials. Our heart goes out in sympathy especially to the bishops and priests of Wales, where Catholics are few and scattered, and where poverty and loneliness must so often be the companions of those valiant apostles who would enlarge the kingdom of Christ on earth. To them We say : look to your illustrious martyrs, Blessed Richard Gwyn and Blessed David Lewis, and go forward with courage and good cheer.

You will also thank God, that unlike many of your fellow-Catholics in other parts of the world, you enjoy the inestimable blessing of peace and ordered government under your gracious King and Queen. We express here Our sentiments of profound esteem for His Majesty King George VI and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and pray that God may grant them a long, prosperous and peaceful reign.

We cannot conclude without a message to all those men of good-will in England and Wales who would serve God, but who are not in communion with the See of Peter. We should like them to know that they, too, have a place in Our heart and We pray often for their welfare in this life and in the next.

And now as an earnest of Our paternal affection for all, We give Our Apostolic Benediction. We bestow it at this moment with all Our heart on Our beloved Son, whom We were so happy to appoint as Our Legate at your centennial celebration; We bestow it on Our Brethren in the episcopate, on all Our priestly sons, on all the faithful assembled, and in a special manner on all who have laboured hard to organize the liturgical functions, the pageant and the many ceremonies and meetings that have enriched the splendour of the Congress. May God bless you all, dear sons and daughters of England and Wales. Great is the hope which your loving Mother the Church places in you. May the next hundred years show how eminently worthy you are of her.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XII,*
Dodicesimo anno di Pontificato, 2 marzo 1950 - 1° marzo 1951, pp. 231 - 233
Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana

A.A.S., vol. XXXXII (1950), n. 16, pp. 825 - 827.