



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AL CONGRESSO MARIANO NAZIONALE DELL'INDIA****

Mercoledì, 8 dicembre 1954

Venerable Brethren and dearly beloved children of Mother India and Mother Church!

It would indeed be an insensitive soul that could fail to be moved to the depths of its being by this national act of Marian homage you are bringing to its fervent close today at Bombay, the lovely Gateway to your lovely land.

Only those who ignore or misread the colourful story of your steadfastness in the Faith — brought to you first in Apostolic times, when the mustard seed had scarce been planted by Our Blessed Lord, then quickened to new vigour and fruitfulness by the ministry of a Xavier, a de Nobili and many another missionary bearing His divine message of fraternity and pardon from Eternal Rome — only the unheeding will have been in the least surprised at the eagerness of Catholic India to add its fond and potent collective note, with those of your brethren in Christ from Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, to the grand chorus of praise and petition welling up from the heart of the Church Universal, through this memorable Marian Year, to the heart of Our Lady, Mary Immaculate. For Us it is a deeply felt joy to be present with you in the person of Our Legate, India's revered Cardinal.

These days of community prayer, discussion and planning in her concern and honour, made possible by the nation-wide offerings of the faithful and heartened by the official reception tendered to Our Legate from your civil authorities, have been no novel feature of your spiritual life. Call them rather the solemn sealing of Mary's name and mission on the heart of a nation that has never ceased to love her tenderly, and to imitate her virtues in proof of its love (cfr. *Cant.* 8, 6). The thousands pilgrims young and old who cluster devoutly, year after year, about her sanctuaries of Bandel, Kottar, Velangany and here harming Bandra, among so many others; the family Rosary, linking the evening prayer of your busy towns and little villages, day after day, to that of

the suppliant Church in every continent; your flourishing sodalities, your seminaries, schools and social institutes invoking Mary's patronage and aid; all these are an abiding attestation, to a world in turmoil and tribulation, of your confidence in the Queen and Mother whom the happy coincidence of your Independence Day with the Feast of her glorious Assumption has impelled you to proclaim « Our Lady of India ».

But let not those without the Household of the Faith mistake for a moment the meaning, the source and the scope of your age-old devotion to Mary. Every flower your children lay at her feet, every song you sing to her matchless beauty, every appeal to her power and compassion must be known for what it is, first and finally : the expression and reflexion of your personal dedication, after her example, to the living Christ; to the Divine Child Whom she deserved, albeit through no merit of her own, to bear at Bethlehem (*Luc. 2, 7*); to the Divine Teacher, Who deigned to be taught human wisdom at her holy home in Nazareth (*Luc. 2, 51-52*); to the Divine Victim and Victor over sin and death, Whose redemptive Sacrifice she saw completed on Calvary (*Io.1, 25*). To Jesus, then, through Mary, leads the spiritual path of that authentic Marian devotion you proudly and publicly profess once more to-day, at the close of her historic Centenary. If you have entrusted to her maternal care and vigilance the most delicate and urgent of your family and social problems — witness the ardent resolution of your successive Marian Congresses — the light and strength you seek is not hers to give, but only to procure from the Sacred Heart of her Son and Saviour. She is the crystal-pure Channel, not the Fountain, of that superabundant divine grace you beg through her Immaculate Heart for home and Church and country.

Continue above all, dearly beloved, to make it clear from your deeds, especially from your corporate programme for moral reform and social justice, that the devotion of men and nation, to Our Lady must never be restricted to pious sentiment, how ever noble its motivation, however exalted its object. She is the first to insist on action to confirm your protestations of love, to complement your Christian prayer for help. Her perennial answer to every supplication rings sweetly yet sharply down the ages and across the seven seas from Cana's marriage feast: « Whatsoever He shall say to you, *do ye* (*Io. 2, 5*).

Where better, moreover, than in her wholly dedicated life, are your peaceful legions of Catholic Action to find the model and pattern of their spiritual strategy and tactics? In their total forgetfulness of self, in their common sharing of the prayer, labour, joys and sufferings of Christ in His members at home and afar, in their loyal and effective collaboration with the apostolic Hierarchy which speaks to them and plans for them in His blessed Name, let this generation, too, recognize the Marian stamp on their apostolate.

At this hour of special travail and splendid opportunity for men and peoples of good will, it comforts and reassures Us to know that the hearts of the faithful in Our devoted India and her neighbouring realms are at one, and second to none, in their resolute fealty to Christ. Invoking the intercession of His Blessed Mother and heaven's gracious Queen, as We plead for a rich harvest of heavenly

favour from your Congress labour of love for Him and for the Church, His Spouse, to our beloved Legate, to you, Venerable Brethren, and to all here present in person or by delegation and intention We impart, with deep paternal affection, Our Apostolic Blessing.

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

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