



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AI PARTECIPANTI AL CAPITOLO GENERALE DELLA CONGREGAZIONE DELLA SANTA
CROCE****

Sala del Concistoro, Palazzo Pontificio di Castel Gandolfo - Giovedì, 19 luglio 1956

Matters of moment for your Congregation and, let Us add, for the Church have called you together, beloved sons, in General Chapter. For how can the Church not be particularly concerned with whatever will help to strengthen and render more efficient that precious instrument given to Her by God in Religious Orders and Congregations for the consolidation of the Faith at home and its continuous growth throughout the far-flung Mission fields? Hence We were happy to accede to the request made to Us by your revered Superior General in the name of all the Capitulants to receive you today, and thus enjoy the opportunity of expressing very simply and briefly a few thoughts suggested by the occasion.

Let Us say at once that it was extremely gratifying to know that a wise and discerning preparation has preceded the opening of this General Chapter. Over the past months special commissions have been studying the agenda; the entire field of your Congregation's activities has been surveyed by men of competence and experience, and the means sought and weighed that would increase the fruitfulness of those activities for the good of souls.

They are indeed many and varied; and the nature of each will naturally be a guide and measure of the special formation your members will have to receive. Your work in universities calls for men well-versed in the Arts and Sciences, Philosophy and Theology, who in a spirit of holy zeal consecrate themselves to a persevering pursuit of high scholarship, so that the school they serve may become a centre radiating that life which comes from true wisdom for the benefit of the national community. Knowledge and man's craving for knowledge have always been a weapon cleverly wielded by the enemies of God's Church. It is so today. Catholic scholars must be prepared to meet the enemy on his own ground. Illumined in their task by the splendours of divine Faith they will demonstrate beyond doubt, that Truth is one and its multiple rays, if followed with

humble sincerity, will inevitably lead one back to Him, « in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge » (*Col. 2, 3*).

This thought summons up happy memories of a visit We made just twenty years ago to your Notre Dame in America, and it is consoling for Us to hear of the steady progress and mounting prestige it achieves as year follows year.

But your schools will do more than reflect scholarship. Youth has need not only of a sane and sound culture. It must come to develop a calm and well-balanced judgment, capable of discerning between truth and error, good and evil, justice and its failure. Firmly grounded in convictions planted by Faith and Reason, they must be strong enough not to be carried away by false illusions or violent passion or a fickle public opinion that measures everything by the rule of immediate, apparent success. Such youth the Church with full reason expects to see passing with sure step from the portals of your schools. The supernatural truths of Christ's teaching and example have become the consistent motivation of their thoughts and conduct, and you may confidently look forward to their being a joy to His Spouse, the Church, and an asset to Society.

Now the task of moulding youth must begin early, cannot begin too early; and consequently one understands the immense importance of the work done in the Secondary Schools, where the adolescent, entering on a period of transition and powerful pulsations, senses perhaps for the first time the smoke of battle, glimpses the proud nobility of victory, and when, if he is not to falter, to compromise or surrender, he is in dire need of a conscience that reflects the truth steadily and clearcut, and a will with steel in it. That is why We have followed with special interest the beginnings and rapid evolution of your Notre Dame in Rome, conducted by the Brothers of your Congregation. How happy We are to hear that expansion is the order of the day for that school.

Your service of the Church, beloved sons, We know is not confined to education among the faithful. We have confided to your apostolic zeal distant and difficult Missions in India and Pakistan, where a chief care of your Superiors will be to raise and train a native clergy; and you have generously responded to a pressing need of the Church in some countries of South America. No one can fail to appreciate the heavy burden resting on higher Superiors to prepare men for all these ministries. The spiritual formation of your candidates, We note, you have placed first on the agenda of your Chapter. That is where it belongs.

True, if priests are ordained for men (*Hebr. 5,1*) it is for the men of their own time; and there must consequently be a certain flexibility and adaptation in the formation given to candidates. But in no age is there ever any substitute for the fundamental requirements established by Christ: « If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me » (*Luc. 9, 23*). The appealing admonition of Paul to Timothy has a true ring in every generation : « Be thou an example to the faithful in speech, in conduct, in charity, in faith, in chastity » (*1 Tim. 4, 12*). And discussion of the needed spiritual formation of the beginners in religious life will awaken, as it

were, a renewal of fervour in all, that is so necessary to spiritual and religious men.

And now, beloved sons, We turn Our gaze to the Virgin Mother, Mary Queen of the Apostles. To her maternal care We entrust the prayers We offer for God's blessings on the sessions and the resolutions of your General Chapter. Mother at once of God and men, she will delight to have her Son, Head of His Body (cfr. *Col.* 1, 18), shower upon you, His members, all the precious gifts you most need, especially the gift of knowing Him, Who is love, and of living by Him (dr. *1 Io*, 4, 9).

As a token of Our own paternal affection it is a real joy for Us to impart to you, beloved sons, and to all members of the Congregation of Holy Cross, Our Apostolic Blessing.

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

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