



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
ALLA ASSEMBLEA NAZIONALE ANNUALE
DELLA STAMPA CATTOLICA DEGLI STATI UNITI****

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We are sincerely grateful to Our Venerable Brother, the Honorary President of the Catholic Press Association in the United States, for the pleasure of addressing this annual meeting of its members. We welcome the opportunity to say a word of praise and encouragement for those, who are most certainly in the forefront of the champions of Christ's cause in your country.

In these days and in a country where freedom of the press is established by law, it should not be necessary to insist on the importance of a Catholic press. The power of the written word is being challenged today by other modern arts of communication; yet none will deny the heavy pressure still exercised by the press on moulding habits of thought, that would first weaken, then subvert the principles of Christian belief and correct moral conduct. The very freedom possessed, as you know full well, increases the danger, which only an enlightened and courageous public opinion can avert or lessen. Your associated Newspapers, Magazines and Reviews both weekly and quarterly, as well as the increasing number of books authored by Catholics, have the noble and truly patriotic task and ambition to help that public opinion to find and hold to the path of truth and justice and, let Us say it simply and honestly, holy living. If you succeed in this, you will have made a momentous contribution to the peace, prosperity and power for good of your beloved country.

Obviously the influence of the Catholic press will be in proportion to the influence and number of its readers. And here, before this assembly, We would like to make a fervent, paternal appeal to the Catholic Colleges and Universities throughout the land. With Our own eyes We have seen many of your imposing institutions of learning, and have stood in admiration of all they tell of the faith and generosity of your people and of the self-dedication of the Clergy and Religious Orders and Congregations, whose unremitting application to study, research and lecturing sustain them at their high level of scholarship. Is it not right to expect that the students and graduates of these

schools should be a chief support of the Catholic press and literature? Are they? Much is done, We are sure, to guide the students' taste in reading; and if at the same time they were brought to realize the responsibilities which await the Catholic laity today and their consequent need to deepen by continued study their understanding of the Faith, which is their most precious legacy; if they grasped the nature and magnitude of the issues at stake in the perennial struggle that the Church has to wage in the face of those who through ignorance or evil-minded enmity revile and misrepresent her and her teachings, would they be languidly gravitating to light, trivial reading? Would they not rather with a more robust mentality turn with an eager sense of chivalry to the best Catholic sources of information and instruction?

Here the Catholic press purports to offer them the necessary guidance and leadership. We submit, that success in this lofty apostolate will make three demands on members of your Association. First, they must show their competence, acquired through serious study and a sure grasp of the fundamental principles of Christian Philosophy and Theology, and made evident by the clear and cultivated expression of sound judgments concerning the important problems of the day. Secondly, they must reflect in what they write the unity, the oneness of the Church in her faith and moral teaching. It was to His Apostles and through them to their successors, that Christ Our Lord confided the truth He came on earth to impart to men. Hence the teaching office in His Church, as all know, belongs to the Bishop of Rome, His Vicar on earth, for the entire body of the faithful, and to the several Bishops for the group of members of the Church confided by that Vicar to their pastoral charge. Now in carrying out their grave obligation of teaching the Bishops will enlist the help of priests and also of the laity, whose warrant for teaching, however, will always derive not from their personal eminence in learning, but from the mission entrusted to them by the Bishops. To them the press, as all the faithful, will give loyal obedience. But in regard to questions, in which the divinely-appointed teachers have not pronounced judgment—and the field is vast and varied, saving that of faith and morals—free discussion will be altogether legitimate, and each one may hold and defend his own opinion. But let such an opinion be presented) with due restraint; and no one will condemn another simply because he does not agree with his opinion, much less challenge his loyalty.

This desired bond of union! assured and sealed by justice and charity, will be unbreakable, if—and this is the third demand made upon your members--if all are ever conscious of the one, sublime goal each and everyone of you is striving to gain : — the spread of Christ's Kingdom of Truth and Salvation among men. That goal is in the divine order of creation. You who aim at it have a character, that sets you apart from ordinary writers. The concrete problems, not of an ideal world, but of this world in which you live here and now and toil, call for solutions, and you must grapple with them; but no solution, you know, will be adequate or safe, that is not contained within the bounds clearly traced by Infinite Truth and Goodness. One's inward vision then must be lifted up from the dark, confusing complexities of a passing world, to keep steadily in view the sheer, white light, of eternity. The Catholic Press is offered and consecrated to God, with the prayer that He may deign to use it as a fit and effective instrument to open up to all men and to make easier for

them the ways to eternal life, which divine Wisdom has said is knowing Him Who is the one true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He sent.

To Our Venerable Brother. your honorary President, to all Our Venerable Brothers whose pastoral zeal guides and promotes the Catholic press, to all the members of your Association and their dear ones at home. from a heart filled with joy for your devotion and success and with paternal affection We impart the Apostolic Benediction.

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