



## The Holy See

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***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII  
AL PELLEGRINAGGIO NAZIONALE D'IRLANDA  
NEL III CENTENARIO DI LUCA WADDING\****

*Castel Gandolfo - Martedì, 8 ottobre 1957*

A thousand welcomes to all,—to Our Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, to you, Taoiseach, to all the children of St. Patrick. You have come from the far North, from the isle set like an emerald in the ring of the sea, to the tomb of the Galilean Fisherman, and here to the home of his successor.

Three hundred years ago the brave, intrepid soul of Fr. Luke Wadding took flight for his true, his heavenly country, leaving his frail and worn body to Rome. Here his dear Franciscan brethren gave it a worthy resting-place in the monastery he had founded. A year ago, at the beginning of the centennial anniversary, We wrote a letter to Our beloved Son, your revered Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh, assuring him of Our blessing on your festivities and extolling the undying merits of the saintly Friar; today, as the year draws to a close, you have come, pilgrims, to honour the memory of your compatriot in the city where he laboured and died, and We are happy to address you briefly and simply as a father to his children.

The memory of Luke Wadding must bring to your mind a keen sense of gratitude for a double legacy, that during a thousand years and longer has enriched the lives of the Irish people both at home and over seas. You recall that he first came to Rome from Lisbon in 1618, member of a royal commission to petition the Pope to declare that Mary, the Mother of God, was immaculately conceived. That was indeed a petition dear to every Franciscan heart; and what could be more appealing, more stirring for the soul of an Irishman than to assist in revealing to his fellowmen another jewel in the beauteous crown of the Queen of Heaven? Was not the land of St. Patrick studded with shrines to Mary Mother, Light of Nazareth, Glory of Jerusalem, Queen of the World? Did not every Irish heart beat faster with love at the mention of her name? Was it not the thought of her powerful intercession with her Son that gave them solace in their trials, hope when dark

shadows would envelope them? This Virgin most pure was always before the mind of Luke Wadding, always his heart's love, during all the years of his exile. That legacy, dearly beloved, is also yours. Defend it; let it increase. Let the child-like love of your Mother Mary be a flame, strong and inextinguishable, that will give light and warmth and cheer even on, the drabbest days that come at times to all. Let her name be on the lips of your children, reverence and love for her grow apace with their years, and though they be in foreign lands, she will not fail them in the hour of need.

Though Luke Wadding left Ireland as a young student never again to see her sea-beaten shore, her glad valleys and the greenness of her pastures, he never ceased to be the devoted son of Erin. For forty years, more than half his life, he lived in Rome, and the solemn admonition of your glorious Patriarch came home to him more vividly than ever: as you are Christians, so are you to be Romans. To be Christian one must be Roman; one must recognize the oneness of Christ's Church, that is governed by one successor of the Prince of the Apostles, who is the Bishop of Rome, Christ's Vicar on earth. To train Irish priests in the very centre of this Roman unity, close to the strong, pulsing heart of Christ's Mystical Body, Luke Wadding founded St. Isidore's for his own religious brethren. During thirty years he governed the College and under his guidance and inspiration profound scholars were formed, professors prepared to occupy university chairs throughout Europe, and, what was a primary plan and hope for him, missionaries were sent forth equipped with learning, courage and selfless zeal to sustain and strengthen the faith of their fathers among the hard-pressed people of seventeenth-century Ireland. To increase this number of Roman-trained missionaries Fr. Luke persuaded Cardinal Ludovisi to found a College for Irish seminarians, who catching up the torch of heroism lighted by the Martyrs and Confessors, whose memories had been their daily companions, would carry it full aflame to brighten the days of persecution and lead their fellow countrymen to a defence of the faith that would never surrender.

What a treasure St. Patrick had confided to his people! It is yours, dearly beloved children,—the true faith, that down through the long centuries has never suffered the blight of heresy. Go to St. Isidore's; there in the monastery you will find a wee bit of Ireland transplanted here in Rome. The old country has been the better for its planting. Kneel in the Church before your sacramental God; sing your praises of Mary and her divine Son; pour out your heart's gratitude for the faith that is yours, sweetened as it is and confirmed by your devotion to Mother Mary: and may Fr. Luke Wadding by his intercession before the throne of God continue to be a blessing to Ireland.

To you, Venerable Brothers and to all the members of your flocks, to the honourable Head of Government here present, to you, dearest sons and daughters of Our dear Ireland, and to all your loved ones, from a heart filled with joy and affection We impart the Apostolic Blessing.

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*\*Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XIX,*

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