



The Holy See

***LETTERA DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO XII
AI CARDINALI, ARCIVESCOVI E VESCOVI DEGLI
STATI UNITI D'AMERICA, PER IL NUOVO COLLEGIO
AMERICANO DEL NORD A ROMA****

Beloved Sons and Venerable Brethren.

The approaching reestablishment here in Our dear Rome of the North American College, the knowledge of whose reopening has been communicated to Us by the rector, affords Us the welcome opportunity of addressing Our paternal words to you, the Members of the Hierarchy of the United States. We rejoice not only in the fact that after a lapse of eight years you are once more sending your chosen young men to study in Our beloved City, to imbibe the sacred wisdom of Holy Mother the Church at its very source and to be nourished at the very heart of the Catholic world, but that you are also planning to erect in the very shadow of Our own dwelling a new and greater seminary to care for ever more young levites from America.

It was Our predecessor of blessed memory, Pius IX, who nearly one hundred years ago first proposed to the American Bishops that they establish a national seminary in Rome, and it was the same Pontiff who purchased and graciously granted the use of the edifice that has housed the American students ever since that time.

Surely there is evident the hand of Divine Providence in the fact that the first steps were taken on the occasion of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and that the College itself was opened for the first time on the very eve of the feast, on December 7th, 1859. And since that day Our Heavenly Mother, Queen of the Clergy, has never ceased to bless with every manifestation of divine favor a work that is of necessity so close to Her maternal heart. The students nurtured in tender love of their Mother and Queen, developed in the image of Her Divine Son, enlightened in the sacred sciences learned at the feet of Christ's Vicar, made strong and courageous by their close association with the places sanctified by the Prince of the Apostles and the martyrs, have returned to their own country to win ever greater triumphs for Christ and His

Holy Spouse. As pastors and teachers, as administrators and also as bishops of the Church in America, the men trained here have always been marked with an especial loyalty to Us and to Our illustrious Predecessors, an inevitable consequence of their sojourn in this City, the See of Peter and of Peter's Successors.

Today as We look about the City of Rome We see on all sides the flower of the youth of the world, even from the most distant nations, drawn here by a common faith, sustained by common ideals, being trained in the same doctrine, sharing the same Divine Sacrifice, and all united by the same bonds of attachment to Us. Surely they are giving to the leaders and to the peoples of every land a magnificent example of unity and of the ability of mankind to live together in Christian peace and concord. The concurrence of so many thousands of men, later destined to play such an important part in the salvation of souls over the whole face of the earth, is a great consolation to Us; and it should be to you. Beloved Sons and Venerable Brethren, a reason especially appealing at this time, to be prompt in making every sacrifice necessary to maintain and even to enlarge the national seminary of your country.

So it is with particular joy that We have learned of your proposals to erect an even finer seminary and to plant your roots even closer to Us. Your wisdom and courage to look to the future and to plan for almost three hundred of your seminarians to study in Rome represent a most worthy initiative that can elicit only Our warmest commendation. At the same time you are keeping a close tie with your old and honored traditions in putting the former college building to use as a house of studies for priests wishing to train themselves in the higher branches of the sacred sciences. Both of these projects call forth Our heartiest approval and support and the return in grace and wisdom that will accrue to the Church in America will amply reward the expenditures and sacrifices that are necessarily involved in their realization.

The united action taken in this matter by the American Hierarchy, always so ready and generous in the support of all measures for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ, once more demonstrates the flourishing condition of the Faith in your great nation. We are sure that the bishops and priests and people will rally to the support of a cause that promises so much for the Church and which is so close to Our own heart. Already an abundant and fruitful harvest for God and for souls has been garnered from the past eighty-nine years of the existence of the North American College: and now your decisions for the future give abundant hope that succeeding generations will continue in greater measure and with more ample facilities, to enjoy the richest blessings stemming from a priesthood nourished in the Eternal City.

With great joy then We give Our blessing to the plans that have been made known to Us by the rector for the future of your seminary. We shall follow their unfolding and their realization with intimate pleasure and personal interest and, as a token of Our encouragement in the great task that lies ahead, We impart to you, Beloved Sons and Venerable Brethren, as also to the priests and faithful of the United States, Our paternal Apostolic Benediction.

Given at the Vatican on the eighteenth day of February one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, the ninth year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XII

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