

# TEXT OF POPE'S PEACE ADDRESS TO COLLEGE OF CARDINALS

Vatican City—Following is the officially translated text of the Christmas Eve allocution by Pope Pius XII to the College of Cardinals:

In the course of the last six years, venerable brethren and beloved sons, as this eve of our Lord's nativity came around, we must all have felt keenly the sad contradiction between the spirit of holy joy and deep brotherly union in the service of God suggested by the beautiful Christmas season, and the lamentable spirit of vengeance and spite that prevailed throughout the world; between the sweet harmony of the "Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus" and the discordant cries of hate amid the thunder of fratricidal war; between the suffused light of Bethlehem and the sinister glare of destructive fires; between the resplendent innocence radiating from the features of the heaven-sent Child and the mark of Cain which will long remain impressed on the countenance of our century.

What a sigh of relief, then, arose from all our hearts, as we heard that the gory conflict had ended, first in Europe, then in Asia? What fervent prayers had risen, during the long years of strife, to the throne of God imploring Him to shorten the days of affliction and stay the hands of those angels who hold the vials of God's wrath for the sips of men.

Now, by the mercy of God, the human family will begin once more to celebrate a Christmas without the terrors of war on land and sea and especially in the air any longer filling men's hearts with deadly anguish. For this turn of events let us all give humble thanks to our omnipotent Lord.

Peace on earth? True peace? Not only the "post-war period," to use a sad but very pregnant term. How long will it take to cure the material and moral disorder, to close up so many wounds!

But yesterday men were scattering destruction, disaster, misery over vast territories; and today, when they must rebuild, men but faintly realize how much perspicacity and foresight, how much rectitude and good will must go to the task of bringing the world back from physical and spiritual devastation and ruin to law, order, and peace. So even this Christmas is still a time of expectancy, of hope and of prayer to the incarnation of God, that he, "The King of peace . . . whose face all the earth desires to see close," (Antiphon I, First Vespers, Christmas Day) may give to the world his peace.

### The Coming Consistory, Its Characteristic Features

As already announced, for the first time since God willed to raise us, in spite of our unworthiness, to the office of Supreme Pontiff, we shall address our selves, if it be God's will, to the task of creating new members of the Sacred College. In our Christmas message last year, we referred to the grave and diverse difficulties which had prevented us from doing so. . . . We have decided to return to that ancient custom, which, while it brings the number of Cardinals in the Sacred College up to its full complement, respects at the same time the limit set by Statute V. We are sorry that respect for that limit has prevented us from including in this first creation not a few other prelates and religious, especially of the Roman Curia and clergy, who for their long service to the Holy See would also have been very worthy of the honor.

We have considered it all the more fitting not to go beyond the limit set, because there never yet has been created so large a number of Cardinals—thirty-two—in a single consistory. Up to now, the two largest creations were made under Popes Leo X and Pius VII, who each created thirty-one Cardinals in a single consistory; that is to say, Leo X created thirty-one; while Pius VII, after his return to Rome, turned his attention to the Sacred College which was much depleted by the sorrowful events



vent times too numerous, fixed the number of Cardinals at seventy, after the example of the seventy ancients of Israel (Exodus XIV: 1-19) and ordained in the strictest terms that this number should not be exceeded for any motive whatsoever, even the most urgent.

Undoubtedly the Roman pontiffs who succeeded him would not be bound by this provision, if they considered it opportune to increase or diminish the number. But there is no evidence that any of them ever departed from this law, which has had formal confirmation in Canon 231 of the Code of Canon Law. The Sacred College had its full complement of seventy Cardinals frequently enough in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, but never in the Nineteenth and, up to the present, never in the Twentieth.

To cite but one example, let us recall that Clement XI, in the secret consistory of May 17, 1708, wanted to create as many Cardinals—i.e. twenty— as were needed to fill up the number of seventy. Moreover, when one of the newly nominated Cardinals, Gabriel Filippucci, renounced the high dignity, Clement XI in the next consistory, on June 7 of the same year, while accepting the renunciation, immediately filled the vacancy by nominating Michaelangelo Conti, who was later to be his immediate successor, Innocent XIII.

We have decided to return to that ancient custom, which, while it brings the number of Cardinals in the Sacred College up to its full complement, respects at the same time the limit set by Statute V. We are sorry that respect for that limit has prevented us from including in this first creation not a few other prelates and religious, especially of the Roman Curia and clergy, who for their long service to the Holy See would also have been very worthy of the honor.

We have considered it all the more fitting not to go beyond the limit set, because there never yet has been created so large a number of Cardinals—thirty-two—in a single consistory. Up to now, the two largest creations were made under Popes Leo X and Pius VII, who each created thirty-one Cardinals in a single consistory; that is to say, Leo X created thirty-one; while Pius VII, after his return to Rome, turned his attention to the Sacred College which was much depleted by the sorrowful events

of that period, and in the secret consistory of March 8, 1816, likewise created thirty-one; but he published only twenty of the nominations, reserving ten in petto.

### As to Their Nationality

Another characteristic of this creation will be the variety of nations to which the future Cardinals belong; for we have been anxious that the greatest possible number of races and peoples would be represented, so that this creation may portray in a living manner the universality of the church. In this way, just as we have during the years of our pontificate seen congregate in the Eternal City, in spite of the war—or rather as a consequence of the war—men from every nation and from the remotest lands, so now that the World War is over we shall have the consolation—if it be God's will—of seeing grouped around us now members of the Sacred College from the four quarters of the earth.

Rome will thus be seen in its true light as the Eternal City, the universal city, the Caput Mundi, the city par excellence, the city of which all are citizens, the city which is the See of the Vicar of Christ, on which the gaze of the whole Catholic world is fixed; nor will Italy, the blessed land which holds this Rome of ours in her bosom, suffer from any loss of prestige; rather will she be repaid in the eyes of all peoples as sharing in this greatness and this universality.

### The Supra-National Character of the Church

The Catholic Church, of which Rome is the center, is supra-national by its very nature. This has two implications, one negative and the other positive. The church is a mother—Sancta Mater Ecclesia—a true mother, mother of all nations and all peoples no less than of all men individually. And precisely because a mother, she does not and cannot belong exclusively to this or that people, nor even more to one than to others but equally to all.

Since she is the mother, she cannot be a stranger anywhere; she dwells, or at least should, because of her nature, dwell among all peoples. Moreover, while the mother with her husband and children forms a family, the church, in virtue of a union incomparably more intimate, deeper and more perfect than is pos-

sible for the family, forms the mystical body of Christ. The church is then supra-national because it is an indivisible, universal whole.

### The Indivisible Unity of the Church

The church is an indivisible whole because Christ, her head, is undivided and indivisible. Christ with his church is—in the profound words of St. Augustine

Christ. This wholeness of Christ, according to the saintly doctor of the church, means the indivisible unity of the head with the body. "In plenitudine ecclesiae," in the fullness of the life of the church, which brings together all places and all periods. Firmly established on such solid foundations, the church, placed as she is in the center of the history of the whole human race, in the agitated and turbulent atmosphere of divergent energies and conflicting tendencies, is so far from being shaken—however much she be exposed to all forms of attacks on her indivisible integrity—that she actually diffuses from her own integral and coherent vitality ever new of the unifying spirit for which all hunger, truths which are valid always and everywhere, ideals which are everywhere and always fresh.

From this it becomes clearer that a sacrilegious attack has been and is made against the Totus Christus, the whole Christ, while at the same time a dastardly blow has been struck against the unity of mankind, whenever an attempt has been, or is made to put the church, forces to heal and consolidate torn and divided mankind: forces of unifying divine grace, forces like a prisoner and slave, in the service of this or that particular people, to tie her up within the narrow confines of a single nation or on the other hand to ostracize her from any nation.

Such a mutilation of the church's integrity has entailed and entails for the peoples who are victims of it to a degree proportionate to its duration—the lessening of their real welfare and of their full vitality—but it is not merely that the individualism of nations and states has in these last centuries striven to break up the integrity of the church, to weaken and hinder her unifying forces, those forces which nevertheless once had an essential part to play in the unification of western Europe.

A many liberalisms strove to create, without the church or in opposition to her, a unity built on lay culture and secularized humanism. Here and there—at once the result of its destructive force and the hostile reaction to it—totalitarianism supplanted it. In a word, what was the net result after a little more than a century of these strivings—without—and often against—the church? Human liberty buried—forced organizations—a world which for brutality and barbarity, for its achievement of destruction and ruin, but above all for its tragic dignity and security had never known an equal.

At a time of stress such as ours still is, the church, in her own interest and in that of mankind, should make every endeavor to use to the best advantage her undivided and indivisible integrity. She must be now more than ever supra-national. This spirit must pervade and impregnate her visible head, the Sacred College, all the activities of the Holy See, of which she must be more than ever there where greater responsibility, not only for the present, but even more for the future. It is a question here of a spiritual focus of having an accurate sense of the church's supra-nationality, and not measuring or determining it according to material considerations or strictly nationalistic groupings of individuals.

by the disposition of Divine Providence, the Italian nation to a greater extent than the others, gave the church her head and large numbers of collaborators in the central government of the Holy See: the church as a whole has always kept its supra-national character intact. Indeed many factors contributed, precisely along this way to preserve her from dangers which otherwise could easily have been more felt.

One might recall, to cite an example, the struggles for leadership of the national-states of Europe and the great dynasties in past centuries. Ever since the reconciliation of church and state by the Lateran pacts, the Italian clergy as a whole, without any prejudice to natural and legitimate love of their country, have faithfully continued to support and promote the supra-national character of the church. We hope and pray that they—and especially the younger clergy in Italy and throughout the Catholic world—may continue to do so; in any case the deflection of the present situation calls for special care in safeguarding that supra-national character and indivisible unity of the church.

### The Universality of the Church

She is supra-national because she extends the same love to all nations and peoples; she is also supra-national, as we have already said, because nowhere is she a stranger. She lives and grows in all countries of the world, and they all contribute to her life and growth. There was a time when ecclesiastical life, in its visible manifestations, flourished especially in the countries of old Europe, from which it flowed, like a majestic river, to what could then be called the outer limits of the world; today it appears rather as a sharing of life and energy between all the members of the mystical body of Christ on earth.

Not a few regions in other continents have long ago outlived the phase of missionary formation in their ecclesiastical development; they are governed by their own hierarchy and give spiritual and material benefits to the universal church from which once they only received such benefits. Is there not revealed in this progressive enrichment of the supernatural and even natural life of mankind the true significance of the church's supra-national character? She is not, because of this supra-national character, placed aloft as though suspended in an inaccessible and intangible isolation above the nations; for just as Christ was in church, in which he continues to the midst of men, so too his life, is placed in the midst of the peoples.

As Christ assumed a real human nature, so too the church takes to herself the fullness of all that is genuinely human, wherever and however she finds it, and transforms it into a source of supernatural energy.

Thus ever more fully is verified in the church of today that phenomenon which St. Augustine praised in his "City of God": The church, he wrote, "recruits her citizens from all nations, and in every language assembles her community of pilgrims on earth; she is not anxious about diversities in customs, laws, institutions; she does not cut off or destroy any of these, but rather preserves and observes them. Even the differences in different nations she directs to the one common end of peace on earth, as long as they do not impede the worship of the one supreme and true God."

Like a powerful lightning-bolt, the church, in her universal integrity, casts her beam of light over those dark days through which we pass. No less obscure were those in which the great doctor of Hippo—the world which he loved so dearly began to founder. That light was then his comfort and, as it does not