

Courier Journal

Text of Pope's Christmas Eve Message to World

(RADIO, N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE)

Vaticana City, Dec. 24 — The English text of the tenth annual Christmas Eve message to the world, delivered by His Holiness Pope Pius XII, is as follows:

Grave yet tender, like the testament and last farewell of a most loving father, were the words of the Divine Redeemer to His first Vicar on earth: "Confirma frater tuus" (Luke 22:32), strengthened by brethren. These words have not ceased to echo in Our mind and heart since the day He willed, in His inscrutable design, to confide to Our weak hands the helm of Peter's Barque.

ALTHOUGH THESE IMMORTAL words are deeply engrained in the depth of Our mind, they are impressed still more upon Us whenever, exercising the Apostolic Ministry, We communicate to the Hierarchy and Faithful of the world the teaching, directives and exhortations which are needed for the complete fulfillment of the Church's saving mission and which must be suitably adapted to the ever-changing circumstances of time and place, while their substantial immutability is kept unchanged.

It is with singular and deep emotion that We experience the force of that Divine Command at the present moment when, beloved sons and daughters of the world, we are addressing for the tenth time Our Christmas Message to you at the end of a decade which, for wonderful happenings, oppressive anxiety and bitter weeping, has not its equal in the course of human history.

Last Christmas, when We asked your prayers and cooperation on this same feast day, We expressed the hope that the year 1948, then about to begin, might be for Europe and for the whole society of nations tormented by so much disunion, a year of earnest reconstruction and the beginning of a rapid advance toward true peace.

Today, at the end of a year which began so hopefully, Our paternal voice again invites you, the upright and thoughtful, the sincere Christians, to ponder over the present state of humanity and of Christendom, and to consider what plans should be adopted to advance sincerely and securely along the path pointed out by the exacting necessities of the times and by your own conscience.

ANY CLEAR-SIGHTED PERSON who has the moral strength and courage to look truth squarely in the face, even if it be painful and humbling, must fully recognize that this year of 1948, which dawned full of high and well-founded expectations, appears now at its close to have arrived at one of those crucial points, where the path which previously disclosed pleasant vistas seems to pose instead on the brink of a precipice where pitfalls and dangers fill god and generous people with increasing anxiety.

Nevertheless, or rather for this very reason, beloved sons and daughters, while faint-heartedness begins to overcome the minds even of the courageous, and doubts assail the most enlightened and determined men, we feel ourselves more than ever obliged to answer the Divine command: "Confirma frater tuus."

To all of you, even those at the extremities of the earth, We send as Our Christmas greeting the words by which the Prophet announced the work of redemption and the decisive victory of the reign of Christ: "Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees. Say to the faint-hearted: Take courage and fear not; behold your God... will come and will save you." (Is. 35: 3-4)

AS THE SUCCESSOR of Him to Whom the Divine Promise was addressed, "I have prayed for you" (Luke 22:32), We know full well that when the light against the powers of darkness is most arduous and enters phases that are decisive and humbly speaking, alarming it is then that the Lord is all the closer to His Church and to His faithful. Fully convinced and aware of this Divine assistance, We remind all those who glory in the name of Catholic Christians of a twofold sacred duty indispensable for the bettering of the present condition of human society.

- (1) Unshakable fidelity to the heritage of truth brought to the world by the Redeemer.
(2) Conscientious fulfillment of the precept of justice and love, necessary presupposition for the attainment on earth of a social order worthy of the Divine King of Peace.

We would fill in gratitude to the Almighty, Giver of all grace and Furnisher of every good, if We did not recognize that the year now coming to a close, despite all its anxieties and sufferings, was also rich in spiritual consolations, in happy experiences and encouraging success.

It was a year in which the Church among all peoples, and in every country and continent, has given unmistakable and splendid proofs of life and vigor, of activity and resistance, and of rapid progress. And those not only justify the brightest hopes in the spiritual field, but have also produced tangible results in the material domain in which the human race finds itself involved while struggling for its healing and its peace.

A GLORIOUS SERIES of religious functions, of Eucharistic and Marian congresses, of important centenary celebrations and impressive gatherings, have proved to any impartial observer that neither the war nor its aftermath, nor the tenacity of the enemies of Christ in their discordant and destructive plans have been able to dry up or contaminate the living sources whence the Church has drawn the life-giving strength for nearly 20 centuries.

Everywhere there is a quickening and throbbing of life which stives especially among Catholic youth to bring the Gospel truths and the salutary force of its doctrine into all the spheres of human activity. Its aim is to help and save even those who up to the present have closed their hearts to such beneficent action with great loss to themselves.

The severe trials the Church has undergone because of the war and its aftermath, the painful losses and serious injury she has sustained, have served only to give more comforting and encouraging proof of her energy and resistance. Tossed about by the storm and waves, she has kept intact and inviolate her vital fibre.

In all those countries where to profess the Catholic Faith really means to suffer persecution there have been and there are still thousands of valiant men and women who, undismayed by sacrifices, proscriptions and torture, and fearless in the face of prison and death, do not bow the knee before the Ball of might and power (3 Kings, 19, 18). Their names are unknown for the most part to the general public, but they are written in indelible characters in the annals of the Church.

IS IT FOR US A DUTY to honor those faithful valiant people, these fearless, courageous chosen ones, who are blessed by God for their hardships of the present time, the sorrows



and the maternal tears of the Spouse of Christ are neither a stumbling block nor foolishness but an occasion and stimulus to show forth... not in words but by actions... the integrity and unselfishness of their purpose, their unflinching fidelity and the sublime generosity of their hearts.

Words fall to pay a worthy tribute and extol in a fitting way the heroism of these most faithful and among the faithful. To each one of them We express Our praise and Our gratitude. The Lord Who promised to remember before His Heavenly Father those who confessed Him before men (Matt. 10:32) will be their eternal recompense.

It is the constancy and steadfastness of so many brethren in the Faith is a source of joy and holy pride for Us. We cannot pass over the obligation of mentioning those also whose thoughts and sentiments bear the imprint of the spirit and difficulties of the times.

How many have suffered harm, and how many have been shipwrecked in their faith and in their very belief in God. How many carried away by a wave of secularism or hostility toward the Church, have lost the freshness and the serenity of a Faith which up till then had been the support and the light of their lives.

Others violently uprooted and torn from their native soil, wander aimlessly about, exposed, particularly in the case of the young, to a spiritual and moral ruin, the danger of which would be impossible to overestimate.

THE MATERNAL EYE of the Church follows with watchful love and redoubled care the souls of those temporarily lost or in danger. She is not angry. She prays, not condemning. She waits. She is waiting the return of those children of hers and is anxious to find means of hastening that hour.

That is why the Church shrinks from no sacrifice and finds no trouble too burdensome to such an end. She is ready for everything, except one thing: that she be not asked to gain the return of the children who have left her when in the distant past or recently, at the expense of any part of the faithfulness of the Christian Faith confided to her keeping.

It seems to Us that a brief clarification is opportune with respect to some harsh statements which have been made by certain individuals. The Papacy uttered by certain individuals, the duty of charity and of love is certainly not lessened by attacks or by insults. We know how to distinguish between the people, often deprived of freedom, and the systems that rule them.

We are conscious of the servile dependence that some representatives of a religion called "orthodox" display toward a concept of life whose ultimate goal—repeatedly proclaimed—is the elimination of all trace of Christian religion.

WE ARE NOT UNAWARE of the narrowing path that must be traveled by many of Our beloved sons and daughters when a public system of violence has driven to cut themselves off formally away from the Mother Church to a kind of deepest, compulsory, and hence, involuntary, isolation. We address the heroic steadfastness of some with deep sorrow and of feeble and patient women. We witness the spiritual anguish of others whose external resistance has given way under the excess of just pressure and who have created a separation which their heart abhors and their conscience reproves.

Fidelity to the Divine patrimony of truth confided to the Church does not in any way concern the Catholic Christian—as not a few believe or seem to believe—in an attitude of indifferent reserve or cold indifference in the face of the grave and urgent duties of the present hour.

ON THE CONTRARY, the spirit and the example of Our Lord, Who came to seek and save what was lost, is the constant motif of love and, generally speaking, the special significance that radiates from the good findings, the history of the Church which proves how she has always been the staunch and constant support of every force for good and for peace; the teaching and exhortations of the Roman Pontiffs, especially in the course of recent decades, dealing with the conduct of Christians toward the neighbor, society and the State.

It is the duty of every Christian to take his share generously, courageously and according to his station and capacity in questions that a tormented and agitated world has to solve in the field of social justice no less than on the international plane of law and peace.

A convinced Christian cannot confine himself within an easy and egoistic "isolationism," when he witnesses the needs and the misery of his brothers; when pleas for help come to him from these in economic distress; when he knows the aspirations of the working classes for more normal and just conditions of life; when he is aware of the abuses of an economic system which puts money above social obligations when he is not ignorant of the aberrations of an intransigent nationalism which denies or spins the common bonds linking the sep-

arate nations together, and imposing on each one of them many and varied duties toward the great family of nations.

The Catholic doctrine on the State and civil society has always been based on the principle that, in keeping with the will of God, the nations form together a community with a common aim and common duties.

Even when the proclamation of this principle and its practical consequences gave rise to violent reactions, the Church denied her assent to the erroneous concept of an absolutely autonomous sovereignty divested of all social obligations.

THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN, persuaded that every man is his neighbor and that every nation is a member, with equal rights, of the family of nations, cooperates wholeheartedly in those generous efforts whose beginnings might be meagre and which frequently encounter strong opposition and obstacles, but which aim at saving individual States from the narrowness of a self-centered mentality.

This latter attitude of mind has been largely responsible for the conflicts of the past, and unless finally overcome or at least held in check, could lead to new conflagrations that might mean death to human civilization.

Since the cessation of hostilities, men have never been so obsessed as today by the nightmare of another war and by anxiety for the peace. They alternate between two extremes. Some adopt the ancient motto, not completely false, but which is easily misunderstood and has often been misused: "si pacem parvum bellum; if you desire peace, prepare for war. Others think to find safety in the formula: peace at all costs!

Both parties want peace while both endanger it. On one side by arousing distrust on the other by promoting a security which can prepare the way for aggression. Thus both, without wishing it, compromise the cause of peace at the very time when the human race crushed under the weight of armaments and in agony at the prospect of fresh and even worse conflicts shudders at the thought of a future catastrophe.

Hence We should like to point out briefly the characteristics of a real Christian will for peace.

(1) The Christian will for peace comes from God. He is the "God of Peace" (Rom. 15, 33); He has created the world to be an abode of peace; He has given His commandment of peace, that "tranquillity in order" of which St. Augustine speaks.

The Christian will for peace has its weapons too. But its principal arms are those of prayer and love, constant prayer to the Father in Heaven, Father of us all; brotherly love among all men and all nations, since all are sons of the same Father Who is in Heaven; love which, with patience, always succeeds in being disposed and ready to achieve understanding and agreement with everyone.

THESE TWO ARMS HAVE their source in God, and when they are lacking, where people only know how to wield material weapons, there can be no real will for peace. For purely material armament necessarily awakens distrust, and creates what amounts to a climate of war.

Who then can fail to see how important it is for the nations to preserve and strengthen the Christian way of life and how grave is their responsibility in the selection and supervision of those to whom they entrust the immediate control of armaments?

(2) The Christian will for peace is easily identified. Obedient to the Divine precept of peace, it will never fall a victim to national pride or honor into an argument for war or even for a threat of war. It is very careful to avoid recourse to the force of arms in the defense of rights which, however legitimate, do not offset the risk of kindling a blaze with all its tremendous spiritual and material consequences.

Here, likewise, the responsibility of the nations is perfectly clear with respect to the paramount problems of the education of youth and the moulding of public opinion, which modern methods and instruments render so sensitive and changeable today. In every department of a nation's life, but this influence must be carefully exerted to support the common interest of all States in the defense of peace.

Every violator of the law should be banished in disgrace to solitary confinement by civil society, as a disturber of the peace. May the United Nations Organization become the full and faithful expression of this international solidarity for peace, erasing from its institutions and its statutes every vestige of its origin which was of necessity a solidarity in war.

(3) The Christian will for peace is practical and realistic. Its immediate aim is to remove, or at least to mitigate, the causes of tension which aggravate the danger of war morally and materially.

These causes are among others, chiefly the comparative scantiness of national territory and the want of raw materials. So instead of sending foodstuffs at enormous expense, to refugee groups, crowded into the best place available why not facilitate the emigration and immigration of families, directing them to countries where they will find more readily the food they need?

AND INSTEAD OF RESTRICTING production often for no just reason why not allow the people to produce to the limit of its normal capacity and so gain its daily bread as the reward of its own labor, rather than receive it as a gift? Finally instead of setting up barriers to prevent one another's access to raw materials, why not make their use and exchange free of all unnecessary restrictions, especially of those which created a harmful situation of economic disparity?

(4) The genuine Christian will for peace means strength, not weakness or weary resignation. It is completely one with the will for peace of Eternal and Almighty God.

Every war of aggression against these goods which the Divine plan for peace obliges men unconditionally to respect and guarantee and accordingly to protect and defend, is a sin, a crime, an outrage against the majesty of God, the Creator and Ordainer of the world.

A people threatened with an unjust aggression, or already its victim, may not remain passively indifferent, if it would think and act as befits Christians.

All the more does the solidarity of the family of nations forbid others to behave as mere spectators, in an attitude of apathetic neutrality. Who will ever measure the harm already

caused in the past by such indifference to war of aggression, which is quite alien to the Christian instinct? How much more recently has it brought home to the "great" and especially to the "small," the sense of their insecurity? Has it brought any advantage in recompense?

On the contrary: it has only reemphasized and encouraged the authors and fomenters of aggression, while it obliges the several peoples, left to themselves, to increase their armaments indefinitely.

Resting for support on God and on the order He established, the Christian will for peace is thus as strong as steel. Its temper is quite different from mere humanitarian sentiment, too often little more than a matter of pure impression, which detests war only because of its horrors and atrocities, its destruction and its aftermath, but not for the added reason of its injustice.

Such a sentiment, under a hedonistic and utilitarian disguise, and materialistic in its source, lacks the solid foundation of a strict and unqualified obligation.

It creates conditions which encourage the deception resulting from sterile compromise, the attempt to save oneself at the expense of others, and the success in every case of the aggressor.

THIS IS SO TRUE that neither the sole consideration of the sorrows and evils resulting from war, nor the careful weighing of the act against the advantage, avail to determine the final, whether it is morally licit, or even in certain concrete circumstances obligatory, (provided always there be solid probability of success) to repel an aggressor by force of arms.

One thing however, is certain: the commandment of peace is a matter of Divine law. Its purpose is the protection of the goods of humanity inasmuch as they are gifts of the Creator.

Among these goods some are of such importance for society, that it is perfectly lawful to defend them against unjust aggression. Their defense is even an obligation for the nations as a whole who have a duty not to abandon a nation that is attacked.

The certainty that this duty will not go unfulfilled will serve to discourage the aggressor and thus war will be avoided, or if the worst should come, its sufferings will at least be lessened.

IN THIS WAY, a better meaning is given to the dictum, "si vis pacem parvum bellum" as also to the phrase "peace at all costs." What really matters is the sincere and Christian will for peace.

We are compelled to it surely by the following considerations: The spectacle of the ruins of the great cities where the tombs of the victims of war are marshalled in endless ranks, the still unreturned longing of prisoners and refugees to return home, the anguish and dereliction of many political captives, worry of unjust persecution.

But we ought to find a still greater incentive in the potent word of the Divine commandment of peace—the gentle penetrating glance of the Divine Child in the manger.

Listen to the admirable words of the Apostle of the Gentiles ringing out in the night like the bells of Christmas—the he too was once a slave to petty prejudices of national and racial pride, laid low with him on the road to Damascus: "He (Christ Jesus) is our peace. He has made the two nations one... killing all enmities in His own person... coming. He announced the good tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and of peace to those who were near." (EP 22: 14-17)

Hence at the present hour, with all the power at Our command, We conjure you, beloved sons and daughters of the entire world, work for a peace that is in accordance with the Heart of the Redeemer.

TOGETHER WITH ALL UPRIGHT men who even though not fighting in your ranks, are united with you in the community of this ideal, work strenuously for the propagation and triumph of the Christian will for peace.

It is however with special confidence that We turn to Catholic youth. The unforgettable demonstrations of last September brought to Rome, in an unprecedented attitude, the representatives of Catholic youth from the most diverse nations. They gave unmistakable proof of their solidarity in the will for peace.

From the steps of Our patriarchal Vatican Basilica, on that occasion we blessed in peace the house of peace calculated to give to the youth of the Catholic world gathered around the cupola of St. Peter's a realization that they belong to one great family which embraces all its sons with equal love.

TO YOU, YOUNG PEOPLE, who bear in the flower of your age the responsibility of a tomorrow still so uncertain, We say: Be constant with building the peace on the rock of the Aeterna. That only by devotion and determination in making of the world a better place, over which the spirit and the promises of Bethlehem may reign serenely can afflicted humanity find peace at long last.

With this hope We invoke the protection of the Most High on all peoples and nations, especially on those who more than others are exposed to the threat of war, to unrest and to devastation.

And on this Christmas Eve, why should Our thought not turn back once again to the land of Palestine, where the Son of God made Man spent His earthly life to that Palestine where, even after the suspension of hostilities, there is still no sign of a secure basis for peace? May a happy solution be finally found which will mean help for so many thousand unhappy refugees and satisfy at the same time the anxious desires of all Christendom to see the Holy Places protected by making them freely accessible and safe, by means of the establishment of an international regime.

We implore likewise the Divine assistance on all who are pleased to dedicate themselves to safeguard and promote peace by their prayers and active cooperation: on the rulers of nations, on those who can exercise a real influence on public opinion, and in general on those from whom people are more disposed to welcome sincere invitations to peace; on the innumerable ranks of war victims and on the many others whose unhappy lot becomes each day more painful as the interminable waiting continues for a peace that is conclusive, morally just and lasting, and immune from all superstitions and prejudices of race and blood.

Meanwhile, counting on Divine Grace to realize these ardent desires, We lovingly impart to you all, beloved sons and daughters, who are united with Us in the bonds of faith and love, Our paternal Apostolic Benediction.

1949 For Peace

There is a definite need for 1949, the need for world peace. War is just as far from thoughts of peace as the nation that wages a hot war. Farther, perhaps, because the nation waging a hot war is fighting that peace may come. That nation that wages a cold war, does not want peace.

1949 for peace! The strongest movement for world peace bases its strength on the realization of the true nature of the Communists. No longer are men deceiving themselves, or pretending to deceive themselves, on the purposes of dictators in Russia. Peace is farthest from their desires. They abstain from hot war only because they are in no position to stand up against the strength of decent nations.

President Truman makes the statement that there are many in Russia who desire peace with the world. There is a ruling clique who give no opportunity to their peace-loving brethren to seek fulfillment of their desire for world-peace. Decent nations must be ready to give help to the peace-loving minority or majority in Russia that it may accomplish its ends.

Pope Pius XII speaks out clearly about the Chinese Communists, marking them as men dedicated to the destruction of all religion. Deceit is part of their strategy. They are to lie about their intentions, pretend to grant freedom of conscience and the practice of religion to any territory they seize. But their secret policy is all for paganism, for diabolism, all for the ruination of religion, the suppression of freedom of conscience.

Now we have the latest outrage of those enemies of God in the arrest on patently trumped up charges of Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary. Sixty-seven percent of Hungary's population is Catholic, practically all of it is Christian. Yet a communist government can go against all justice, all decency, all patriotic spirit, to do violence to Hungary's Man-of-God.

1949 for peace! Catholics will call upon the Immaculate Heart of Mary to use all her power of intercession with the Prince of Peace to overcome the aims of the evil one as put into motion by Communists everywhere. Only through prayer and the practical use of power can the world hope to make 1949 a real year for world-peace.

Temporalities OF 1949

The end of the Old and the beginning of the New Year remind us of the spiritual riches God gives us in time, riches that should be used purposefully for us the unfolding riches of eternity. Present men work while it is day, because they know the night is coming in which no man may work. Every grace of every day must be used well in accordance with the intention of the good God who asks us to use His gifts as the means of pleasing Him, as the means of sanctifying our souls, making them ready for Heaven.

In God's Church things temporal go along with things spiritual. God has placed the welfare of the Church in human hands. On the zeal and labors of the priesthood and the religious orders depend the salvation of our generation. On the generous cooperation of the laity with their clergy depends the outcome for the Church at large and for the individual soul.

God depends upon us to support the temporalities of His Church. It is a special blessing He gives us to invite our help, to look to us as His beloved children, to endow His Church with material goods to carry on its work. His work on the missions can go on only if we help: His work in the Church universal can proceed propitiously only when His children give gifts of money to underwrite all its activities: His work in the diocese and parish can have good success only when we help.

How Shall I Help In 1949?

Solomon of old could tell the Lord: "Gladly have I given all things to Thee." The Temple of God is with us as our parish church; we are not asked to give all we have for support of the Church in our diocese, in our parish. We are asked to give of what God has bestowed on us to support adequately His Church with all its interests. Our Bishop, our Pastor, guide us and direct us in spiritual things: they also lead us in providing monetary support for religion. To follow the Pastor in his zeal to provide well for all the parish needs is to please God, to gain merit for our souls, to help our own and our neighbor profit by God's Providence in His Church.

In 1949 every true Catholic will in his use of the enveloped sets, in his devoted attention to special collections, to pew rent, to diocesan collections, show his intention to give back to God some part of what God has given to him.

The Name Given By The Angel

There is no name under Heaven greater in power, fuller in meaning, sweeter on man's lips, than the Name of Jesus. It is a name not given by man, not chosen by the learned or the fairly or the devout among men on earth: it is a name that came from God the Father in Heaven. It is the name called by the Angel before Christ was conceived in the womb.

"The name given Him by the Angel." His name shall be called Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins. How that name has been to all of us the sacred symbol of all that Our Savior means to us; His grace, His redeeming power, His yearning for the salvation of every soul; His burning love for men; His zeal for their deliverance from sin and confinement in grace, all are summed up in the name of Jesus.

Men everywhere are joined together in one of the oldest societies of all time under the patronage of the Holy Name. On this Sunday in our Cathedral city members of this society assist at a Solemn Pontifical Mass to honor the Holy Name, to give public testimony of their devotion to the Name of their desire—o honor it as the Name given by the Angel. They are but a portion of the grand multitude that goes up from every Christian heart to Jesus, the Lord and Savior. May we ever use it in life as a protection against every evil may it be on our lips in the moment of death as the "only" Name given to men by God.

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