

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN'S
SOCIETY***

Wednesday, 12 October 1949

Beloved Sons, you have come to Rome on the occasion of the centenary of the establishment of your Society. You have come to Us, as to the common Father, to make Us participators in the joy of your celebration. Very rightly, you have judged that your visit would give Us a profound satisfaction. And, indeed, what more consoling sight could be offered to Our eyes than such a gathering of young men representing other thousands, who have formed themselves into a fraternal association, bound together by the strong bonds of Catholic faith and charity : a true bond of brothers in Christ. Be assured, then, Beloved Sons, you and those whom you represent, that the Pope enters very fully and very personally into the joy of your centenary celebrations. In speaking to you, We recall the words of Saint John : « I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one ... I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the words of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the world » (1 *Jo.* 2, 13-14).

By becoming members of this Catholic Young Men's Society, you ought to consider that you have dedicated yourselves in a very special way to the service of Christ. You wish to be known as a body of Catholic Young Men, professing to live as such, and to show to the world an example of a good and fervent Catholic life. Membership in such an organization as yours is thus a perpetual and daily renewed confession of faith.

The Church in England knows well how faithfully your Society has carried out the purpose for which it was founded how you have helped one another, by example and material encouragement, in the frequentation of the Sacraments and in all the practices of your holy religion; how, in the sphere of social action, many of your branches have, by means of debates, discussions and study-clubs, helped to spread a true understanding of the Church's teaching on social questions, so that you may justly boast that you have always been the faithful helpers of your clergy and Bishops.

In order that this good spirit may be preserved and increased among you, We ask all here present to carry Our words back to England as a special and paternal exhortation to all your branches. First, in the use of the Sacraments, you should aim at a more frequent reception than is imposed by your Rule of Monthly

Confession and Communion. Secondly, let the practice of Spiritual Exercises or Retreats be introduced, as far as possible, everywhere. This practice will deepen your faith and en-kindle your fervour. Lastly, besides the mutual aid which you afford to one another in the practice of a good Catholic life, members of your Society should be encouraged to do what they can, by word as well as by example to assist their less fervent Catholic brethren and also their non-Catholic friends and acquaintances, who may be desirous to know more about the true faith.

May your visit to Rome fill your hearts with consolation, and bring you many graces. In Rome you visit the Mother Church whose children are found the world over, which is also in a very particular way the Mother Church of British Christianity. It is the Church of Eleutherius, who sent the first missionaries to plant the faith in Roman Britain. It is the Church of Celestine who in the fifth century sent the great Saint Patrick to Ireland, to carry out there one of the most fruitful Apostolates in the whole history of the Church. It is the Church of Gregory the Great who at the end of the sixth century, dispatched St. Augustine to restore the faith of England, in the greater part of which it had been completely overthrown by wars and barbarian invasion. In Our person you see the successor of Eleutherius, Celestine and Gregory; and the same zeal and solicitude for the salvation of your valiant people, which inspired those Pontiffs of past ages, burns now in Our heart. We regard you, Beloved Sons, as Our instruments and helpers in that great redemptive work. Tell your associates, therefore, when you re-turn to England, that nothing is dearer to Our heart, than that your Society and similar organizations should increase and flourish and become powerful agencies in strengthening the faith preached by those first Apostles to your beloved England.

And, as a pledge of Our special and paternal affection, We impart to you, Beloved Sons, and to all the members of the Catholic Young Men's Society, to your directors and chaplains, and to all your families and those dear to you the Apostolic Benediction.

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