



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AGLI APPARTENENTI AL SEGRETARIATO INTERNAZIONALE
E AI SEGRETARIATI NAZIONALI DEI PAESI EUROPEI****

Sala del Concistoro - Lunedì, 19 novembre 1956

At a time when violent upheavals are shaking several nations and even endangering the peace of the world, you are gathered together in Rome, gentlemen, under the standard of the «European Campaign for Youth», to discuss the present political situation in Europe and to develop your program of activities for the coming year. Your presence here pleases Us deeply and provides precious consolation for Us after the bitter sorrows of these last weeks. Be welcome then, and believe that We count on your good will and on your efforts to overcome the obstacles which selfishness, indifference, or enmity are still setting up among European countries. We hope too that your International Commission for Undeveloped Countries will attain its end and succeed in forming a specialized group able to handle competently this problem, which is considered more urgent each day.

Young people who are today preparing to go into social life or beginning to assume responsibilities therein, sometimes feel overwhelmed by the magnitude and difficulty of the task that confronts them. The bitter antagonism of ideologies, the grouping of nations into hostile coalitions, the threat of bloody conflicts, is this not enough to crush every generous impulse, to frustrate self-confidence and the desire to accomplish useful and important work? Under these circumstances, how to work out plans for the future? How, above all, to set about the task resolutely and fervently?

Incidentally, recent technical achievements, such as the development of mechanical appliances and the utilization of atomic energy, now open up prospects which are almost limitless. One foresees rapid improvement in standards of living for many people, advancement in international, economic, and cultural relations, the establishment of necessary and productive cooperation among areas more closely dependent on each other. Never, it seems, has an appeal to the vital powers of youth made itself heard with so much urgency, nor sanctioned the hope for more astonishing results.

Less subject to the prejudices that the restrictions of the past have long fostered, young people long intensely to prepare a more united and brotherly Europe for the future. It is for them, therefore, to draw conclusions, in honesty and clarity, from the conditions in which they are now living, and to repel man's destructive philosophies without hesitation. It belongs to the present to build on a solid foundation, resolutely to seek and to do good everywhere, to fight for spiritual freedom, which is not disorder in thought and action, rebellion against authority, or denial of the soul and of God Himself, but rather means submission to the real laws of growth and of progress and humble and persistent search for authentic values capable of guiding and safeguarding the full development of the individual in national and international society. In a word, may they know how to discern in the Christian ideal of life the realization of the deepest desires of the human soul and the clearest proof of what is for mankind the only road to salvation.

Truly, in spite of the darkness that obscures the future, and many reasons for faltering and mistrust, a splendid road is opening up for young people eager to build a better world. So We do not doubt, beloved sons, that your meeting brings to light new reasons for optimism and gives an impetus to an enlightened movement, expedient for the peace of the world and for the union of European nations.

As a pledge of the divine favors that We fervently call down upon you and all your dear ones, We grant you heartily Our paternal Apostolic Benediction.

**The Pope Speaks*, vol.3 n°4 p.359-360.