



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN XXIII
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
ORGANIZED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF JURISTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

4 April 1962

Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that We welcome here the participants of the European Conference organized by the Special Committee for World Peace through Law. We appreciate the interest that inspires you, gentlemen, to advocate the use of law for good relations among the nations. We heartily congratulate you for this influence on public opinion, guided so zealously by this association. «The Church,» We said in the Christmas message of 1959, «looks favorably upon all sincere undertakings that can spare humanity further sorrow, further slaughter, further immeasurable destruction» (AAS 52 (1960) 31).

This unchanging attitude of the Church toward true peace permeates the teachings of the Roman Pontiffs. How can We not recall in particular the numerous and precise statements of Our immediate Predecessor on the subject of international order? Harmony among nations, Pius XII said over and over, like harmony among persons, cannot be administered by force, but must be regulated by juridical standards conformed to reason and established on universal and unchanging moral principles, without which peace cannot reign among nations.

That is why it is fitting to insist so much, as you suggest in your meetings, on the observance of international laws and on the mediating function of courts of justice. *Pax orbis ex jure* [The peace of the world arises from law].

Our message cited above continues in the same vein: «It is necessary, therefore, to get rid of certain erroneous notions – the myth of force, of nationalism, or of anything else that vitiates the ordinary life of the people – and to establish peace on moral principles according to the teaching of

right reason and Christian doctrine. «But, beside truth, and illumined by it, justice must advance. It suppresses the causes for conflict and for war, resolves differences, determines obligations, defines duties, satisfies the rights of each party» (AAS 52 (1960) 29).

Such a determination to respect the rights of persons and of different communities animates the social teaching of the Church. And everyone who seeks to investigate the scope of it and to conform his conduct to it becomes familiar with the practice of civic and social virtues. He is even called upon to put at the disinterested service of human society all the gifts that nature has bestowed on him: intelligence, organizational ability, personal magnetism, material prosperity.

Permit Us to have you observe: «True peace comes only from God. It has only one name: the peace of Christ. It has only one aspect: the one that Christ has given to it. In order to forestall in some way man's counterfeit peace, He emphasizes: «Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you (John 14, 27)» (AAS 52 (1960) 28).

So We feel it a duty to invite you to complete your works by a humble and persevering invocation to Divine Providence, so that peace, the fruit of justice, may always be more abundantly granted to men! May help from heaven support your peaceful beginnings and crown them with success!

But these prayers will be more potent if they go forth from a heart itself full of peace, grounded in a loving and filial dependence on the will of God and careful to observe the divine laws with fidelity; from a heart desirous of communicating its dispositions and of thus meriting the sweet approval of the Lord Jesus: *Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam. Beati pacifici* [Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice. Blessed are the peacemakers.] (Matt. 5, 6, and 9).

We do not doubt that each one of you is convinced of the interior necessity of uniting personal serenity and social peace with international accord. In this confidence, We gladly implore a great shower of divine blessings upon your generous efforts, upon your persons, and upon those who are dear to you.

**The Pope Speaks*, vol. 8 n°1 p. 75-76.