



The Holy See

*RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO XII ALL'EPISCOPATO E AI FEDELI DEL SUD AFRICA**

Domenica, 29 aprile 1951

In the liturgical office of today, the fifth Sunday after Easter, holy Mother Church recalls the opening chapter of a letter that St. Peter wrote to the faithful of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. How the great soul of that Prince of the Apostles must have thrilled with consolation and a just pride as he contemplated the rapid spread of the Gospel of his divine and loved Master! Did his thoughts go back to those peaceful days of Capharnaum and the lake of Galilee, when Jesus told him and his fellow-fishermen to launch out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch; and they took a great quantity of fish, so that the net was near breaking (*Luc. 5, 4-6*). « Then Jesus said to Peter: Do not be afraid; henceforth thou shalt be a fisher of men » (*ibid. o*). Did he remember his first sermon preached in Jerusalem shortly after the resurrection of Christ? « About three thousand souls were won for the Lord that day » (*Act. 2, 41*). Now he can address churches flourishing up and down the countries of Asia and Greece, and his own episcopal See he will establish in Rome, the very centre and heart of the world empire.

Time and again that joy experienced by the first Vicar of Christ has found echo in the hearts of his successors in Rome, when Patrick brought Ireland into the fold of the divine Shepherd, Augustine brought England, Boniface Germany, Cyril and Methodius the nation of the Slays; and the sheer joy that penetrates Our own soul today is not unlike theirs, as We address you, Venerable Brothers and beloved children gathered to celebrate the erection of the Hierarchy in the Union of South Africa.

Oh, many decades have passed since the Church was established in your vast and rich country; it is almost a century and a half since Mass was first offered in Cape Town, and your revered cathedral of St. Mary has witnessed the growth of a hundred years. But today the Church in the Union of South Africa has come of age. Its growth has been steady, solid and secure. Schools are flourishing; you have your Catholic press and seminary; there are hospitals and orphanages for

the suffering and needy members of the Body of Christ. All praise to the intrepid missionaries, whose courage and determination despite formidable obstacles and repeated rebuffs have written a glorious page in the annals of South Africa. We cannot refrain from mentioning with a special sense of regard and gratitude the Sisters, native and foreign, who have been of such incalculable assistance to the clergy in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

If it is right to look back today and rejoice in the achievements of the past, it is of paramount importance to study prayerfully, with devout and eager zeal the bright vision of limitless progress that unfolds before you. This, We are sure, is the daily concern of your Bishops; and no one will realize more clearly and more emphatically than they that, if the Church in South Africa is to meet the challenge of the future successfully, there must be a marked increase in the number of native clergy. That means that the native Catholic home must be permeated by a strong faith, a high esteem of the priesthood, a consciousness of the exalted privilege and honour that come to any family, when God calls one of its sons to the service of the altar. Parents imbued with such a spirit will not be wanting in generosity to give of their best to the Lord of the harvest, whose loving heart grieves for lack of helpers to gather it in. When the Church is served and governed by priests and bishops of your own nation, thoroughly trained in the sacred sciences and deeply grounded in the spiritual life, then will the hopes and prayers of the early missionaries be fulfilled; then their long years of toil and sacrifice amid perils and privations, will have received a recompense a hundred-fold.

That God, in His boundless love for the Church in South Africa, may hasten that day, We raise a fervent prayer to Mary, Queen of the Apostles; while with paternal affection We impart to you, Venerable Brothers and to your dear flocks, the Apostolic Benediction.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XIII,*

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