



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AD UN GRUPPO DI APPARTENENTI AL
«CANADIAN WOMEN'S PRESS CLUB»****

Sala del Concistoro - Sabato, 2 luglio 1955

Not least among the many claims of your country to Our paternal regard, members of the Canadian Women's Press Club, is the consistently high moral tone you are striving to achieve and maintain within the noble profession to which your lives are dedicated. These recent contacts with your European colleagues in the delicate field of mass communications will have served to deepen, We trust, your conviction that a free press must justify its pretention to public acclaim by its unfeigned esteem for moral values, rather than by its concern for the technical perfection of its product.

That is in no way to disparage the stubborn requirements of art—and even of finance—bound up with the business of transmitting truth, goodness and beauty from person to person through the printed word and image. It is merely to bear prudently in mind that publishing and journalism are much more than a business or trade. As We have had frequent occasion to note before, books and magazines and newspapers render today — to family, Church and State alike — an all but indispensable service. Only let it be kept alert to the sense of human solidarity in joy and pain, and free of moral taint at its source — that is, the mind and heart of author, reporter and editor,—and you need not hesitate to call it a spiritual service, the substance of a providential career or vocation to be ranged proudly in line with the teacher's « art of arts » (S Gregor. Nazianz. *Or. II Apologetica*, n. 16 - *Migne PG*, t. 35, col. 425).

And will not most of your menfolk be disposed to agree that the mind and heart of a woman, when properly prepared, are likely to be acutely sensitive to this need for moral integrity in what one writes for the information, instruction, entertainment of the public? Surely she will be among the first to mark the difference between honest interpretation of the news and the subtly printed lie or cruel insinuation; between engaging and provocative prose or picture; between the serene

chronicle of pleasant or unpleasant fact and gossip more or less malicious. Who could be better placed than she, at home or at the office, to appreciate, that social disease and delinquency may « circulate » as readily, alas!, from the editor's chair, from the city desk, from the fashion page or woman's forum, from the popular novel and the poisoned feature story, as the light of truth and the warmth of human sympathy and friendship? Who better than she is equipped, by nature and grace, to sense that danger and avert that disaster?

Your most welcome visit to Eternal Rome, Ladies of the Press, coincides with the Church's feast of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. The everheartening strains of her *Magnificat* (*Luc.* 1, 46-55) remind Us once more that the restoration of a high moral tone to the life, labour and love of the human family through the merits of Our Lord and Saviour was first and forever accomplished with the aid of a woman, ever humbly alert to the responsibilities of her maternal mission among the children of men. May the blessing of the Son of God, through the intercession of His immaculate Mother, attend your every personal or collective effort to respect and serve His image in your readers, and speed the coming of His Kingdom in the hearts of all His people.

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