



The Holy See

***DISCORSO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AD UN GRUPPO DE L'«APOSTOLATO DEL MARE»****

Venerdì, 7 settembre 1956

When We were informed that you had travelled all the way from Liverpool to offer Us a token of your filial devotion in the form of a spiritual bouquet, it became very difficult indeed for Us to deny the request of your Port Chaplain to receive your group. Propitious circumstances have made it possible and We are happy thus to be able to express to you personally Our grateful appreciation. It is a work of artistic beauty you are presenting to Us and the richness of its spiritual significance stirs Our paternal heart deeply.

Also it is a gratifying occasion for Us to add a word of praise and encouragement for the Apostleship of the Sea to which you are dedicated. No one today could fail to see what a crying need there was for such an organization as yours to care effectively for the spiritual needs of those who go down to the seas. This has been made manifest not only by the increasing response given to the appeal of this apostleship, but also and especially by the way seamen the world over have contributed to its development. It is little more than thirty years ago (1922) that Our predecessor approved the Statutes of your Organization, and in doing so expressed the hope and desire that the Apostleship of the Sea be actuated in centres placed in all the continents of the world. In that year there were twelve centres in six countries; today there are almost eighty in seventeen countries. To emphasize Our own personal interest in your Apostleship We entrusted its protection and encouragement to the high authority of the Consistorial Congregation, thus giving it a Roman seal, a seal of catholicity, universality.

We are much consoled to learn how seamen reaching the world's ports are becoming accustomed to look for the help you are prepared to give them. That help is and will always remain primarily spiritual. It is your love of God that is your driving force in this apostleship; and you have been taught and are intimately conscious that love of one's neighbour is inextricably bound up with love of God. God did not create a human family made up of segregated, dissociated, mutually

independent members. No; He would have them all united by the bond of total love of Him and consequent self-dedication to assisting each other to maintain that bond intact. How better could you show your love for your neighbour than by striving to procure for him what is his greatest boon, love of His Lord and Creator.

Your interest is directed to helping a particular group, whose spiritual needs are pressing and so often disregarded. There are peculiar difficulties inherent in their profession, and you want to lessen those difficulties and make it easier for them to come to God and to continue united to God through the sanctifying grace of His Holy Spirit, whether on board ship or in their ports of call. Besides offering them the spiritual benefits of Religion, you extend your apostleship to social service; and you do well. If only those good men could find a real home everywhere! You can offer merely a substitute for the restful, soothing affection of a family hearth; but it is a substitute that is so, so necessary. The Report of Atlantic House, your own centre at Liverpool, shows what outstanding progress you have been steadily making in this regard. We congratulate you on it; and We pray that God may be pleased to transform such service into a golden key in your hands to open the souls of more and more men to the knowledge of Him, « who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all » (*Rom. 8, 32*).

That Our good wishes may bear more abundant and richer fruit, We impart to you, to your Port Chaplains and to all members of the Committees of Atlantic House, the Apostolic Benediction as a pledge of heavenly graces.

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

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