

Pius XII

The Pope of Peace

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IN the war years, later, and most of all during the Holy Year of 1950, thousands upon thousands of men and women of all nations have visited Pope Pius XII at the Vatican and all — Catholics, other Christians, and non-Christians alike — have brought away a vital impression of the chief bishop of Christendom. All recognized in him the man of God; most sensed that he is indeed the key-man of the Church of Christ: and in the eyes of a very great number, he personified the desire for peace latent in the heart of man.

It is, perhaps, as 'the Pope of Peace' that Pius XII will go down to history, for no one of his recent predecessors in the Chair of Saint Peter has stood out in the white light of modern publicity and so obviously embodied the idea of peace, which Jesus Christ described when He said: "Peace is My bequest to you, the peace which I give you is Mine to give. I do not give peace as the world gives it." To proclaim by words and deeds, and most of all by his prayers, that the peace of Christ is the sole antidote to the storms and upheavals of the past ten years or so has been the outstanding achievement of the leader raised by God to be His Vicar in this war ravaged generation. No other world-leader has survived the two great wars with an enhanced reputation and ever-widening fame. This fact is recognized by the fifty States — many of them with only a tiny proportion of Catholics in their population — who maintain ambassadors and ministers in Rome solely engaged in transactions with the Holy See. The like has never been known in the history of the Church.

Before attempting to relate the details of the present Pope's career, it will be as well to consider what the position he holds really is. As Bishop of Rome he is the 254th successor of Saint Peter in an unbroken continuity lasting nearly 2,000 years; as Pope he is spiritual Father of 400,000,000, scattered all over the world; as Vicar of Christ he plans and puts into operation the main lines of the policy and progress of some 1,200 bishops who are the successors of the Twelve Apostles and look to him for a lead much as their predecessors looked to Saint Peter. This vast society — the greatest and most unanimous block of men and women in the world — is held together, not by force or any material compulsion, but by a moral and spiritual bond, stronger than all others because independent of them, namely: love for, confidence in, and service of Jesus, the Son of God made Man, whose Vicar on earth today is Pius XII.

This unique society, the Church, with Christ its Head united to everyone of its members through the Holy Spirit "whose bond is peace", inevitably is concerned with such matters as the best form of government, or justice as between labour and capital, since its members are also citizens and have to earn their living, but these are incidental to two main questions: the faithful service of God and true friendship for our neighbour. Hence, the primary duty of a Pope is to preach truth and teach goodness. We shall see that the words 'justice' and 'peace' are the most favoured in the vocabulary of EUGENIO MARIA GIUSEPPE GIOVANNI PACELLI, Who exchanged his surname, thought to be

made up of *pax and caeli* (peace of heaven), for that of Pius XII on his election in 1939 and at the same time chose for his motto *Opus Justitiae Pax* — The Work of Justice is Peace.

A ROMAN UPBRINGING.

The future Pope was born in Rome on March 2nd, 1876, within a short distance of the Vatican. It was only six years earlier that Rome had finally been wrenched by the anti-clericals from the control of the Popes who had been its civil as well as religious rulers for centuries. His father was a lawyer whose work took him to the Vatican, and also involved him in the constitution of the new Italian nation. He was respected by both parties. His mother, also a Roman, was a woman of deep piety, who did much to foster the vocation of her delicate but bright-eyed and studious younger son to the priesthood. His path was not easy; for the Jesuits had been turned out of their college near his home, but Eugenio and his brother were so well-grounded in their religion that they were allowed to go to the new secularized college; and so, far from suffering any harm, they were looked up to by their companions as boys who were a credit to their faith. His ardent championship of Saint Augustine as a great thinker won for the younger Pacelli a reputation for independence of mind, which reinforced his consistent lead in class-work.

On leaving school, his father put his name down for the secular university, but there was a change of plan. Eugenio, having decided to study theology rather than law, was admitted to the famous Capranica Seminary, only to find that his health failed.

Fortunately, he was allowed to attend the courses while living at home with his family, and so enjoyed the care and help of home life, which he has so often praised in later years.

Ordained priest on the last Easter of the old century, in 1899 he became almost at once a minor official in the Vatican department of Foreign Affairs, which he was never to leave and which he was destined to perfect, and then direct through the most crucial years of an exceptionally troubled half-century. It is told of Eugenio Pacelli, as of so many other priests destined to higher duties, that he has always wished to dedicate himself to pastoral work. In the early years he delighted to hear confessions; in the Chiesa Nuova (the New Church), the church of Saint Philip Neri close to his old home, may be seen the confessional to which penitents of Don Eugenio crowded in the early days. The story is also told of the willingness with which Pius XII drew aside a simple soldier who had asked him to hear his confession during a wartime audience. In the usual Italian fashion, the brief dialogue was concluded in the corner of the vast hall and it was difficult to tell which of the two was the happier for the experience.

THE DIPLOMAT.

This incident serves to indicate the discipline and self-sacrifice entailed by the choice of a career in one of the specialized branches of the Church's government. Inevitably, the diplomatic branch precludes much direct contact with souls, but only by thus forgoing the normal work of parish priests can the comparatively small number of specialists carry out the delicate and responsible tasks, which may affect the welfare of thousands of souls. If the Pope of Peace has been able to accomplish so much for the Church, it is in great part due to the thoroughness with which he devoted himself to his duties as a diplomat and a statesman.

The future Cardinal Gasparri soon showed his appreciation of the thorough junior secretary and sent him to London in 1901 for the funeral of Queen Victoria. This was the first of many diplomatic missions undertaken by the most travelled of modern Popes, who likes to recall that he was also in

England for the Eucharistic Congress of 1908, and again for the coronation of King George V three years later. When Cardinal Gasparri became Secretary of State to Pope Benedict XV at the outbreak of the First World War, he took with him as assistant Monsignor Pacelli and placed him in charge of the rapidly expanding war-relief services of the Vatican. Gathering together a special staff, he built up an information service for tracing the missing, on both sides of the trenches, and the exchange of wounded prisoners which was only to be surpassed in efficiency and renown, by the similar agency set up during the late war of 1939-1945.

The organization was working at high pressure when, in the spring of 1917, Monsignor Pacelli was appointed the Pope's Nuncio at Munich and consecrated 'Archbishop of Sardis'. The move was part of the famous attempt of Benedict XV to bring about peace among the belligerents. Within a week of his arrival in Germany, the Nuncio made his way to Berlin and submitted to the Kaiser the proposals worked out by the Pope. It was a forlorn hope and nothing came of it, but the letter remains a proof of the far-sightedness of the Holy See, for it could, with appropriate amendments, have been useful even at the end of the second world conflagration. Despite the failure of this initial task, Monsignor Pacelli was to remain in Germany for twelve years. These showed him at close quarters the aftermath of war and gave him an unequalled mastery of German and mid-European affairs which made him the obvious successor to Cardinal Gasparri when he retired in 1930. He had watched the fall of Wilhelm II and the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. He had even had to repel a squad of Brown-shirts from his own house in Munich, at one point.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

Naturally, there was much curiosity shown in Rome when the experienced diplomat who had been away so long returned to become the principal assistant to Pope Pius XI. At the age of 53 the tall, distinguished-looking, very hard-working Cardinal, who daily took an afternoon walk accompanied by a secretary in the principal public park, soon became a well-loved figure. As a young man he had tried to make up for the fact that his work tied him to an office-desk by becoming chaplain to a school run by the Sisters of the Assumption; now that he had to contend with the rising power of Nazism in Germany, of Fascism in Italy, and of Communism in various parts of the world, he delighted to preach to the Roman throngs those long, carefully prepared and somewhat formal sermons which rivalled the orations of Classic times and won him the love of his more pious fellow-citizens, who never ceased to proclaim the fact that he is a true Roman, a Roman from Rome, Romano di Roma.

One of the first indications that the new Secretary of State was a match for the most up to date of his opponents was the way chosen to bring to a head the protracted negotiations with the Fascists over the Catholic youth associations. Despite the freedom left to them by the concordat drawn up at the time of the settlement of the Lateran Treaty, which put an end to the tension between Church and State in Italy in 1929, pressure had been brought to bear on them by the more militant wings of the Fascist Party. Protests in the highest quarters had been consistently disregarded when, on July 5th, 1931, the Pope's protest — in the form of the letter *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* — which has been described as one of the major encyclicals of his reign — appeared simultaneously in all the principal newspapers of Europe as well as the *Osservatore Romano*. It had been carried to them in an airplane by an American priest then working in the Secretariat of State, Monsignor Spellman, now the Cardinal Archbishop of New York.

AN UNTIRING WORKER.

Six years were to go by before another victory of the same order was to be won against the twin giants of totalitarianism. Both Communism and Nazism were denounced in no uncertain tones by the ageing Pope in two encyclicals issued within a few days of each other in March 1937: *Mit Brennender Sorge* and *Divini Illius Magistri*. Although both personally compiled by the doughty Pius XI, he was certainly greatly helped by his German expert who had also made a first-hand study of Communism while in Berlin. Neither of these forthright denunciations was launched before every chance of achieving a *modus vivendi* had been tried on the Catholic side. Did not the Pope say he would dine with the Devil himself rather than give up all hope? Meanwhile, his Secretary of State drew up concordat after concordat in the hope of securing at least the minimum of religious freedom in country after country. This was the main work of the Vatican in the years between the wars, to secure from nations some legal recognition of the rights to freedom of worship and of education, which are indispensable for the religious life of ordinary men and women of every country.

These basic rights, which alone ensure the free practice of religion, were the first to be attacked by the totalitarians, but others were to share the same fate; the right to exchange ideas, to travel, or even to hold meetings: each was gradually suppressed, and as each phase became apparent whether in Russia, or Mexico, or Germany, or Italy, appropriate countermoves were made at the Vatican. And all this time the Pope was preaching, and his Secretary was promoting, that Catholic Action which was to enlist lay-folk, men and women, boys and girls, to be apostles of their own fellows — whether in factory or farm, regiment or college, trade union or youth club.

As the signs of the inevitable clash of arms became more obvious to the well-informed observers in the Vatican, their activities in the cause of peace were redoubled. Inevitably, the brunt of this work fell on the Secretary of State, and it was undoubtedly as part of his indefatigable search for long-term agreement that Cardinal Pacelli made several foreign visits in the pre-war years: he went as the Pope's Delegate to South America for the Eucharistic Congress in 1934, more than once to France, and last of all to Hungary in 1938, on the eve of the war. But it was his trip to the United States in 1936 which was perhaps the most fruitful, as well as the most publicized. The Cardinal travelled long distances by plane, surprised journalists by anticipating their questions, and visited President Roosevelt. All these contacts were to prove invaluable when his election to the Papacy and the outbreak of war soon afterwards put an end to his foreign travel for good.

The last year of peace was one of unceasing anxiety; as the relentless march of the Nazi forces into Austria and Czechoslovakia necessitated new measures to safeguard Catholic liberties, these earned for the Secretary of State the virulent hatred of the Nazi Party-controlled press and wireless. A new bishop was established in Berlin, however, and Catholic organization was tightened-up to withstand the effects of bogus trials of priests and religious, on financial and other charges. But all the time there was a ceaseless watch kept on the Russian agents too, and on the deteriorating situation in Fascist Italy. All these anxieties undoubtedly contributed to shortening the life of Pope Pius XI, who died on February 10th, 1939.

ELECTED POPE.

Because an ancient custom made it unlikely for a Secretary of State to succeed the Pope he had served, many, including Cardinal Pacelli, began to look for a suitable candidate among the other Cardinals; but once these were all assembled, it soon became clear that there was no choice.

Within a short time of the closing of the doors of the conclave Cardinal Pacelli was unanimously elected to succeed Saint Peter on March 2nd, 1939 — his sixty-third birthday. Not only the Roman crowds, who were delirious in their joy, not only Catholics all over the world, but also many statesmen who knew and trusted the judgement of the late Secretary of State were happy to think that his policy and experience would be perpetuated in the reign of Pius XII.

His first word was of peace, and it became the continuous concern of the new Pope to stave off the outbreak of war, by all means in his power during the short half-year which preceded the German attack on Poland. Reports of his speeches were banned in Germany; at Easter, Mussolini invaded the small kingdom of Albania; every day the prospect grew darker. The Pope sent his successor as Nuncio in Germany to visit Hitler at Berchtesgaden and it was said that he recommended a Five-Power conference. Because he confined himself to basic moral considerations, the Pope's efforts once again came to nothing. The statesmen in Paris, London, Berlin and Rome would not listen, but at least one commentator has said: "In the light of subsequent events this seems to be one of the world's greatest tragedies".

During the last weeks of that fateful summer, as hopes of peace receded, the new Pope was busy composing his first encyclical letter, which traditionally consists of a statement of his programme and policy. The pressure of relief work delayed it so that it was not issued until more than six weeks of warfare had confronted the world with the ruthless might of Nazism and the duplicity of the Communist leaders in the annihilation of Poland. Darkness over the Earth, (*Summi Pontificatus* 'On the Supreme Pontificate', is its Latin title) as it is known in England, is in many ways the best introduction to the mind and spirit of the great neutral who raised his voice from the Vatican hill, 'not only to protest at the exorbitant self-importance of modern States', but to demand consideration for the innocent multitudes helplessly condemned to suffer, and to suggest from the very earliest days that the only sound basis for peace-treaties was the Natural Law implanted by God in the heart of man. It was, he said, "the denial and rejection of this universal norm of morality in both individual and social relations", which lay at the root of international conflicts. Foreseeing a long-drawn-out conflict, the Pope, after reviewing the potentialities for good in the basic social units of family and nation, added: "Every nation has its own genius, its own qualities, springing from the hidden roots of its being", and insisted that the future world order must rest on the "unshakable foundation of Natural Law and Divine revelation" which the Catholic Church ceaselessly proclaims in God's name to all men.

THE POPE'S LONG DAY.

The pressure of world events should not be allowed to obscure for a moment the clear view of the regular, ascetically simple, and arduous life led by the chief pastor of the flock of Christ, who is also sometimes called the servant of the servants of God. The splendid dress and ceremonial, which surround the Pope on solemn occasions, has no part in his private life, which begins at 6.30 and ends long after midnight, as many Romans know who watch the lighted windows on the top floor of the Vatican palace. After a simple Low Mass celebrated in his private chapel with the minimum of ceremony, a slight continental breakfast follows, and then punctually at 9 every morning Pius XII is at his desk ready for the first of the long series of visitors, who receive courteous and detailed attention right up to, and often beyond, midday. These include the cardinals who are entrusted with various departments of the Church's administration, ambassadors of foreign powers, bishops from every part of the globe, heads of religious orders, and distinguished men and women. Later there are the public audiences given to groups of people who come to ask for a blessing. It is here that the

Pope may really be seen as their common Father by privileged members of his heterogeneous flock asking questions, using one of the six or seven languages he speaks fluently, giving a present to a child or a newly-wed couple or taking an interest in the workmanship of some simple object presented to him. During the Holy Year of 1950, this time is given over to the crowded public audiences, which muster many thousands each week in Saint Peter's.

After a frugal luncheon, always eaten hermit-like on his own, and a well-deserved siesta, there is time for reading before the afternoon walk which is taken in all weathers in the Vatican gardens. From six till eight, the morning's business is reviewed. After supper, also taken in strict privacy, Pius XII has been known to say: "Now I can settle down to my real day's work".

Certainly, there is time, now that the interruptions are at an end, for the undisturbed study and prayer, which is at the root of his work for justice and peace. In solitude, the Pilot plots the course Peter's Ship must steer through the troubled waters of the mid-twentieth century. Sifting the mass of first-hand information which reaches the Vatican every day is not unlike studying the weather-forecast, and in this the many experts gathered round him play their part, but in all major decisions the last word rests with the Supreme Pontiff, for he alone has the decisive power to bridge earth and heaven, to bind, and to loose.

Those exact phrases, and apt quotations, from the pagan classics as well as the Christian Fathers, are all worked-out meticulously during the silent hours and very often memorized so that the Holy Father seldom refers to his notes in the various addresses which he makes, whether it be to theologians or sportsmen, to scientists or to children. All alike sense the care that has gone into their preparation, and the genuine concern for their interests. This apostolate of the spoken word is only one more proof of that adaptability, which is the wonder of all his hearers, for each is convinced that he is being addressed personally. Pius XII is indeed in the direct line of Saint Paul as well as Saint Peter, for he makes himself deliberately "all things to all men".

THE WAR YEARS.

This strict routine was adhered to every day throughout the war years, without even the annual stay at Castel Gandolfo in the summer, and without any form of heating in the winter. It seemed as though the worry and the work were all-absorbing. Certainly, there was plenty of both, for of course there were Catholics on either side of the battle lines, and, as in the first war it had helped to organize war relief, so now, remembering the experience, the neutral Vatican became the main clearinghouse, not only for information about the missing, wounded, and prisoners, but for relief to civilians as well as to troops. The Vatican enquiry service had agents in all parts the world and won the gratitude of millions in all nations for its ceaseless activity. Using couriers, post, telegraph, air mail and radio, it dealt with some five and a half million messages in all. But there was also the question of food and clothing, which has continued to be a major problem until today; on this millions of pounds were spent, so that at one time it was rumoured that the Vatican Treasury was overdrawn. Happily, many generous donations of money and goods in kind have averted this crisis, but it is a too little known fact that the enormous strain of this generous material aid caused serious anxiety.

If the planning of these corporal works of mercy was appreciated by the millions directly concerned, many more millions were to be heartened by the pacific messages and constructive documents which at intervals punctuated the din of battle. Starting on the first Christmas Eve of the

war, a magnificent series of addresses gave a most inspiring lead to all Christians and, since they stated eternal truths, won for the Holy Father the respect of many not of his flock.

PREPARING FOR PEACE.

The best-known message was that broadcast on December 24th, 1939, when the Pope outlined five prerequisites for peace: recognition of national independence, progressive disarmament, international supervision, freedom for minority groups, and a generous rather than legalistic interpretation based on the "universal charity which is the expression of the Christian ideal". In England, these five points were taken up very widely by leaders of every denomination as a result of a joint letter to *The Times* the following year which was signed by Cardinal Hinsley, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury and others. As the long years of war passed, the Holy Father added to and amplified his suggestions for the new order, which was to emerge so slowly and painfully out of the chaos that gradually engulfed the greater part of the earth.

When the Nazi armies turned West and almost overran the whole of Europe, Mussolini belligerently involved Italy in the disaster in June 1940, and overnight the tiny Vatican State, occupying a few acres in the centre of Rome, found itself in a state of siege; but while both sides found strict neutrality difficult to preserve, it was in the main scrupulously maintained.

The Allied diplomats were given accommodation within the Vatican, and through them contact was preserved with the outer world; among them were the personal representative of President Roosevelt, the English Minister to the Holy See and the Polish Ambassador.

In addition to the immediate cares arising directly out of the spread of hostilities to Africa, Asia and the Pacific which necessitated a constant extension of departments to deal with chaplains, special missionary personnel, and the intricacies of diplomatic representation — the Pope found time to work out in detail certain long-term plans which he embodied in a series of documents which he invariably typed on his own machine.

THE GREAT ENCYCLICALS.

Of these masterly encyclical letters, which must be read in full to obtain a clear idea of the mind of Pius XII, one is devoted to promoting the study of the Bible, (*Divino afflante Spiritu*) another to relations with the Eastern Churches (*Orientalis Ecclesiae*), another, which may prove the most far-reaching of the Pope's letters, is his re-statement of the age-old doctrine that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ, (*Mystici corporis Christi*) while a fourth, not issued until after the end of the war, reviews the basic elements of Christian Worship (*Mediator Dei*).

The accent throughout is vigorous, encouraging, forward-looking, and goes a long way to account for the vitality and recuperative power shown by Catholics in various parts of the world since the war, despite the demoralizing effects of that time and the wicked opposition still suffered in many quarters.

The teaching about the layman's responsibility, which is today clearer than ever, has been reinforced by such statements as this:

Our Saviour wants to be helped by the members of His Mystical Body in carrying out the work of the Redemption... He has bestowed its boundless treasures upon the Church without any co-operation on her part, but in their distribution, He not only shares the work with His Church, but wills it to arise in a certain fashion out of her labour. This is truly a tremendous mystery, that the

salvation of many souls depends upon the prayers and voluntary mortifications offered for that intention by members of the Church.

In the sphere of moral behaviour, the Pope has unceasingly branded the folly of divorcing public morality from the laws, which govern private lives. But he has no less forcibly extolled the nobler functions of the State, which consist, according to him, in restraining or encouraging the activities of citizens so as to promote the common good of society. To bring this about, he has recommended a corporate and law-abiding spirit which gives to public life a legal structure that is "at once spiritual and ethical, earnest and profound, instinct with the warmth of true humanity, and lit with the light of Christian faith". It is impossible to dispute that this programme, were it adhered to, would unfailingly bring about an atmosphere where, "despite the failings, obstacles and harshness which earthly life presents, brotherly intercourse becomes possible."

Here it should be mentioned that in bringing about this much-desired end, the Pope has repeatedly made it plain that he counts on the moral virtues and spiritual resources of Catholic womanhood. In a famous address on their duties in social and political spheres, Pius XII has made it plain that he wishes women to take their place beside their sons and husbands in the construction of the modern Christian society. In an age when the extension of education and right of franchise make the feminine role in so many public spheres a matter of necessity, it is good to be able to quote these words:

A wide field is open to woman's activity... To study and explain the place and function of woman in society, her rights and obligations: to be the guide and teacher of her sisters; to correct ideas, dispel prejudices, clear up confusions; to expound and spread the teaching of the Church... here is an immense and important task.

THE RELIEF OF ROME

When the victorious allies freed Rome on June 4th, 1944, the citizens and the troops were unanimous in ascribing to the Holy Father, who as Bishop of Rome had done everything possible to preserve it, the fact that the eternal city remained virtually unscathed. The Pope ascribed the near-miracle to the intercession of our Lady. Thereafter the gates of Saint Peter's Basilica were thrown open to the men and women of the armed forces of every nation for those memorable audiences, which are recalled with pleasure today in every corner of the earth. Direct contact with the Vicar of Christ gave to many an insight of the mysterious prolongation of the Redeemer's love for men, which is so impressively expressed in the person of Pius XII. Its effect on an English gunner caused him to blurt out: "Henry the Eighth robbed us of a Father".

But the war had yet another year to run in Europe and even longer in the Far East. Italy was to experience the 'red rake' almost from end to end, and, even after V-day, nation after nation in East Europe was to succumb to the ruthless invasion from the East.

It is easy to imagine the distress caused to the Pope by these calamities as his children in Christ were burnt to death at Nagasaki, tortured to death in Auschwitz and Belsen, starved and uprooted, when not killed, all over East Europe.

Yet by a supernatural alchemy, his suffering was transmuted into a courageous optimism, rooted in the serene confidence in God's Providence, which he never ceased to preach:

We shall never tire of saying to all our children, and to all who share their sentiments: Take courage; be of good heart. You are more numerous than would appear. You are powerful and solidly grounded in your eternal principles... God is with you.

TOWARDS CHRISTIAN UNITY.

From the first, a note of sympathy and understanding for non-Catholic Christians has been struck by Pius XII, and many have been the indications that the healing of the nine-hundred year-old breach between Latins and Greeks ranks very high among the wishes of the present Bishop of Rome. Certainly, it was unprecedented for the Patriarch of Constantinople to be invited to, and further to be represented at, his coronation, as it was for the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in the House of Lords soon afterwards, to say:

"There are some things more sacred than peace, and these must be defended. If His Holiness would give a lead, I can promise that the leaders of the Anglican, Orthodox, and Protestant Churches would give their support..."

Though nothing definite has come of the improved relations that have grown up, this may be put down to the immense amount of work that will have to be done to clear the psychological differences inherited from the past, rather than to any lack of goodwill.

Some progress in co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics was achieved in England during the war years, but this drawing-together has not been persevered in, as the practical difficulties emerged. Some of these were reviewed in a prolonged correspondence in the Press in November 1949, but the Instruction published by the Holy Office soon afterwards, and the welcome provided for non-Catholics in Rome during the Holy Year, will help to dispel any notion that the Holy Father has altered his mind. (The Holy Office Instruction is ON THE "ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT" - An Instruction of the Holy Office Addressed to the ordinaries of places, given December 20, 1949.)

PROGRESS IN THE MISSIONS.

In many respects, the most heartening as also the least well-publicized aspect of the vitality of the Church is that shown in its youngest and most far-flung growths, those missionary communities which, despite the anxiety caused by two world wars, have never ceased to grow and to enlist new nations and races in the ranks of Christ's brethren. Although they form as yet but a small part of the whole population, there are today flourishing native Catholic communities in India, China, Indonesia, and Africa, with their own priests, nuns, and often bishops too, which will enable them to preserve and continue the practice of their faith no matter what befalls the lands from which they received their early missionaries.

One of the first missionary acts of Pius XII's pontificate was the consecration in Saint Peter's in October 1939, on the morrow of the outbreak of war, of twelve new missionary bishops who included natives of China, Madagascar, India, and Uganda. Many others have followed since and it is interesting to note that the vicariates of West Africa have recently been granted full canonical status as bishoprics in much the same way as the full hierarchy was re-introduced to England a century ago; and a similar progress is expected in the near future in British East Africa (Kenya).

Writing later on this subject, Pius XII, after promising to continue the missionary policy of his predecessor, added these lines, which have inspired his subsequent policy and won him many hearts:

All those who enter the unity of the Catholic Church, whatever their race or their speech, may rest assured that they will have the full rights of sons in this house of our common Father, in which all live by the law and in the peace of Christ.

THE FIRST CONCLAVE.

The first post-war gathering of the College of Cardinals took place in February 1946 and enabled their number, which had been reduced to 30, to be raised to the maximum of 72. To this conclave were summoned 32 prelates from Armenia to Mozambique, from China to Australia.

If any proof were needed of the growth of the Church in the twentieth century, it was to be seen in the inclusion among the new cardinals of a Chinese, an Armenian, an Australian, two new Americans, and a Canadian in the splendid company, which also numbered as its youngest member Cardinal Griffin of Westminster, and Cardinal Mindszenty of Budapest, Hungary, so soon to suffer persecution.

For the ceremony of the conferring of the red hat, the nave of Saint Peter's was transformed into a papal chapel and those who were privileged to see the assembly, whether in person, or later on the news-reels, could not fail to detect here also an undercurrent of prudent provision against any eventuality in the inclusion among the company from which the next Pope must be elected of prelates who dwell so far apart on the map. Many had flown across half the globe, but none could confidently hope to avoid the death-dealing rays of the atom-bomb any more than the fury of Communist agents.

THE COMMUNIST CHALLENGE.

But the outstanding lesson to be derived from the gathering was the proof that the Catholic Church is spreading everywhere save only in lands under Communist control, and that it is today more universal and truly international than at any time in her history. The material and the spiritual, the unregenerate and the redeemed, are sharply confronted in the ever more sharply defined conflict between Rome and Moscow which is watched anxiously by so many today, and which has brought martyrdom to countless souls in the past three decades. There is nothing novel in the antagonism between the Church and the Atheism that is at the heart of pure Communism. It is the fact that this formal turning from God has, owing to a series of political events, come to be endowed with a political power more systematic and ruthless than anything since the Turks menaced Europe for generations, that preoccupies the watchers, in Europe and elsewhere. The world-wide aspirations of Communism, which give to it an importance quite separate from the success or failure of the Russian experiment, necessarily present a challenge to the Universal Church.

It is in this context that every move and every phase of the battle for civilization must be studied. The flimsy and cynical pretence that what was being attacked in Mexico, or Spain a few years ago before the Second World War, and in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Rumania today, is a political opposition deceives no one. The long list of heroes, headed by Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary and Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague, is made up of countless obscure men and women whose sole offence is a firm faith; this is a reminder that in no age has the Church been without her persecutions and her martyrs, but it also presents those of her members who are free with an enormous opportunity; for there is no chance for Communism to flourish where religion is pure and justice and charity prevail in society. Doubtless this is why, instead of decrying Communism, Pius XII scarcely ever mentions it and contents himself with praising the positive worth of family, State, and inter-State relations based on justice.

The fleeting successes of the Communist Party immediately after the war were enough to cause serious concern to the Italian Bishops, and it was with the full co-operation of the Vatican that every resource was mobilised to ensure a heavy poll in the crucial elections of April 1948. The resounding victory of the Christian Democrat Party has been an important factor in the recovery of Italy, and may encourage other Catholic nations similarly situated to embrace a more positive programme.

THE HOLY YEAR of 1950.

Meanwhile, the unprecedented crowds of pilgrims from all the free nations of the world who have responded to the invitation to come to Rome for the Jubilee Year of 1950 show that, deep down, there is in the hearts of the ordinary Christian man and woman an appetite for spiritual nourishment, which may also be described as a hunger for the 'peace of Christ'. For such is the sole reward of the long, and often costly, journey to the tombs of the Apostles and martyrs, but this need is nowhere so demonstrably felt as in the frequent and immensely crowded general audiences given to the multitudes by Pius XII several times a week in Saint Peter's, and frequently overflowing into the vast piazza outside.

The inspiring and heartening effects that these gatherings have — even the briefest and most fleeting sight of the Holy Father satisfies the ordinary pilgrim — must be experienced to be believed. Doubly blessed are those happy enough to be present at the Pope's Mass in Saint Peter's when, at the Elevation, the Vicar of Christ sacramentally lifts the Saviour of Mankind above the world.

There is doubtless nothing new in the enthusiasm of the faithful on such occasions; what is new, and likely to have untold effects, is the enormous number of pilgrims who despite every difficulty have managed to make the pilgrimage in this year. A grand total of a million all told was reached already by the end of April 1950.

In the special prayer he composed, with the intention that it should be recited during the Holy Year, the Pope dwelt at length on the subject he never tires of, and the following extract may be seen to reflect a very widespread need:

Give peace, O LORD, in our time, peace in our souls, peace in our families, peace in our land, peace among nations.

It was to this theme that His Holiness returned on Easter Sunday of 1950, when one of the densest gatherings in living memory crowded Saint Peter's and overflowed into the adjacent square. On this most solemn day in the Holy Year of Jubilee, which marked the turn of the twentieth century, the Vicar of Christ rehearsed the words our Lord spoke to the Apostles on the subject of peace. The following lines from his address may be considered to express the whole message of the Pope of Peace to the modern world:

If men would only decide to follow Christ, they could share that interior peace which is the perfection of joy, even though they have to endure affliction, persecution, or injustice at the hands of men... And if everyone were to attain this true interior peace — when hatreds are spent and passions calmed, where riches are distributed according to more equitable standards of justice and charity — then at last there will come about with unfailing certainty that peace which has been described as the harmony of order.

[In 2009, Pope Pius XII was ranked among the 'Venerable' of the Church.]
