

Dear John (letter continued)

We were stopping at Lourdes yesterday, John. Now today, the Feast of the Maternity, let's travel from Lourdes over to the Dome that has been put over the Rock of Peter. Underneath that Dome, Christ still speaks through His teacher, the Pope. That teacher was speaking, (not infallibly this time but the truth, nevertheless) on Monday to a group of despairing pilgrims. He pointed out the way for reconstruction after the war, saying the following was necessary:

"To rebuild society on Christian bases.

"To re-establish the Bible and its morals in esteem and honor.

"To revise the family, restoring to matrimony the halo of its sacramental dignity, to spouses a sense of their obligations and a consciousness of their responsibility.

"To reaffirm in all great society a genuine notion of authority, discipline, respect for the social orders, and the reciprocal rights and duties of the human person.

"There is your tomorrow!"

The Pope must have read your letter, John, because there is the answer to every one of your criticisms. There is the way out of your confusion and despair. The world's greatest need isn't a saint or two, fine though that would be. A saint could teach falsely, but the Pope, never. No, truth hasn't fled from the world. The world has fled from the truth. The world has fled, also, from the Mother of all the world. Like little kids, the people have left her protecting influence and guidance, and have gone out, led by the liberal Pied-Pipers into the world's back alleys and bar-rooms. They've become dirty, stained and bruised. They're being kicked around by the bullying neighbor kids. They'll have no peace until, like little kids, they come back to that Divine Son, to His teacher and to His mother - to that Mother's serenity, strength, wisdom, mercy and love. Her mercy and love embrace all, whether German or Jew, Catholic or non-Catholic, rich or poor, nun or actress, white or black, saint or sinner. Oh, yes, she hates sin but loves the sinner. That's mother-love.

Don't think she wants her sons to come to her merely to curl up in blissful peace. She wants fighters like her Son. She herself is referred to in scriptures as "**terrible** as an army in battle array." She'll wipe away the doubts, bandage the wounded souls and then send them out to fight - for her Son, for the Pope's Tomorrow; first in one's own personal life, then nationally, even internationally if need be.

Mary has a special love for the United States. Long ago, 1858, the Pope appointed her patroness of the United States under her title "The Immaculate Conception." She certainly would want you to fight for your country in a just war - truly for God, country and Notre Dame. Sunday's Gospel teaches the same lesson. "Render to God the things that are God's, and to Caesar (the state) the things that are Caesar's." Obedience and defense are certainly owed to our state; and above all, gratitude.

Next Wednesday is draft registration day. Because Notre Dame ever links her patriotism with her religion she will celebrate that day properly: No classes on that day but there will be a Mass at 8:30 for God, country and her registering sons; for peace, but if war comes, that it be a just one to be followed by the Pope's Tomorrow of a just, charitable and lasting peace, internationally, nationally and between man and man.

Start a crusade of prayer for peace, John? Surely. The call is issued to the students today. The crusade of prayer will continue until the Feast of Christ the King; for the same intention as the Mass.

As for you personally, John, think things over. You'll have the prayers of the faculty and students of Notre Dame. Talk to our Lady at the Grotto and if you wish drop in on any priest on the campus. And remember, come war or peace keep your gaze lifted to the Grotto, the Dome and Heaven and you'll have the peace Christ promised.