



POPE PIUS XII

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## PIUS XII

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*FRANCIS H. ROTH, O.P.*



HE election on Thursday, March 2, of Eugene Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State, as the 262nd Vicar of Christ on earth, echoed with a jubilant melody of thanksgiving in the hearts of thousands assembled in St. Peter's Square. In undiminishing enthusiasm, this magnificent manifestation of filial homage then re-echoed with unparalleled rapidity throughout the universe and was taken up by millions of devout Christians everywhere.

Despite human conjectures as to who might ascend the papal throne, it was Divine Providence that singled out Cardinal Pacelli as the new representative of Christ to carry on the unbroken divine mission of the Church.

The new Pontiff, Pius XII, is no stranger to the American people. His visit to the United States in 1936 won for Him the hearts of all Americans. Then, too, his profound knowledge of the peoples of other nations will contribute, in no small degree, to a successful reign as the Father of Christendom. He is especially well acquainted with conditions prevailing in the Germany of today, having served the Church there as papal nuncio for several years prior to his appointment as Secretary of State. He saw and experienced the aftermath of the Great War and was most influential in successfully bringing about, by a concordat, friendly relations between the Holy See and Germany.

Years later, as papal legate to the International Congresses in Buenos Aires and in Budapest, he obtained first-hand information as to the conditions of the people in South America and in the Balkan States. France and its people he learned to know when the late Pius XI sent him as legate to Lourdes and later again to Lisieux.

Pius XII is blessed with extraordinary qualities to help him in the performance of his office. His gift of tongues will make him a universal Father, and his gift of sympathetic understanding will prove him a compassionate Father. The Catholics of America sincerely congratulate their new Supreme Pastor. In humility they pledge him filial devotion, and they earnestly pray that God may grant him courage and strength in these turbulent days of a rapidly changing world, and may preserve him in health and vigor for many years to come.

*We want to add a wish and exhortation to peace in this paternal message of Ours. We wish to speak of that peace which Our Predecessor of hallowed memory advocated with so much perseverance to mankind and invoked with ardent prayer, and to which he spontaneously offered his life to God.*

*That is a peace which in its sublime gift of heaven is desired by all good souls and is the fruit of charity and justice. We exhort all to peace of mind, which attains tranquillity through the friendship of God, to the peace of families which are united together in harmony by the holy love of Christ, and finally to peace among nations through the interchange of fraternal hands, friendly collaboration and cordial understanding to the interests of the great human family under the eye and protection of Divine Providence.*

—Pius XII, First Radio Message to the World, March 3, 1939.