

## *Audience with His Holiness*

We were informed at dinner that an audience had been arranged with His Holiness Pope Pius XII for tomorrow.

*Monday, August 20*

After attending Mass at St. Peter's, a representative of the State Department conducted us to the Vatican. Stopping enroute at the Catholic Club, we purchased Rosary Beads and other ecclesiastical objects as gifts for friends at home, desiring to have them blest by His Holiness.

Passing groups of soldiers on the steps of St. Peter's, we motored to the left of the entrance to St. Peter's and into the Vatican entrance. Conducted to the chambers of His Holiness on the third floor, we walked through seven beautiful rooms. At each room entrance, Swiss Guards clicked their heels and stood at attention while we passed.

Ushered into the ante-chamber of His Holiness, we were met by the chamberlain who asked us to await our audience with the Holy Father. In this ante-room were two superb marble tables; there was a gorgeous gold clock on one. The gold chairs and the exquisite red silk tapestry on the wall were too magnificent for words.

Immediately adjacent to this room was a large chamber known as the Ambassador's room, where His Holiness receives dignitaries from foreign nations. While we waited, the Spanish Ambassador, in diplomatic dress, emerged from a private office of His Holiness. We were introduced.

In a few moments we were escorted into the office of the Holy Father. His Holiness wore a white brocade silk robe. He is a thin man, and has blue eyes—height about 5 feet, 11 inches. His hair is sparse and his face very sad. He greeted us warmly, shaking hands. As I kissed his ring I was impressed by his lovely long fingers.

Seated at his desk, he spoke to us in English, and said how happy he was to see us. I gave him the regards Archbishop Spellman sent by me. His Holiness spoke very highly of His Excellency, Archbishop Spellman, particularly as to the ability of His Eminence, and was glad that the Archbishop was equally respected and liked by non-Catholics as well as Catholics.

Speaking to His Holiness about the condition of Germany, we told him of meeting Cardinal Faulhauber in Munich. He was most interested and spoke very highly of Cardinal Faulhauber. When I told him of the wreck of the Frauen Cathedral in Munich, he replied that he was heartsick at so much devastation. He inquired as to whether or not Cardinal Faulhauber's palace had been ruined; we were glad to say that the residence of His Eminence had been only slightly damaged.

I told him of the complete demolition of the Unter den Linden, Potsdamer Platz, and the main section of Berlin; of the damage to the Dom Cathedral, Lutheran Cathedral, and the many Catholic churches. He specifically asked as to the State Museum. When I replied that it was badly damaged, he said: "All too sad to think of."

I reported to him that Count von Preysing, Catholic Bishop of Berlin, was ill; that I therefore had not been able to see him, but that he had sent a personal note of felicitation to His Holiness and also to Archbishop Spellman.

His Holiness speaks excellent English. He spoke very highly of Count von Preysing. He labors a bit with our language, yet his enunciation and grammar are perfect. He has some difficulty in understanding English—one must speak slowly. Speaking and understanding seventeen different languages, he prides himself on addressing foreign visitors in their own tongues.

The Holy Father stated that he knew nothing of the conditions east of Berlin, but understood they are very bad. He was thoroughly familiar with the anti-Communist work of our press. Also, he seemed thoroughly informed as to conditions in America.

We talked of personal friends in America, and he asked to be

kindly remembered to various friends. After about twenty minutes of delightful conversation, we arose to depart.

He asked us if we would accept a gift of Rosary Beads, and we said we would be delighted. He first asked Johnnie Hanes how many pairs he would like. John hesitated, and said, two, if not too many. He gave John two pairs and then he asked me the same question. I wanted to say a dozen but said two.

Then he asked Warren Johnson, my brother-in-law, who was with us, the same question. Warren also replied, two. His Holiness smiled beneficently at Warren and said, "You are a Lieutenant. In English we call you a Leftenant."

He asked us which we wished, black beads or white beads. We diplomatically replied by saying one of each. Upon arising to go, I asked His Holiness if he would bless some of the ecclesiastical objects we had brought with us. He replied "I bless you, your children, your family, your lovely country and your people."

Upon leaving he said to us, "I ask you not to publish anything I've said. I've spoken to you from the heart and not officially." Obviously, I have obeyed his request.

Upon leaving the Vatican, we were told His Holiness has not been outside his quarters for seven years; that during the War, he protected 1000 foreigners in the Vatican, including Russian officials. His Holiness indicated in our conversation he was fighting for freedom of religion in the world; not just Catholicism, but the privilege for everyone to worship God as his conscience dictated.

We were told that, in all of his encyclicals throughout the War, he never once referred to Hitler or Mussolini by name, but instead diplomatically criticized Nazis and Fascists.

From this inspiring audience with His Holiness we returned to the Grand Hotel, having been photographed with the Swiss Guards while in the Vatican.

In the afternoon we went sight-seeing about Rome, mingling with the American soldiers, who were everywhere. The Holy City has been spared the scars of battle.

*Tuesday, August 21*

Visited the U. S. press control officers who supervise the Italian press. The censorship of the Italian press was explained to us—it is conducted along the lines explained to us at Bad Homburg in Germany. Later we visited the Allied High Command and had a splendid conversation with Admiral Ellery Stone, in command of the civil affairs of Italy. The Admiral explained to us the conduct of the Allied Occupation Command of Italy, and described the integrated command. The British, Russians, French, and other commissioners sit on a board with him and he in turn acts as Commander-in-Chief of the Civil Command of Italy.

The Admiral indicated that he felt their procedure was much better than that of Berlin as, by their procedure, the Allied forces in Italy could settle their problems behind closed doors and then an order could be issued by one Commander, and not by each of the Allied Commanders, as in Berlin.

We were told (not by Admiral Stone but by diplomatic representatives of ours and the British Government) that the Russians grab everything, and that it is most necessary for us to have 100,000 men here in uniform to insure law and order.

Our Army and Navy officials advise that we should stay out of the Italian politics; let the Italians run their own politics, but supervise the business of the nation, such as food supplies, transportation, etc.

Members of our High Command in Rome expressed great satisfaction that General MacArthur had been given supreme command in Japan. They thought it would be suicidal to allow the Russians to participate in the Japanese Command.

### ***Confidential Chat with Count Umberta***

After a delightful visit with our Military Command we went to the palace of Crown Prince Umberta, and had a delightfully friendly and personal chat with him.