

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

# QUI PLURIBUS

OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF

PIUS IX

## On Faith and Religion

November 9, 1846



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# Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius IX

## QUI PLURIBUS *ON FAITH AND RELIGION*

November 9, 1846

To all Patriarchs, Primates,  
Archbishops, and Bishops.

Venerable Brothers, We greet you and give you Our Apostolic Blessing.

For many years past We strove with you, Venerable Brothers, to devote Our best powers to Our episcopal office—an office full of labor and worry. We strove to feed those committed to Our care on the mountains of Israel, at its streams and in its richest pastures. Our illustrious Predecessor, Gregory XVI, whose famous actions are recorded in the annals of the Church in letters of gold, will surely be remembered and admired by future generations. Now though, upon his death, by the mysterious plan of Divine Providence, We have been raised to the supreme Pontificate. We did not purpose this nor expect it; indeed Our reaction is great disquietude and anxiety. For if the burden of the Apostolic ministry is rightly considered to be at all times exceedingly heavy and beset with dangers, it is to be dreaded most particularly in these times which are so critical for the Christian commonwealth.

2. We are well aware of Our weakness. So when We reflect on the most serious duties of the supreme apostol-

late, especially in a period of great instability, We would simply have fallen into great sadness, did We not place all Our hope in God Who is Our Savior. For He never abandons those who hope in Him. Time and again, so as to demonstrate what His power can accomplish, He employs weak instruments to rule His Church; in this way, all men may increasingly realize that it is God Himself who governs and protects the Church with His wonderful Providence. We are also greatly supported by the comforting consideration that We have you, Venerable Brothers, as Our helpers and companions in the work of saving souls. For since you have been called to share a portion of Our case, you strive to fulfill your ministry with attentiveness and zeal, and to fight the good fight.

### **Admonitions to the Hierarchy**

3. For this reason, as soon as We were placed, despite Our unworthiness, on this high See of the Prince of the Apostles as the representative of the blessed Peter, and received from the eternal Prince of Pastors Himself the most serious divinely-given office of feeding and ruling not only the lambs, that is, the whole Christian people, but also the sheep, that is, the bishops, We surely had no greater wish than to address you all with a deep feeling of love. Therefore, since We have now assumed the supreme pontificate in Our Lateran Basilica, We are sending this letter to you without delay, in accordance with the established practice of Our predecessors. Its purpose is to urge that you keep the night watches over the flock entrusted to your care with the greatest possible eagerness, wakefulness and effort, and that you raise a protecting wall before the House of Israel; do these as you battle with episcopal strength and steadfastness like good soldiers of Christ Jesus against the hateful enemy of the human race.

## Fight Against Heresy

4. Each of you has noticed, Venerable Brothers, that a very bitter and fearsome war against the whole Catholic commonwealth is being stirred up by men bound together in a lawless alliance. These men do not preserve sound doctrine, but turn their hearing from the truth. They eagerly attempt to produce from their darkness all sorts of prodigious beliefs, and then to magnify them with all their strength, and to publish them and spread them among ordinary people. We shudder indeed and suffer bitter pain when We reflect on all their outlandish errors and their many harmful methods, plots and contrivances. These men use these means to spread their hatred for truth and light. They are experienced and skillful in deceit, which they use to set in motion their plans to quench peoples' zeal for piety, justice and virtue, to corrupt morals, to cast all divine and human laws into confusion, and to weaken and even possibly overthrow the Catholic religion and civil society. For you know, Venerable Brothers, that these bitter enemies of the Christian name are carried wretchedly along by some blind momentum of their mad impiety; they go so far in their rash imagining as to teach without blushing, openly and publicly, daring and unheard-of doctrines, thereby uttering blasphemies against God.<sup>1</sup> They teach that the most holy mysteries of our religion are fictions of human invention, and that the teaching of the Catholic Church is opposed to the good and the prerogatives of human society. They are not even afraid to deny Christ Himself and God.

5. In order to easily mislead the people into making errors, deceiving particularly the imprudent and the inexperienced, they pretend that they alone know the ways to

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<sup>1</sup> Ap. 13.6.

prosperity. They claim for themselves without hesitation the name of “philosophers.” They feel as if philosophy, which is wholly concerned with the search for truth in nature, ought to reject those truths which God Himself, the supreme and merciful Creator of nature, has deigned to make plain to men as a special gift. With these truths, mankind can gain true happiness and salvation. So, by means of an obviously ridiculous and extremely specious kind of argumentation, these enemies never stop invoking the power and excellence of human reason; they raise it up against the most holy Faith of Christ, and they blather with great foolhardiness that this Faith is opposed to human reason.

### **Faith and Reason are Reciprocal**

6. Without doubt, nothing more insane than such a doctrine, nothing more impious or more opposed to reason itself could be devised. For although faith is above reason, no real disagreement or opposition can ever be found between them; this is because both of them come from the same greatest source of unchanging and eternal truth, God. They give such reciprocal help to each other that true reason shows, maintains and protects the truth of the Faith, while faith frees reason from all errors and wondrously enlightens, strengthens and perfects reason with the knowledge of divine matters.

### **Doctrine of Human Progress**

7. It is with no less deceit, Venerable Brothers, that other enemies of divine revelation, with reckless and sacrilegious effrontery, want to import the doctrine of human progress into the Catholic religion. They extol it with the highest praise, as if religion itself were not of God but the work of men, or a philosophical discovery

which can be perfected by human means. The charge which Tertullian justly made against the philosophers of his own time “who bought forward a Stoic and a Platonic and a Dialectical Christianity”<sup>2</sup> can very aptly apply to those men who rave so pitiously. Our holy religion was not invented by human reason, but was most mercifully revealed by God; therefore, one can quite easily understand that religion itself acquires all its power from the authority of God who made the revelation, and that it can never be arrived at or perfected by human reason. In order not to be deceived and go astray in a matter of such great importance, human reason should indeed carefully investigate the fact of divine revelation. Having done this, one would be definitely convinced that God has spoken and therefore would show Him rational obedience, as the Apostle very wisely teaches.<sup>3</sup> For who can possibly not know that all faith should be given to the words of God and that it is in the fullest agreement with reason itself to accept and strongly support doctrines which it has determined to have been revealed by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived?

8. But how many wonderful and shining proofs are ready at hand to convince the human reason in the clearest way that the religion of Christ is divine and that “the whole principle of our doctrines has taken root from the Lord of the heavens above”;<sup>4</sup> therefore nothing exists more definite, more settled or more holy than our Faith, which rests on the strongest foundations. This Faith, which teaches for life and points towards salvation, which casts out all vices and is the fruitful mother and nurse of the virtues, has been established by the birth, life, death,

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<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *De Praescript*, chap. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 13:1.

<sup>4</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 in Isaiah*.

resurrection, wisdom, wonders and prophecies of Christ Jesus, its divine author and perfecter! Shining forth in all directions with the light of teaching from on high and enriched with the treasures of heavenly wealth, this Faith grew famed and notable by the foretelling of so many prophets, the lustre of so many miracles, the steadfastness of so many martyrs, and the glory of so many saints! It made known the saving laws of Christ and, gaining in strength daily even when it was most cruelly persecuted, it made its way over the whole world by land and sea, from the sun's rising to its setting, under the single standard of the Cross! The deceit of idols was cast down and the mist of errors was scattered. By the defeat of all kinds of enemies, this Faith enlightened with divine knowledge all peoples, races and nations, no matter how barbarous and savage, or how different in character, morals, laws and ways of life. It brought them under the sweet yoke of Christ Himself by proclaiming peace and good tidings to all men!

### **Faith Comes from God**

9. Now, surely all these events shine with such divine wisdom and power that anyone who considers them will easily understand that the Christian Faith is the work of God. Human reason knows clearly from these striking and certain proofs that God is the author of this Faith; therefore it is unable to advance further but should offer all obedience to this Faith, casting aside completely every problem and hesitation. Human reason is convinced that it is God who has given everything the Faith proposes to men for belief and behavior.

10. This consideration too clarifies the great error of those others as well who boldly venture to explain and interpret

the words of God by their own judgment, misusing their reason and holding the opinion that these words are like a human work. God Himself has set up a living authority to establish and teach the true and legitimate meaning of His heavenly revelation. This authority judges *infallibly* all disputes which concern matters of faith and morals, lest the faithful be swirled around by every wind of doctrine which springs from the evilness of men in encompassing error. And this living *infallible* authority is active only in the Church which was built by Christ the Lord upon Peter, the head of the entire Church, leader and shepherd, whose faith He promised would never fail. This Church has had an unbroken line of succession from Peter himself; these legitimate pontiffs are the heirs and defenders of the same teaching, rank, office and power. And the Church is where Peter is,<sup>5</sup> and Peter speaks in the Roman Pontiff,<sup>6</sup> living at all times in his successors and making judgment,<sup>7</sup> providing the truth of the faith to those who seek it.<sup>8</sup> The divine words, therefore, mean what this Roman See of the most blessed Peter holds and has held.

11. For this mother and teacher<sup>9</sup> of all the churches has always preserved entire and unharmed the Faith entrusted to it by Christ the Lord. Furthermore, it has taught it to the faithful, showing all men truth and the path of salvation. Since all priesthood originates in this Church,<sup>10</sup> the entire substance of the Christian religion resides there also.<sup>11</sup> The leadership of the Apostolic See has always been

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<sup>5</sup> St. Ambrose on Ps. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Council of Chalcedon, Act. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Synod of Ephes., Act. 3.

<sup>8</sup> St. Peter Chrysologus, Epistle to Eutyches.

<sup>9</sup> Council of Trent, Session 7 on Baptism.

<sup>10</sup> St. Cyprian, Epistle 55 to Pope Cornelius.

<sup>11</sup> Synod. Letter of John of Constantinople to Pope Hormisdas and Sozomen, *Hist.*, III. 8.

active,<sup>12</sup> and therefore because of its pre-eminent authority, the whole Church must agree with it. The faithful who live in every place constitute the whole Church.<sup>13</sup> Whoever does not gather with this Church scatters.<sup>14</sup>

### **Warn the Faithful**

12. We, therefore, placed inscrutably by God upon this Chair of truth, eagerly call forth in the Lord your outstanding piety, Venerable Brothers. We urge you to strive carefully and zealously to continually warn and exhort the faithful entrusted to your care to hold to these first principles. Urge them never to allow themselves to be deceived and led into error by men who have become abominable in their pursuits. These men attempt to destroy faith on the pretext of human progress, subjecting it in an impious manner to reason and changing the meaning of the words of God. Such men do not shrink from the greatest insults to God Himself, who cares for the good and the salvation of men by means of His heavenly religion.

### **Goals of Heretics**

13. You already know well, Venerable Brothers, the other portentous errors and deceits by which the sons of this world try most bitterly to attack the Catholic religion and the divine authority of the Church and its laws. They would even trample underfoot the rights both of the sacred and of the civil power. For this is the goal of the lawless activities against this Roman See in which Christ placed the impregnable foundation of His Church. This is the goal of those secret sects who have come forth from the darkness to destroy and desolate both the sacred and the

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<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine, Epistle 162.

<sup>13</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, III, 3.

<sup>14</sup> St. Jerome, Epistle to Pope Damasus.

civil commonwealth. These have been condemned with repeated anathema in the Apostolic letters of the Roman Pontiffs who preceded Us.<sup>15</sup> We now confirm these with the fullness of Our Apostolic power and command that they be most carefully observed.

14. This is the goal too of the crafty Bible Societies which renew the old skill of the heretics and ceaselessly force on people of all kinds, even the uneducated, gifts of the Bible. They issue these in large numbers and at great cost, in vernacular translations, which infringe the holy rules of the Church. The commentaries which are included often contain perverse explanations; so, having rejected divine tradition, the doctrine of the Fathers and the authority of the Catholic Church, they all interpret the words of the Lord by their own private judgment, thereby perverting their meaning. As a result, they fall into the greatest errors. Gregory XVI of happy memory, Our superior predecessor, followed the lead of his own predecessors in rejecting these societies in his apostolic letters.<sup>16</sup> It is Our will to condemn them likewise.

### No Choice of Religion

15. Also perverse is the shocking theory that it makes no difference to which religion one belongs, a theory which is greatly at variance even with reason. By means of this theory, those crafty men remove all distinction between virtue and vice, truth and error, honorable and vile action. They pretend that men can gain eternal salvation by the practice of any religion, as if there could ever be any sharing between justice and iniquity, any collaboration

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<sup>15</sup> Clement XII, constitution *Providas*; Pius VII, constitution *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*; Leo XII, constitution *Ubi Graviora*.

<sup>16</sup> Gregory XVI, encyclical letter *Inter Praecipuas Machinationes*.

between light and darkness, or any agreement between Christ and Belial.

### Celibacy

16. The sacred celibacy of clerics has also been the victim of conspiracy. Indeed, some churchmen have wretchedly forgotten their own rank and let themselves be converted by the charms and snares of pleasure. This is the aim too of the prevalent but wrong method of teaching, especially in the philosophical disciplines, a method which deceives and corrupts incautious youth in a wretched manner and gives it as drink the poison of the serpent in the goblet of Babylon. To this goal also tends the unspeakable doctrine of *Communism*, as it is called, a doctrine most opposed to the very natural law. For if this doctrine were accepted, the complete destruction of everyone's laws, government, property, and even of human society itself would follow.

17. To this end also tend the most dark designs of men in the clothing of sheep, while inwardly ravening wolves. They humbly recommend themselves by means of a feigned and deceitful appearance of a purer piety, a stricter virtue and discipline; after taking their captives gently, they mildly bind them, and then kill them in secret. They make men fly in terror from all practice of religion, and they cut down and dismember the sheep of the Lord. To this end, finally—to omit other dangers which are too well known to you—tends the widespread disgusting infection from books and pamphlets which teach the lessons of sinning. These works, well-written and filled with deceit and cunning, are scattered at immense cost through every region for the destruction of the Christian people. They spread pestilential doctrines everywhere and deprave the

minds especially of the imprudent, occasioning great losses for religion.

### **Results of Heresy**

18. As a result of this filthy medley of errors which creeps in from every side, and as the result of the unbridled license to think, speak and write, We see the following: morals deteriorated, Christ's most holy religion despised, the majesty of divine worship rejected, the power of this Apostolic See plundered, the authority of the Church attacked and reduced to base slavery, the rights of bishops trampled on, the sanctity of marriage infringed, the rule of every government violently shaken and many other losses for both the Christian and the civil commonwealth. Venerable Brothers, We are compelled to weep and share in your lament that this is the case.

### **Defend the Church**

19. Therefore, in this great crisis for religion, because We are greatly concerned for the salvation of all the Lord's flock and in fulfillment of the duty of Our Apostolic ministry, We shall certainly leave no measure untried in Our vigorous effort to secure the good of the whole Christian family. Indeed, We especially call forth in the Lord your own illustrious piety, virtue and prudence, Venerable Brothers. With these and relying on heavenly aid, you may fearlessly defend the cause of God and His holy Church as befits your station and the office for which you are marked. You must fight energetically, since you know very well what great wounds the undefiled Spouse of Christ Jesus has suffered, and how vigorous is the destructive attack of Her enemies. You must also care for and defend the Catholic Faith with episcopal strength

and see that the flock entrusted to you stands to the end firm and unmoved in the Faith. For unless one preserves the Faith entire and uninjured, he will without doubt perish forever.<sup>17</sup>

### **Protect the Faith**

20. So, in accordance with your pastoral care, work assiduously to protect and preserve this Faith. Never cease to instruct all men in it, to encourage the wavering, to convince dissenters, to strengthen the weak in faith by never tolerating and letting pass anything which could, in the slightest degree, defile the purity of this Faith. With the same great strength of mind, foster in all men their unity with the Catholic Church, outside of which there is no salvation; also foster their obedience towards this See of Peter on which rests the entire structure of our most holy religion. See to it with similar firmness that the most holy laws of the Church are observed, for it is by these laws that virtue, religion and piety particularly thrive and flourish.

21. "It is an act of great piety to expose the concealment of the impious and to defeat there the devil himself, whose slaves they are."<sup>18</sup> Therefore We entreat you to use every means of revealing to your faithful people the many kinds of plot, pretense, error, deceit and contrivance which our enemies use. This will turn them carefully away from infectious books. Also, exhort them unceasingly to flee from the sects and societies of the impious as from the presence of a serpent, earnestly avoiding everything which is at variance with the wholeness of faith, religion and morality. Therefore, never stop preaching the Gospel, so that the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ex Symbolo Quicumque.*

<sup>18</sup> St. Leo, Sermon 8.4.

Christian people may grow in the knowledge of God by being daily better versed in the most holy precepts of the Christian law; as a result, they may turn from evil, do good and walk in the ways of the Lord. You know that you are acting as deputies for Christ, who is meek and humble, and who came not to call the just, but sinners. This is the example that we should follow. When you find someone disregarding the commandments and wandering from the path of truth and justice, rebuke them in the spirit of mildness and meekness with paternal warnings; accuse, entreat and reprove them with all kindness, patience and doctrine. "Often benevolence towards those who are to be corrected achieves more than severity, exhortation more than threats, and love more than power."<sup>19</sup>

22. Strive to instruct the faithful to follow after love and search for peace, diligently pursuing the works of love and peace so that they may love one another with reciprocal charity. They should abolish all disagreements, enmities, rivalries and animosities, thus achieving compatibility. Take pains to impress on the Christian people a due obedience and subjection to rulers and governments. Do this by teaching, in accordance with the warning of the Apostle,<sup>20</sup> that all authority comes from God. Whoever resists authority resists the ordering made by God Himself, consequently achieving his own condemnation; disobeying authority is always sinful except when an order is given which is opposed to the laws of God and the Church.

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<sup>19</sup> Council of Trent, Session 13, chap. on reform.

<sup>20</sup> Rom. 12:1-2.

## Clergy Should Be Example

23. However, priests are the best examples of piety and God's worship,<sup>21</sup> and people tend generally to be of the same quality as their priests. Therefore devote the greatest care and zeal to making the clergy resplendent for the earnestness of their morals, the integrity, holiness and wisdom of their lives. Let the ecclesiastical training be zealously preserved in compliance with the sacred canons, and whenever it has been neglected, let it be restored to its former splendor. Therefore, as you are well aware, you must take the utmost care, as the Apostle commands, not to impose hands on anyone in haste. Consecrate with Holy Orders and promote to the performance of the sacred mysteries only those who have been carefully examined and who are virtuous and wise. They can consequently benefit and ornament your dioceses.

24. These are men who avoid everything which is forbidden to clerics, devoting their time instead to reading, exhorting and teaching, "an example to the faithful in word, manner of life, in charity, in faith, in chastity."<sup>22</sup> They win the highest respect from all men, and fashion, summon forth and inspire the people with the Christian way of life. "For it would certainly be better," as Benedict XIV, Our Predecessor of undying memory very wisely advises, "to have fewer ministers if they be upright, suitable and useful, than many who are likely to accomplish nothing at all for the building up of the Body of Christ, which is the Church."<sup>23</sup> You must examine with greater diligence the morals and the knowledge of men who are entrusted with the care and guidance of souls, that they

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<sup>21</sup> Council of Trent, Session 22, chap. 1 on reform.

<sup>22</sup> Tm. 4:12.

<sup>23</sup> Benedict XIV, encyclical letter *Ubi Primum*.

may be eager to continuously feed and assist the people entrusted to them by the administration of the sacraments, the preaching of God's word and the example of good works. They should be zealous in molding them to the whole plan and pattern of a religious way of life, and in leading them on to the path of salvation.

25. When ministers are ignorant or neglectful of their duty, then the morals of the people also immediately decline, Christian discipline grows slack, the practice of religion is dislodged and cast aside, and every vice and corruption is easily introduced into the Church. The word of God, which was uttered for the salvation of souls, is living, efficacious and more piercing than a two-edged sword.<sup>24</sup> So that it may not prove to be unfruitful through the fault of its ministers, never cease, Venerable Brothers, from encouraging the preachers of this divine Word to carry out most religiously the ministry of the Gospel. This should not be carried out by the persuasive words of human wisdom, nor by the profane, seductive guise of empty and ambitious eloquence, but rather as a demonstration of the spirit and power.

### **Objectives of Clerical Duties**

26. Consequently, by presenting the word of truth properly and by preaching not themselves, but Christ crucified, they should clearly proclaim in their preaching the tenets and precepts of our most holy religion in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and the Fathers. They should explain precisely the particular duties of individuals, frighten them from vice, and inspire them with a love of piety. In this way the faithful will avoid all vices and pursue virtues, and so, will be able to escape

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<sup>24</sup> Heb. 4:12.

eternal punishment and gain heavenly glory.

27. In your pastoral care, continuously urge all ecclesiastics to think seriously of their holy ministry. Urge them to carefully fulfill their duties, to greatly love the beauty of God's house, to urgently pray and entreat with deep piety, and to say the canonical hours of the breviary as the Church commands. By these means they will be able both to pray efficaciously for God's help in fulfilling the heavy demands of their duty, and to graciously reconcile God and the Christian people.

### **Education of Clerics**

28. You know that suitable ministers can only come from clergy who are very well-trained, and that the proper training greatly influences the whole future life of clerics. Therefore, continually strive to ensure that young clerics are properly molded even from their earliest years. They should be molded not only in piety and real virtue, but also in literature and the stricter disciplines, especially the sacred ones. So your greatest desire should be, in obedience to the prescript of the fathers at Trent,<sup>25</sup> to set up skillfully and energetically, seminaries if they do not yet exist. If necessary, expand those already established, supplying them with the best directors and teachers. Watch continuously and zealously that the young clerics in them are educated in a holy and religious manner, in the fear of the Lord and in ecclesiastical discipline. See that they are carefully and thoroughly improved, especially by the sacred sciences, according to Catholic doctrine, far from all danger of any error. They should also be improved by the traditions of the Church and the writings of the holy Fathers, as well as by sacred ceremonies and rites. Thus

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<sup>25</sup> Council of Trent, Session 23, chap. 18, on reform.

you will have energetic, industrious workers endowed with an ecclesiastical spirit, properly prepared by their studies, who in time will be able to tend the Lord's field carefully and fight strenuously in the Lord's battles.

29. Furthermore, you realize that spiritual exercises contribute greatly to the preservation of the dignity and holiness of ecclesiastical orders. Therefore do not neglect to promote this work of salvation and to advise and exhort all clergy to often retreat to a suitable place for making these exercises. Laying aside external cares and being free to meditate zealously on eternal divine matters, they will be able to wipe away stains caused by the dust of the world and renew their ecclesiastical spirit. And stripping off the old man and his deeds, they will put on the new man who was created in justice and holiness.

30. Do not regret that We have spoken at length on the education and training of the clergy. For you are very well aware many men are weary of the difference, instability and changing nature of their errors, and therefore want to profess our most holy religion. These men, with God's good help, will more easily embrace and practice the teaching, precepts and way of life of this religion if they see that the clergy surpass all others in their piety, integrity and wisdom, and in the noble example they give of all the virtues.

### **Praise for the Clergy**

31. We recognize your many worthy attributes: your burning charity towards God and men, your exalted love of the Church, your almost angelic virtues, your episcopal bravery, and your prudence. Being inspired to

do His holy will, you are all followers in the footsteps of the Apostles. As bishops, you are the deputies, and thus the imitators of Christ. In your harmonious pursuits, you have become a sincere model for your flock, and you enlighten your clergy and faithful people with the splendor of your sanctity. In your compassionate mercy, you seek out and overtake with your love the straying and perishing sheep, as the shepherd in the Gospel did. You place them paternally on your shoulders and lead them back to the fold. At no time do you spare either cares or plans or toils in religiously fulfilling your pastoral duties and defending all Our beloved sheep who, redeemed by Christ, have been entrusted to your care from the rage, assault and snares of ravening wolves. You keep them away from poisonous pasture land and drive them on to safe ground, and in all possible ways you lead them by deed, word and example to the harbor of eternal salvation.

32. Therefore, to assure the greater glory of God and the Church, Venerable Brothers, join together with all eagerness, care and wakefulness to repulse error and to root out vice. When this is accomplished, faith, religion, piety and virtue will increase daily. Then all the faithful, as sons of light, casting aside the works of darkness, may walk worthily, pleasing God in all things and being fruitful in every good work. And in the very great straits, difficulties and dangers which must beset your serious ministry as bishops, especially in these times, do not ever be terrified; rather, be comforted by the strength of the Lord “who looks down on us who carry out His work, approves those who are willing, aids those who do battle, and crowns those who conquer.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> St. Cyprian, Epistle 77 to Nemesianus and other martyrs.

33. Nothing is more pleasing to Us than to assist you, whom We love, with affection, advice and exertion. We devote Ourselves wholeheartedly together with you to protect and spread the glory of God and the Catholic Faith; We also endeavor to save souls for whom We are ready to sacrifice life itself, should it be necessary. Come to Us as often as you feel the need of the aid, help and protection of Our authority and that of this See.

34. We hope that Our political leaders will keep in mind in accordance with their piety and religion, that “the kingly power has been conferred on them not only for ruling the world, but also especially for the protection of the Church.”<sup>27</sup> Sometimes We “act both for the sake of their rule and safety that they may possess their provinces by peaceful right.”<sup>28</sup> We hope that with their aid and authority they will support the objects, plans and pursuits which we have in common, and that they will also defend the liberty and safety of the Church, so that “the right hand of Christ may also defend their rule.”<sup>29</sup>

35. We hope that all these matters may turn out well and happily. Let us together entreat God in urgent and unceasing prayers, to make up for Our weakness by an abundance of every heavenly grace, to overwhelm with His all-powerful strength those who attack us, and to increase everywhere faith, piety, devotion and peace. Then when all enemies and errors have been overcome, His holy Church may enjoy the tranquillity it so greatly desires. Then, too, there may be one fold and one shepherd.

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<sup>27</sup> St. Leo, Epistle 156 (123) to Emperor Leo.

<sup>28</sup> St. Leo, Epistle 43 (34) to Emperor Theodosius.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

36. That the Lord may more readily respond to Us, let us call as intercessor she who is always with Him, the most holy Virgin Mary, Immaculate Mother of God. She is the most sweet mother of us all; she is our mediatrix, advocate, firmest hope and greatest source of confidence. Furthermore, her patronage with God is strongest and most efficacious. Let us invoke, too, the prince of the Apostles to whom Christ Himself gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whom He made the rock of His Church, against which the gates of hell will never prevail; let us also invoke his fellow-apostle, Paul, and all the heavenly saints who are already crowned and hold the palm of victory. We ask that they implore for all Christians the abundance of divine favor which they desire.

37. Finally, as an augury of all the heavenly gifts and as witness of Our great charity towards you, receive the Apostolic Blessing which from deep in Our heart, We most lovingly impart to yourselves, Venerable Brothers, and to all clerics and the faithful laity who are entrusted to your care.

Given in Rome at St. Mary Major on the 9th of November 1846, in the first year of Our Pontificate.



LATIN TEXT: *Acta Pii IX*, I, 1:4-24.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: Padraig M. O'Cleirigh.



