

Pope St. Leo the Great, Letter XII, To all the bishops of Mauritania Cæsariensis in Africa:

« But if in every grade of the Church great forethought and knowledge has to be employed, lest there be any thing disorderly or out of place in the house of the Lord: how much more carefully must we strive to prevent mistakes in the election of him who is set over all the grades? For the peace and order of the Lord's whole household will be shaken, if what is required in the body be not found in the head. Where is that precept of the blessed Apostle Paul uttered through the Spirit of God, whereby in the person of Timothy the whole number of Christ's priests are instructed, and to each one of us is said: "Lay hands hastily on no one, and do not share in other men's sins"? [1 Tim. 5:22] What is to lay on hands hastily but to confer the priestly dignity on unproved men before the proper age, before there has been time to test them, before they have deserved it by their obedience, before they have been tried by discipline? And what is to share in other men's sins but for the ordainer to become such as is he who ought not to have been ordained by him? For just as a man stores up for himself the fruit of his good work, if he maintains a right judgment in choosing a priest: so one who receives an unworthy priest into the number of his colleagues, inflicts grievous loss upon himself. »

Pope St. Leo the Great, Letter XVIII, To Januarius, Bishop of Aquileia, 447 A.D:

«For it is most wholesome and full of all the benefits of spiritual healing that presbyters or deacons, or sub-deacons or clerics of any rank, who wish to appear reformed, and entreat to return once more to the catholic Faith which they had long ago lost, should first confess without ambiguity that their errors and the authors of the errors themselves are condemned by them, that their base opinions may be utterly destroyed, and no hope survive of their recurrence, and that no member may be harmed by contact with them, every point having been met with its proper recantation. . . No slight penalty does he incur from the Lord, who judges any such person fit to be advanced to Holy Orders. If advancement is granted to those who are without blame, only after full examination, how much more ought it to be refused to those who are under suspicion.»

Pope St. Leo the Great, Letter CLXVII, To Rusticus, Bishop of Gallia Narbonensis, with the replies to his Questions on various points:

« But I am surprised, beloved, that you are so disturbed by opposition in consequence of offences, from whatever cause arising, as to say you would rather be relieved of the labours of your bishopric, and live in quietness and ease than continue in the office committed to you. But since the Lord says, "blessed is he who shall persevere unto the end,"[] whence shall come this blessed perseverance, except from the strength of patience? For as the Apostle

proclaims, "All who would live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution."[] And it is not only to be reckoned persecution, when sword or fire or other active means are used against the Christian religion; for the direst persecution is often inflicted by nonconformity of practice and persistent disobedience and the barbs of ill-natured tongues: and since all the members of the Church are always liable to these attacks, and no portion of the faithful are free from temptation, so that a life neither of ease nor of labour is devoid of danger, who shall guide the ship amidst the waves of the sea, if the helmsman quit his post? Who shall guard the sheep from the treachery of wolves, if the shepherd himself be not on the watch? Who, in fine, shall resist the thieves and robbers, if love of quietude draw away the watchman that is set to keep the outlook from the strictness of his watch? One must abide, therefore, in the office committed to him and in the task undertaken. Justice must be steadfastly upheld and mercy lovingly extended. Not men, but their sins must be hated. The proud must be rebuked, the weak must be borne with; and those sins which require severer chastisement must be dealt with in the spirit not of vindictiveness but of desire to heal. And if a fiercer storm of tribulation fall upon us, let us not be terror-stricken as if we had to overcome the disaster in our own strength, since both our Counsel and our Strength is Christ, and through Him we can do all things, without Him nothing, Who, to confirm the preachers of the Gospel and the ministers of the mysteries, says, "Lo, I am with you all the days even to the consummation of the age."[] And again He says, "these things I have spoken unto you that in me ye may have peace. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, because I have overcome the world."[] The promises, which are as plain as they can be, we ought not to let any causes of offence to weaken, lest we should seem ungrateful to God for making us His chosen vessels, since His assistance is powerful as His promises are true. »

Pope St. Gelasius I, Letter XIV, General Decree:

« Nor are deacons to take their seats in the priests' area when the divine mysteries are being celebrated or church management of any kind is being discussed. They may not have the right of carrying out the distribution of the sacred body while a pontiff or a priest is present, but only in their absence. Let us also greatly exert ourselves to safeguard what has been decreed by the venerable ordinances and, without any prejudice to them, let us permit what seems to require alleviation, for the sake, it may be, of some brief necessity. » ~ The Letters of Gelasius I (492-496), Pastor and Micro-Manager of the Church of Rome. Introduction, translation, and notes by Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen. © 2014, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium, p. 149.

Pope St. Gelasius I, Letter XIV, General Decree:

« We have taught that illiterate people too and those who have suffered the amputation of some body part are in no respect to approach the service of the church. Together the ancient tradition and the olden formulation of the apostolic see do not admit this, for the one who lacks education cannot be fit for sacred offices, and legal injunctions have decreed absolutely that nothing blemished should be offered to God (cf. Lev 21:18; Deut 17:1). And so for the rest, such cases should be avoided by all means, and nobody like that be accepted into the clergy. But if some like that were previously accepted through the personal thoughtlessness or carelessness of those presiding, they should continue in the ranks to which they have been appointed, but so as never to secure advancement, and they should regard it sufficient that this much is permitted them through an excess of compassion. » ~ The Letters of Gelasius I (492-496), Pastor and Micro-Manager of the Church of Rome. Introduction, translation, and notes by Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen. © 2014, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium, p. 152.

Pope St. Gelasius I, Letter XIV, General Decree:

« No less have we heard with impatience that such a disregard has come upon divine affairs that women are encouraged to minister at the sacred altars, and that they openly perform everything that has been assigned only to the service of the male sex, to which they do not correspond. » ~ The Letters of Gelasius I (492-496), Pastor and Micro-Manager of the Church of Rome. Introduction, translation, and notes by Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen. © 2014, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnhout, Belgium, p. 155.

Pope Innocent III, sermon In Council of Priests:

« Many actions are trifling for subordinates that are serious for prelates, and many sins are venial for the laity that are mortal sins for the clergy. For “Who will heal the charmer struck by a serpent”? And if a priest sins, who will pray for him? Certainly, the higher the status, the heavier the fall, for to whom more is entrusted, from him more is demanded. “There shall be a severe judgment for those who rule.” . . . Assuredly the priest is worthy of as many deaths as the examples of moral ruin he gives to the people. »

Lateran IV, A.D. 1215, Canon III:

« We add further that each archbishop or bishop, either in person or through his archdeacon or through suitable honest persons, should visit twice or at least once in the year any parish of his in which heretics are said to live. There he should compel three or more men of good repute, or even if it seems expedient the whole neighbourhood, to swear that if anyone knows of heretics there or of any persons who hold secret conventicles or who differ in their life and

habits from the normal way of living of the faithful, then he will take care to point them out to the bishop. The bishop himself should summon the accused to his presence, and they should be punished canonically if they are unable to clear themselves of the charge or if after compurgation they relapse into their former errors of faith. If however any of them with damnable obstinacy refuse to honour an oath and so will not take it, let them by this very fact be regarded as heretics. We therefore will and command and, in virtue of obedience, strictly command that bishops see carefully to the effective execution of these things throughout their dioceses, if they wish to avoid canonical penalties. If any bishop is negligent or remiss in cleansing his diocese of the ferment of heresy, then when this shows itself by unmistakable signs he shall be deposed from his office as bishop and there shall be put in his place a suitable person who both wishes and is able to overthrow the evil of heresy. » ~ Translation taken from Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, ed. Norman P. Tanner.

Pope Nicholas IV, *Supra Montem*, 1289:

«One must solicitously take precaution, however, lest any heretic, or anyone suspect of heresy, or even an infamous person, be admitted in any manner to the observance of this life. And if one happens to find such having been received, let him be assigned as swiftly as possible to be punished by the Inquisitors for heretical depravity.»

Pope Clement V, Council of Vienne, 1311-1312:

« Let nobody be surprised that we do not inflict heavier punishment on those who perpetrate the above crimes [i.e., “the sacrilege of wrongfully and rashly striking a bishop, or of seizing or banishing him, or has ordered these things to be done, or approved them when done by others, or been an accomplice, or given advice or shown favour, or knowingly defended the guilty”]. Alas! shameful to relate, these crimes are of frequent occurrence, and for the many men of violence an example is needed. The punishment of the offender ought to be in proportion to the dignity of the person wronged. Bishops are called most holy, are Christ’s ambassadors, spiritual fathers, our brothers and fellow bishops, the acknowledged pillars of the church. The punishment, then, ought to be heavy, proportionate to the guilt of one who violates the dignity of such an eminent person. »

Council of Constance, Session XLIII, 23 March 1418:

« Among the various faults of clerics and prelates this one has especially taken root, namely that many of them despise an appearance of ecclesiastical decency in their dress and delight in what is unbecoming. They seek to conform to the laity and they exhibit outwardly in their dress whatever they are thinking in their minds. Therefore, with the approval of this sacred

council, we renew and order the careful observance of all the laws currently in force regarding the clothing, tonsure and habits of clerics, as to both shape and colour, and their hair-styles and the style and uprightness of their lives. These laws have been heeded far too little by both the secular and the regular clergy. Especially we order to be utterly abolished, with the same council's approval, the abuse whereby in certain regions some clerics and churchmen, both secular and regular, and even (which we deplore still more) prelates of churches, wear long gloves that are unnecessarily large and sumptuous, extending to their elbows, and clothes with slits at the back and sides, with furs covering the edges even of the slit parts. »

Pope Leo X, The Fifth Lateran Council, Session IX, 1514:

« Moreover, nothing impedes the church of God more than when unworthy prelates are accepted for the government of churches. Therefore, in the preferment of prelates, the Roman pontiffs must give much attention to the matter, especially because they will have to give an account to God at the last judgment about those given preferment by them to churches and monasteries. »

Pope Leo X, The Fifth Lateran Council, Session IX, 1514:

« Since the cardinals of the holy Roman church take precedence in honour and dignity over all the other members of the church after the sovereign pontiff, it is proper and right that they be distinguished beyond all others by the purity of their life and the excellence of their virtues. On that account, we not only exhort and advise them but also decree and order that henceforth each of the cardinals following the teaching of the Apostle, so live a sober, chaste and godly life that he shines out before people as one who abstains not merely from evil but from every appearance of evil. »

Pope Leo X, The Fifth Lateran Council, Session IX, 1514:

« Since the cardinals assist the Roman pontiff, the common father of all Christians, it is very improper for them to be patrons of or special pleaders for individuals. We have therefore decided, lest they adopt partiality of any kind, that they are not to set up as promoters or defenders of princes or communities or of any other persons against anyone, except to the extent that justice and equity demands and the dignity and rank of such people requires. Rather, separated from all private interest, let them be available and engage with all diligence in calming and settling any disputes. Let them promote with due piety the maintenance of the just business of princes and all other persons, especially the poor and religious, and let them offer help in accordance with their resources and their official responsibility to those who are oppressed and unjustly burdened. »

Pope Leo X, The Fifth Lateran Council, Session IX, 1514:

« [V]ery special provision must be made that our deeds be approved not only before God, whom we ought to please in the first place, but also before people so that we can offer to others an example to be imitated. »

Pope Leo X, The Fifth Lateran Council, Session XI, 1516:

« Leo, bishop, servant of the servants of God, with the approval of the sacred council, for an everlasting record. Under the protection of the supreme majesty by whose ineffable providence things in heaven and on earth are guided, as we carry out the office of watchman over the Lord's flock committed to us, insofar as this is granted to our weakness, we reflect within ourselves in great depth that, among many other important matters, the office of preaching is also our concern. Preaching is of the first importance, very necessary and of great effect and utility in the church, so long as it is being exercised rightly, from genuine charity towards God and our neighbour, and according to the precepts and examples of the holy fathers, who contributed a great deal to the church by publicly professing such things at the time of the establishment and propagation of the faith. For, our redeemer first did and taught, and by his command and example, the college of twelve apostles – the heavens alike proclaiming the glory of the true God through all the earth – led back from darkness the whole human race, which was held by the old bondage under the yoke of sin, and guided it to the light of eternal salvation. The apostles and then their successors propagated far and wide and rooted deeply the word itself through all the earth and unto the ends of the world. Therefore those who are now carrying this burden ought to remember and frequently reflect that they in turn, with respect to this office of preaching, are entering into and maintaining that succession of the author and founder of this office, Jesus Christ our most holy redeemer, of Peter and Paul, and of the other apostles and disciples of the Lord.

We have learnt from trustworthy sources that some preachers in our times (we record this with sorrow) do not attend to the fact that they are carrying out the office of those we have named, of the holy doctors of the church and of others professing sacred theology, who, ever standing by Christians and confronting false prophets striving to overturn the faith, have shown that the church militant remains unimpaired by her very nature; and that they ought to adopt only what the people who flock to their sermons will find useful, by means of reflection and practical application, for rooting out vices, praising virtues and saving the souls of the faithful. Reliable report has it, rather, that they are preaching many and various things contrary to the teachings and examples which we have mentioned, sometimes with scandal to the people. This

fact influences our attitude very deeply when we reflect within ourself that these preachers, unmindful of their duty, are striving in their sermons not for the benefit of the hearers but rather for their own self-display. They flatter the idle ears of some people who seem to have already reached a state that would make true the words of the Apostle writing to Timothy: “For, a time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.” These preachers make no attempt whatever to lead back the deceived and empty minds of such people to the path of right and truth. Indeed, they involve them in even greater errors. Without any reverence for the testimony of canon law, indeed contrary to canonical censures, twisting the sense of scripture in many places, often giving it rash and false interpretations, they preach what is false; they threaten, describe and assert to be present, totally unsupported by legitimate proofs and merely following their own private interpretation, various terrors, menaces and many other evils, which they say are about to arrive and are already growing; they very often introduce to their congregations certain futile and worthless ideas and other matters of this nature; and, what is more appalling, they dare to claim that they possess this information from the light of eternity and by the guidance and grace of the holy Spirit.

When these preachers spread this medley of fraud and error, backed by the false testimony of alleged miracles, the congregations whom they ought to be carefully instructing in the gospel message, and retaining and preserving in the true faith, are withdrawn by their sermons from the teaching and commands of the universal church. When they turn aside from the official sacred teachings, which they ought particularly to follow, they separate and move far from salvation those who listen to them. For, as a result of these and similar activities, the less educated people, as being more exposed to deceit, are very easily led into manifold errors, as they wander from the path of salvation and from obedience to the Roman church. Gregory, therefore, who was outstanding in this task, moved by the warmth of his charity, gave a strong exhortation and warning to preachers that, when about to speak, they approach the people with prudence and caution lest, caught up in the enthusiasm of their oratory, they entangle the hearts of their hearers with verbal errors as if with nooses, and while perhaps they wish to appear wise, in their delusion they foolishly tear asunder the sinews of the hoped-for virtue. For, the meaning of words is often lost when the hearts of the audience are bruised by too urgent and careless forms of speech.

Indeed, in no other way do these preachers cause greater harm and scandal to the less educated than when they preach on what should be left unspoken or when they introduce error by

teaching what is false and useless. Since such things are known to be totally opposed to this holy and divinely instituted religion, as being novelties and foreign to it, it is surely just for them to be examined seriously and carefully, lest they cause scandal for the christian people and ruin for the souls of their authors and of others. We therefore desire, in accord with the word of the prophet, Who makes harmony dwell in the house, to restore that uniformity which has lost esteem, and to preserve such as remains, insofar as we can with God's help, in the holy church of God, which by divine providence we preside over and which is indeed one, preaches and worships one God and firmly and sincerely professes one faith. We wish that those who preach the word of God to the people be such that God's church suffers no scandal from their preaching. If they are amenable to correction, let them abstain in future from these matters into which they have recently ventured. For it is clear that, in addition to the points which we have mentioned, a number of them are no longer preaching the way of the Lord in virtue and are not expounding the gospel, as is their duty, but rather invented miracles, new and false prophecies and other frivolities hardly distinguishable from old wives' tales. Such things give rise to great scandal since no account is taken of devotion and authority and of its condemnations and rejections. There are those who make attempts to impress and win support by bawling everywhere, not sparing even those who are honoured with pontifical rank and other prelates of the church, to whom they should rather be showing honour and reverence. They attack their persons and their state of life, boldly and without discrimination, and commit other acts of this kind. Our aim is that so dangerous and contagious an evil and so mortal a disease may be thoroughly wiped out and that its consequences may be so completely swept away that not even its memory remains.

We decree and ordain, with the approval of the sacred council, that nobody – whether a secular cleric or a member of any of the mendicant orders or someone with the right to preach by law or custom or privilege or otherwise – may be admitted to carry out this office unless he has first been examined with due care by his superior, which is a responsibility that we lay on the superior's conscience, and unless he is found to be fit and suitable for the task by his upright behaviour, age, doctrine, honesty, prudence and exemplary life. Wherever he goes to preach, he must provide a guarantee to the bishop and other local ordinaries concerning his examination and competence, by means of the original or other letters from the person who examined and approved him. We command all who undertake this task of preaching, or will later undertake it, to preach and expound the gospel truth and holy scripture in accordance with the exposition, interpretation and commentaries that the church or long use has approved and has accepted for teaching until now, and will accept in the future, without any addition contrary to its true meaning or in conflict with it. They are always to insist on the meanings which are in

harmony with the words of sacred scripture and with the interpretations, properly and wisely understood, of the doctors mentioned above. They are in no way to presume to preach or declare a fixed time for future evils, the coming of antichrist or the precise day of judgment; for Truth says, it is not for us to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. Let it be known that those who have hitherto dared to declare such things are liars, and that because of them not a little authority has been taken away from those who preach the truth.

We are placing a restriction on each and all of the said clerics, secular and regular and others, of whatever status, rank or order, who undertake this task. In their public sermons they are not to keep on predicting some future events as based on the sacred writings, nor presume to declare that they know them from the holy Spirit or from divine revelation, nor that strange and empty predictions are matters which must be firmly asserted or held in some other way. Rather, at the command of the divine word, let them expound and proclaim the gospel to every creature, rejecting vices and commending virtues. Fostering everywhere the peace and mutual love so much commended by our Redeemer, let them not rend the seamless garment of Christ and let them refrain from any scandalous detraction of bishops, prelates and other superiors and of their state of life. Yet these they rebuke and hurt before people generally, including the laity, not only heedlessly and extravagantly but also by open and plain reproof, with the names of the evildoers sometimes being stated by them.

Finally, we decree that the constitution of Pope Clement of happy memory beginning *Religiosi*, which we renew and approve by this present decree, must be observed by preachers without alteration, so that, preaching in these terms for the people's advantage and winning them for the Lord, they may deserve to gain interest on the talent received from him and to win his grace and glory. But if the Lord reveals to certain of them, by some inspiration, some future events in the church of God, as he promises by the prophet Amos and as the apostle Paul, the chief of preachers, says, Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, we have no wish for them to be counted with the other group of story-tellers and liars or to be otherwise hindered. For, as Ambrose bears witness, the grace of the Spirit himself is being extinguished if fervour in those beginning to speak is quietened by contradiction. In that case, a wrong is certainly done to the holy Spirit. The matter is important inasmuch as credence must not be easily given to every spirit and, as the Apostle states, the spirits have to be tested to see whether they come from God. It is therefore our will that as from now, by common law, alleged inspirations of this kind, before they are published, or preached to the people, are to be understood as reserved for examination by the apostolic see. If it is impossible to do this

without danger of delay, or some pressing need suggests other action, then, keeping the same arrangement, notice is to be given to the local ordinary so that, after he has summoned three or four knowledgeable and serious men and carefully examined the matter with them, they may grant permission if this seems to them to be appropriate. We lay the responsibility for this decision on their consciences. »

Council of Trent, Session XXII, Decree on Reformation, Chapter I:

« There is nothing that continually instructs others unto piety, and the service of God, more than the life and example of those who have dedicated themselves to the divine ministry. For as they are seen to be raised to a higher position, above the things of this world, others fix their eyes upon them as upon a mirror, and derive from them what they are to imitate. Wherefore clerics called to have the Lord for their portion, ought by all means so to regulate their whole life and conversation, as that in their dress, comportment, gait, discourse, and all things else, nothing appear but what is grave, regulated, and replete with religiousness; avoiding even slight faults, which in them would be most grievous; that so their actions may impress all with veneration. »

Pope Benedict XIV, *Ubi Primum*, 1740, To the Patriarchs, the Primate, the Archbishops, and the Bishops:

« Venerable Brothers, Greetings and Apostolic Benediction.

When it first pleased God to raise Us to the supreme See of Saint Peter, He entrusted to Us the power of the Vicar of Christ as governor of His universal Church. We heard the divine voice:

“Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.” The care of both the lambs of the Lord’s flock (who are the people scattered through the entire world) and of the sheep, (the bishops who act as tender parents of the lambs) is entrusted to the pope. Therefore, brothers, receive the words of your shepherd through this letter. You are called to share in Our concerns. Understand from Our warnings and exhortations how much the desire to fulfill Our duties presses upon Us. Keep in mind also the strength of Our love for you, which leads Us to earnestly desire the eternal joy of the shepherds which comes from the progress of the flock.

Importance of Clergy

Above all, see to it that the clergy excel in character and in zeal for divine worship and that ecclesiastical discipline is kept in good condition or restored where it has suffered. The example

of dedicated clerics is the best inspiration for the faithful. Therefore, direct the keenness of your mind so that those men are chosen for the clergy from whom it can reasonably be expected that their lives will command respect from all who walk in the law of the Lord and who go from virtue to virtue. Their work will bring spiritual benefit to your churches. It is better to have a few ministers who are upright and effective, than many who labor in vain to build up the Church. You are aware of how much caution the holy canons require the bishops to exercise in this matter. Do not allow yourselves to be led away from this rule, which should be observed in its entirety, by any human consideration or by the requests of patrons. Observe the precept of the Apostle not to conduct the laying on of hands too hastily-especially when it concerns the promotion to the sacred mysteries and Holy Orders. Attaining the age which the holy laws of the Church have prescribed for each order is not sufficient. Neither should everyone who is now in lower orders be indiscriminately promoted to a higher order, as if it is his right. You should diligently investigate whether the way of life of those in lower orders and their progress in sacred learning are such that it may be said to them: "Rise to a higher place." It is more expedient for some to remain in an inferior position, rather than be promoted to a higher one, which would bring danger to them and scandal to others.

Seminaries

2. Because this matter concerns those who are called to the Lord's portion, you should take care to educate them to piety, integrity of life, and to the canonical discipline from an early age. Where there are still no seminaries, they should be established as soon as possible. Where seminaries exist already, they should be enlarged if it is necessary due to the increased number of students. The bishops have already been instructed in the means to use to that end. We shall add other things to these instructions if We learn of their necessity from you. You should cherish these colleges with special concern by visiting them often, by studying the life, talent, and progress in studies of each of the young men, and by appointing suitable teachers and men endowed with an ecclesiastical spirit. Honor their literary exercises and their ecclesiastical functions with your presence occasionally. Finally, confer some benefice on those who are outstanding examples of virtue or who win the greatest honors. It should not grieve you to water these tender shoots in this manner as they mature. Your work will then bring you a happy harvest in an abundance of good laborers. Bishops usually complain that the harvest is indeed great, but the laborers are few. Perhaps it also ought to be lamented that the bishops did not expend the necessary efforts in order to prepare enough good laborers for the harvest. Good and strong laborers are not born, but made. But the making of them is a matter for the work and the skill of the bishops.

Selecting Clerics

3. It is of the utmost importance that you entrust the care of souls to exemplary men who are conspicuous for their doctrine, piety, purity, and good works. They should truly be and should be considered the light and the salt of the people. These men are your principal aides in forming the flock entrusted to your care, governing it, purifying it, leading it in the path of salvation, and rousing it to Christian virtue. You should choose as parish priests men who may be judged suited to the fruitful governing of people. Concentrate on this matter above everything else, so that all those who exercise the care of souls may nourish the people entrusted to them with salutary words at least on Sundays and other feast days. They should teach those things which the faithful must know for their salvation and explain the main principles of divine law and Catholic dogma. They should also teach the children the basics of that same faith once they have completely removed any wicked habits contrary to it. How can the people hear if there is no one to preach to them? How can they know the faith and lead holy lives if the men who have the care of their souls are sluggish, idle, or remiss? It is impossible to overstate the tremendous threat to the Christian community which arises when those who have care of men's souls neglect the training of the young, especially their catechetical instruction. Those who exercise this office and others who hear confessions would benefit greatly if you could see to it that they have a few days rest each year for spiritual exercise. They will be spiritually renewed by such a retreat and strengthened from on high. They will return to their tasks quickened and eager to work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Necessity of Residency

4. You know, brothers, that the divine precept commands all pastors to know their sheep and to nourish them by preaching, by the administration of the sacraments, and by the example of every good work. Those priests are by no means able to fulfill these or the other duties of the pastoral office who neither look after their flock nor assiduously guard the Lord's vineyard, over which they have been placed as watchmen. Therefore, you should remain at your post and maintain your personal residence in the church or diocese to which you have been bound by the duty of your office. The many decrees of the general councils and the constitutions of Our predecessors clearly commanded this.

Do not consider it appropriate for a bishop to be absent from his diocese for any reason for a period of three months each year. For this to be permitted to bishops, it is necessary that there

be a compelling reason requiring such an absence. At the same time, it should be determined that no harm would come to the flock in the interim. Remember that He who sees and knows everything will be your judge. Therefore, see to it that your reason is truly one which can be judged worthy by the Prince of the shepherds who will demand an account of the sheep entrusted to you. Certainly a shepherd would try in vain to protect himself in that judgment with the excuse that the wolf captured and devoured the sheep while he was away and unaware. If we consider the matter carefully, it is apparent that the evil which besets a diocese abandoned by its bishop can be attributed to him whose duty it is to recall his subjects who stray from the right path with warnings, to entice them with examples, to strengthen them by word, and to keep them together by his authority and love. In addition, everyone understands that it is much better for others to take care of business elsewhere than for the bishop himself, tarrying outside his diocese, to do so. The bishop, and not administrators, should take care of the protecting and the governing of the flock. As suitable and upright as the priests may be, nevertheless the sheep are not accustomed to hearing the voice of the priests as the voice of the true shepherd. Nor can their vicarious work substitute for the vigilance and the work of the bishop, to whom the special grace of the Holy Spirit gives assistance for this matter, as experience clearly shows.

Visitation

5. As in every domestic matter, there is nothing more beneficial than for the head of the family to examine everything frequently and nourish the labor and diligence of his family with his own vigilance. We therefore enjoin upon you the obligation of visiting your churches and dioceses yourselves (unless a serious matter arises which requires you to entrust this duty to others) order to acquaint yourselves with your sheep and with the appearance of your flock. That sentence which we recalled above is full of fear and terror: namely that no excuse is allowed to the shepherd if the wolf devours the sheep and the shepherd does not know it. The bishop will be unaware of many things and many things will be hidden from him if he does not visit every part of his diocese himself and if he does not look, listen, and examine everywhere for which evils a remedy may be prepared. He should probe the causes of those evils and then take preventive measures lest they come to life again. The condition of human weakness is such that thorn bushes, prickles, and weeds grow gradually in the Lord's field, the cultivation of which is entrusted to the bishop. If the gardener does not return frequently to pluck them out, his seedlings will wither with the passage of time.

But neither is it sufficient that you examine your dioceses and that there is provision for the administration of the dioceses by your precepts. It remains that you put into effect those things

which were decided during your visitations. For even the best laws are worthless unless that which is sanctioned in words is actually executed by those to whom this task falls. Therefore, after you have prepared remedies to cast out or prevent diseases of the soul, do not relax your concern. Rather, promote with all your strength the execution of the precepts you decreed. You can achieve this best through repeated visitations.

Exhortation

6. Finally, to cover many matters in a few words, it is fitting that you yourselves be the promoters, the leaders, and the teachers in every sacred and ecclesiastical function and in every exercise of divine worship and of piety. Thus, both the clergy and the whole flock may be enlightened, as if by the brightness of your holiness and may be warmed by the fire of your love. Therefore, be an example for your flock in the frequent celebration of the Mass, in devout offering, in solemn celebration of Masses, in administering the sacraments, in reciting the breviary, in respect for and in the splendor of the churches in the discipline of your household and of your spiritual family, in love for the poor and in helping them, in looking after the sick and supporting them, in welcoming pilgrims with hospitality, and finally in every good work of Christian virtue. Thus, all may be imitators of you just as you are imitators of Christ as is fitting for bishops whom the Holy Spirit placed in charge of the Church of God which Jesus redeemed by His blood. Look back often on the apostles to whose place you have succeeded. Follow in their footsteps in works, in vigilance, in bearing hardship, in keeping the wolves away from your sheep, in removing the roots of vices, in teaching the evangelical law, and in leading back to salutary penance those who have strayed.

The omnipotent and merciful God will surely be with you. In that comforter, we can do everything. We trust that religious princes will give you their help. In addition, this Holy See will assist you whenever you think Our Apostolic authority will be helpful. May all of you whom We love in Christ Jesus come to Us with confidence as Our brothers, Our helpers, and Our crown of glory. Come to the Holy Roman Church, your mother and the head and teacher of all the churches. The source of religion comes from her. The rock of faith and the fount of priestly unity resides here, as well as the teaching of uncorrupted truth. We desire nothing more and find nothing more pleasant than to serve the glory of God with you and to work for the protection and the propagation of the Catholic faith. We want to save souls for whom We would willingly offer Our lives if necessary. Finally, may the great reward which waits for you rouse you and spur you on. When the Prince of Shepherds appears, you will receive an unfading crown of glory and a crown of justice which is reserved for those faithful dispensers

of the mysteries of God and for those energetic and vigilant observers of the house of Israel, the Holy Church of God. Though unworthy, We take the place of God on earth; accordingly, We bless your brotherhood lovingly. We impart Our apostolic blessing to your clergy and faithful people with paternal affection.

Given in Rome, at St. Mary Major, on the third day of December, 1740, the first year of Our pontificate. »

Pope Benedict XIV, Constitution “Cum Illud” concerning the concursus for vacant parishes, 14 December, 1742:

« As it was a thing the Catholic Church always dreaded that unworthy priests or priests without the virtues of their state should ever get the care of souls or the custody of the flock of Christ—for any congregation can be only tottering to ruin and disorder when the virtues required in all are not found even in the head—the sacred canons and especially the Council of Trent prudently ordained that the government of parishes should be entrusted only to those who from their infancy to mature years had so laudably borne the pressure of ecclesiastical discipline as to leave it little short of sin to doubt their superior qualifications for the duties of rector on the ground of learning, morality and length of service. In this regard an opinion somehow got abroad that the Council of Trent did not rigorously prescribe the appointment of the most worthy of the candidates to a vacant parish—that the Fathers only intended to provide for the exclusion of those who are positively unworthy. But this interpretation, as erroneous and very different from the true and genuine meaning of the Council, our predecessor Innocent XI., of holy memory, proscribed. He at the same time pointed out how much need there is of circumspection in conferring the pastoral office. »

Pope Benedict XIV, Cum Religiosi, 1754, To the Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops of Italy:

« We could not rejoice, however, when it was subsequently reported to Us that in the course of religious instruction preparatory to Confession and Holy Communion, it was very often found that these people were ignorant of the mysteries of the faith, even of those matters which must be known by necessity of means; consequently, they were ineligible to partake of the Sacraments. Although the ministers mentioned continue unceasing instruction to eradicate this great evil, yet this evil greatly distresses the people requesting and waiting for their dispensation. For oppressed by poverty and begging for their food with their own hands, they wish to leave the city as quickly as possible, to return to their homelands and marry; this is the

purpose of their journey, and they are undeterred by the discomforts of public and heavy penance.

Bishops Not at Fault

2. At the start of Our pontificate, We wrote an encyclical letter to increase the zeal of Our Venerable Brothers to ensure that in every diocese the elements and precepts of Christian doctrine be explained and learned. We have read both the old and new reports of their diocesan synods; We know they are filled with instructions and exhortations, and that they include everything helpful for transmitting Christian doctrine. Therefore We heartily assert Our conviction that in this matter none of the bishops can be found lacking in the Apostolic office entrusted to him; the fact that some members of their dioceses are ignorant is not due to their fault or negligence. It must clearly be attributed either to the obstinacy of their subjects who, despite the commands of their superiors, have avoided instruction in their Christian doctrine; they have, in fact, seldom if ever gathered to hear the word of God explained in preaching. Or it could be attributed to the slowness of some for learning what is taught. Or perhaps it is because that although they learned the elements of Christian teaching in their earliest years, when they were older, they ceased learning and building upon the foundation of their youth. Because of this, they are gradually reduced to a state like that of people who were not taught in their early years or who never received instruction in Christian doctrine. Although these setbacks have continued in spite of every measure taken by Our Venerable Brothers, We must nonetheless stir up their zeal again by this encyclical letter. And they are obligated anew to take every step and care possible in this matter on which the eternal salvation of the souls entrusted to them depends.

Work of St. Charles Borromeo

3. Each one of you, Venerable Brothers, has thoroughly understood the measures taken by St. Charles Borromeo, both in his own large diocese of Milan and in the entire province of which he was Metropolitan. He took these measures in order to establish a fruitful method of transmitting Christian doctrine, and he labored greatly in order to strongly sustain this religious education. And when he observed that his toil had not borne the fruit he desired, he did not despair, but instead increased his cares and concerns as is seen in the fifth synod of Milan: “We have hitherto shown great care in looking after the instruction of individual Christians in the fundamental doctrines in the Christian faith; but since we realize that we have profited little so far, we are led by the importance of the matter to make these additional

decisions.” For it was enough for that holy prelate to see that the need still existed, and thus to address himself to the work a second time; in this endeavor, he added cares to cares and minimized the many measures he had employed up till then. In like manner, it was enough for the Assyrian king to be informed that the nations did not know the commands of God: “and it was announced to the king of the Assyrians, and said: the nation which you transferred and sent to dwell in the cities of Samaria do not know the laws of God’s land.” He at once sent a priest to teach those nations the commands of God: “And the King of the Assyrians gave commands, saying: bring there one of the priests which you led off as prisoners and let him go and dwell with them and teach them the laws of God’s land” (4 Kings 17).

Teach the Fundamentals of the Faith

4. Therefore with the example of St. Charles Borromeo before Us, We encourage you and implore you by the mercy of Jesus Christ not to despair in this important work of handing on the fundamentals of the Christian faith, even if hitherto you have devoted all your zeal and care to it. See to it that every minister performs carefully the measures laid down by the holy Council of Trent and by the statutes of your synods: that on fixed days school-masters and mistresses should teach Christian doctrine; that confessors should perform this part of their duty whenever anyone stands at their tribunal who does not know what he must by necessity of means know to be saved; that priests should also provide this instruction before uniting spouses in marriage; that fathers of families and lords of houses should be gravely advised of the duty imposed on them of being themselves instructed and of seeing to the instruction in the commandments of Christian doctrine of their sons and of the members of their household; that the practice of reciting aloud properly-composed acts of Faith, Hope and Charity by the priest and people before or after the parish mass should be preserved in the dioceses in which it is customary and be carefully introduced where it is not. Parish priests should not avoid their duty of at least on feast days, explaining the Gospel to the people from the altar when there is no sermon. In addition, they are obliged to teach them the chief mysteries of our holy religion, the commandments of God and the Church, and everything which is necessary for their worthy partaking of the Sacraments. Preachers should also follow this path, recalling the salutary advice that they should join instruction to exhortation whenever their hearers stand in need of both. Finally, the best method for instructing ignorant men in Christian doctrine is indicated by St. Augustine who says (de Cath. Rud., 10) that the most fruitful procedure is to ask questions in a friendly fashion after the explanation; from this questioning one can learn whether each one understood what he heard or whether the explanation needs repeating. In order that the learner grasp the matter, “we must ascertain by questioning whether the one

being catechised has understood, and in accordance with his response, we must either explain more clearly and fully or not dwell further on what is known to them, etc. But if a man is very slow, he must be mercifully helped and the most necessary doctrines especially should be briefly imparted to him.” We are assured that you yourselves will pursue many more paths than We point out to you in this encyclical letter. In the meantime, Venerable Brothers, We lovingly impart to you and to the flock entrusted to your care Our Apostolic Blessing.

Given at Castelgandolfo on the 26th of June 1754 in the fourteenth year of Our Pontificate. »

Pope Clement XIII, A Quo Die, 1756:

« Let swelling of the spirit and stubborn customs depart from episcopal government. We who say we dwell in Christ should walk just as He walked. [16] We should not seek an example anywhere else than from the Lord Jesus, whom we should imitate. For when the disagreement among the disciples arose about who should be reckoned the greatest, He said: “Among pagans it is the kings who lord it over them. This must not happen with you. No; the greatest among you must behave as the least; the leader as if he were the one who serves. Here I am among you as one who serves.” [17] Therefore, just as the Lord Jesus Christ forbade the apostles to rule, we believe that we have come not to rule the Church but to serve it. May we concentrate all our thoughts, labors, and counsels to that purpose, so that we might preserve safe and sound in the Church those sheep entrusted to us by the Lord. We should desire nothing more than their welfare.

Therefore, elders, We speak to you in the words of the prince of the apostles: “I am an elder myself and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is to be revealed. Be shepherds of the flock of God.” [18] Watch over the sheep, not like the hired hand who sees the wolf coming, abandons them, and runs away, [19] but gladly, because God wants it. [20] Be like the shepherd who gives his life for his sheep, [21] not for sordid money but freely. [22] Do not lord over the clergy, but become examples for the flock. There is no more offensive or dangerous poison than the desire to rule. If a bishop is corrupted by this, it is inevitable that the church entrusted to him will be shaken, if not destroyed. Therefore, a bishop should not want to be powerful, but rather to be useful. Having made himself an example for the flock, he should like a torch radiate blameless conduct, moral integrity, piety, and religion. When the people see this, they will walk happily and quickly in the way of the Lord, for they will see that they have been given a leader and not a master.

It is especially characteristic of love to be lifted up with joy when someone in the Church of God flourishes in piety and learning, someone who longs to save souls and fulfills his priestly duty with industry, labor and diligence. We have often thought that such a man is exposed to the envy of his neighbor. [23] Every sane man sees that he is being destroyed by the disparagement of the envious, and it is not fitting that this happen. When Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, [24] Joshua, son of Nun, warned Moses that he should prohibit them. Moses responded that he very much wanted everybody to prophesy. He said: “are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people would prophesy and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!” [25] The love of the bishop considers it a crime to burn with anger. It does not consider the man led astray by harmful desires as an enemy but rather lays hold of him as a brother, coaxing him, encouraging him, and warning him. [26] It calls him back from error and leads him back to the path of righteousness. If something should happen which requires a more serious verbal castigation, beware lest the words cut too harshly. Let severity abstain from every affront.

We cannot be silent concerning the useless desire for glory which a certain bishop correctly called hidden destruction. Once it has shown itself, there is perhaps nothing more hostile to love. Servility creeps up on whatever bishop this deadly plague gets hold of and infects; it attacks his most noble part, the soul. It captures him with its poisonous flatteries and constantly besieges him. It drives the wretch to the point that he no longer seeks the glory of God but only his own, increasing enormously that distorted and excessive self-esteem by which each of us is greatly deceived. Even the Lord Jesus denied that He sought this. [27] Detraction and lying follow flattery as destructive attendants and ministers, so that nothing is left safe and sound for the eminent and virtuous men in the company of the bishop. For this reason, Solomon in his wisdom warns that it is better to be seized by wisdom than deceived by the flattery of fools. [28] He also says: “Turn your back on the mouth that misleads; keep your distance from lips that deceive.” [29] Bishops should always keep this in mind: “When a ruler listens to false reports, all his ministers will be scoundrels.” [30] We must stop being envious of glory. [31] Thus, glory will be the downfall of those who think earthly things are important. [32] Let us look higher-let us look upon that heavenly home of eternal glory. Let us not think that our true, solid, and serious glory comes from the lips of men. [33] We have all sinned, and we all need the glory of God. Having died to our sins, [34] we should not glory in ourselves. The Father should be glorified in the Son, [35] so that we might be filled with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ for the glory of God, [36] to whom alone belong all glory, majesty, authority, and power. [37]

Among the fruits of justice, mercy to the poor should certainly be considered the most important. That justice which comes from faith belongs to Jesus Christ. [38] It is true that “if one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, ‘I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty’ without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that?” [39] Thus, the apostle James questions all Christians. Every faithful person, especially everyone who is a little more wealthy than the others, should out of mercy come to the assistance of the poor. They require our generosity as their principal right, for we hold the goods of the Church, which are the prayers of the faithful, the price of sins, and the inheritance of the poor, not as our own but as if in trust. It is not justifiable to use it for ourselves in such a way that nothing remains for those who could rightfully cry out, “What you spend is ours!” Where does such a great abundance of things come to us from, if not from the gifts of the Church? Like a bride, we should be content [40] with the good things we receive, that is, food and shelter, [41] considering piety with sufficiency as a great profit. It is certainly a special gift when it replenishes more abundantly those things which we need to protect, nourish, and embellish the bride. It is certainly everybody’s great gain, because we obtain grace from God by almsgiving. Our blind mind is illuminated by it and we who are broken and fallen with a natural weakness are raised up and supported. When we pour forth our souls in desire and replenish our afflicted spirit, our light will rise in the darkness and our shadows will become like noon, for the Lord will fill our souls with his splendors. [42]

Actually to obtain light for the mind from God and to obtain the grace and devotion without which the episcopal duties would languish, almsgiving has great power. But it is no more efficacious than prayer and the most holy sacrifice of the Mass. The apostle orders us to pray without interruption and to give thanks to God in everything because it is the will of God that we not extinguish the spirit of faith and love. [43] This spirit helps us in our weakness and expresses our plea through groans that could never be put into words. [44] If a certain bishop needs wisdom, he should ask God for it and God will give it to him. [45] Let him not hesitate to seek anything in faith. He should ask that God arouse in his soul as great a faith as Moses had when he saw the invisible God. [46] It is necessary to have humility to attain that faith. David cried: “I am poor and needy. God help me.” [47] These words of the Lord show us how great is the power of perseverance and persistence in prayer: “It is necessary to pray always without ceasing.” [48] In that constancy and perseverance, let us wait for the majesty of God if there is a delay: it will appear and will not deceive us because it comes gradually. [49] We should not be concerned only about our weaknesses, but we should also consider that the problems of others afflict us and are on the same level as our own. Our prayers should be addressed more ardently

and more perseveringly to God. It is through this prayer that we obtain from the Lord, as a decisive intermediary of the Church's faithful, the faith, hope, and love of all – virtues which are necessary for each and every one of us and for all the faithful in the world. The holy sacrifice of the Eucharist will build the road for us to beseech God and will open the way to obtain anything we want. For this reason, entangled in the great preoccupations of our office, we shall not refuse to offer the holy body and blood of Jesus Christ frequently to God. We do not think that we have been given any greater task than to offer repeatedly a sacrifice of appeasement to God the Father for our sins and those of the faithful.

As We are in a certain manner intermediaries between God and mankind, We offer to God the prayers of the people, and in the same way We communicate the will of God to them. This is the will of God: Our sanctification. [50] Thus it is Our duty to proclaim and reveal the mystery of Christ, [51] just as it is fitting for Us to speak. It is necessary, first of all to teach this to the people: The body of Christ was similar to ours, with the exception of sin. It is not only but also sanctifying, capable of suffering, exposed to death, and able to stand in the stead of all of us. Christ offered his body, and us at the same time, to satisfy divine justice. [52] He handed himself – and us at the same time – to all the torments which our crimes merited. He was condemned to the sorrows of death and suffered the curse given to sinners by the law: death under the harshest tortures. He satisfied the law, for the death and burial of Jesus Christ abolished all sin. The Lord Jesus rose from the grave with the same flesh but it was stripped of its mortality and adorned with glory of eternity. In order that they may be justified, it is necessary for sinners to die with Christ, who died in their place and in their name. Then they must enter the grave with Christ, in order to leave behind the flesh defiled by sin. They must hand over the old man to the wrath of God and to the death of the sinner, so that by baptism a new man might return to life in us and live again with Christ in immortality and eternal glory. Therefore all Christians should think about that eternal life and not this brief one. They should remove from their hearts the desire for pleasures and riches which are the instruments of pleasure. Cast off pride, in which all harmful desires are contained. The world is passing away, as well as what it craves for; however, he who keeps the will of God will endure forever. [53]

You can easily see, Venerable Brothers, how important it is for you yourselves to teach the people these and all other things which pertain to God's mysteries. Therefore, you should carefully consider that those whom you choose to exercise the priestly ministry and to teach the people the fundamentals of Christianity should possess great purity of life, moral integrity, chastity, justice, piety, and devotion. How serious it would be if something bad, if something

vicious, if something perverse were to infect their character with bad habits. Cautiously and prudently remove this danger from the pastors. Help and instruct each of your neighbors with salutary advice. Give the soul of the faithful wings with which to fly from the earth to contemplate heavenly matters; once it is snatched away from the world, give that soul to God and recall the divine image in it to its original purity. On the other hand, it should not be said that pastors who ask to give an account of their lives cannot themselves bear this scrutiny. Nor should they reproach the character of another, so that they themselves must be contradicted. The learning which is perceived as worthy of a clergyman should attain pure and holy habits. They should have a knowledge of the Scriptures: “All Scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people’s lives and teaching them to be holy that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” [54] They should go to both testaments of the Bible, to the traditions of the Church, and to the writings of the holy fathers, as if they were going to springs from which pours forth a pure and undefiled teaching of faith and character. They should read often and reflect upon the Roman Catechism, the summation of Catholic teaching, which provides holy sermons to give to the faithful.

In considering someone’s suitability for the ministry, do not rely only on individual enthusiasm or on someone’s recommendation. You should consider as best suited to be a faithful minister and to receive a part of the Lord’s flock the man whose timid virtue shirks the ministry. “Do not be too quick to lay hands on any man” [55] which happens if we do not consider and test the men over and over again. Lest we pay the price to God for imprudent rashness and share in another’s sin, [56] let him be tested carefully and accurately and judged severely. It should not weary you if we dwell a little longer on this matter which requires great attention. In whatever manner the priests behave, the majority of the people will behave in the same way. Everyone looks upon them – especially if they are parish priests – as if in a mirror. For this reason, nobody deserves anything more destructive from the Church than evil priests, who infect the people with their vices and so corrupt the Church that they seem to harm it more by their example than by their sin.

Associate with distinguished men in the sacred ministry, not because we consider ourselves inadequate in the duty of preaching the gospel, but rather so that we might seem to leave in the hands of others the nets which the Lord gave to us to become fishers of men. [57] The principal duty of the bishop is to preach the word of God, for the apostle cried: “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. It is a duty which has been laid on me.” [58] The Lord Jesus Christ did not send him primarily to baptize- -even though this is a holy action – but especially to

preach the gospel. [59] We know that the ministry of the word held first place in the minds of the apostles and that these holy men did not neglect this duty. [60] For this reason they thought it fitting to entrust to deacons the rest of the charitable works toward their neighbors. St. Paul writes to Timothy: "Make use of the time until I arrive by reading to the people, preaching, and teaching." [61] If someone feels that he lacks the ability to preach or says that his talents do not measure up to the responsibility, do not allow him to neglect his duty in other matters which pertain to the word of God. Therefore, if the bishop commands the priests to teach the basics of Christian doctrine to the children, he should also give his assistance in that work. He should join himself as an assistant to the pastors in teaching the faithful, so that his duty of preaching the word might be preserved on all sides. This should make everybody hasten to fulfill his duty. Thus, he should not feel it burdensome to administer the sacraments to the faithful occasionally with his brother priests, to enter the choir in the meantime and sing the psalms with the canons, and to preside over the meetings which he has convened. From this the priests will receive a great share in the spirit of his holy ministry, just as the seventy men received the Spirit in the time of Moses. The people who witness this will be filled with the greatest esteem for divine worship, and the tainted men will be frightened away from the sacred ministry by the same venerable spectacle, so that they will not dare in the least to aspire to it.

Because the bishop cannot manage the Church and supervise his flock if he is away, you should not be absent from your churches for any length of time. This was solemnly ratified by natural law and by the holy canons, especially by the decrees of the Council of Trent. The bishop should visit all the places in his diocese to protect the power of their laws when they begin to fail, either through the laziness of the ministers or through the stubbornness of the faithful. If there is a serious and necessary reason for you to leave your diocese and if it is necessary to be absent for any length of time, We ask you not to allow the Church to be weakened by the desire of her pastor. Whenever you are absent, this danger is present.

In addition, example should accompany words. We should show ourselves in all things as an example of good works [62] so that our opponents will respect us and not have anything bad to say about us. [63] Deeds should not be silent without words, nor should the lack of deeds shame the words. In addition, we believe in our heart that the perfect leader of the Church has been furnished with the perfect goods of the greatest virtue, so that his life might be adorned by what he says and his teaching by what he lives. The home of modesty should be our own, as well as the teacher of modesty. The ecclesiastical discipline which we follow should be full of dignity and harmony. If we are not committed to anybody's will and pleasure, we will not

indulge in the softness and weakness of our spirit and we will not single out anyone for special treatment. This often creates great turmoil in the administration of the Church and gives serious offense, providing contempt and envy for the bishop.

As for what concerns Us, We have already taken care [64] that We establish as bishops in the various countries those who bring to the episcopacy a sound doctrine, a life beyond reproach, and a mind prepared for all things for the sake of Jesus Christ. We believe that the responsibility should go to him who presides over it; let him not swell up with the greatness of the honor but diminish in humility. In scrutinizing and testing men whom We want to place over such a great responsibility, We shall use you as witnesses and authorities, trusting in the holy devotion of your testimony and in your faith. We do not doubt in the least that you will not use any human rationale, but only thoughts for Him who has called you to the work of the ministry for building up the body of Christ. [65]

It remains, Venerable Brothers, that We advise you concerning the fortitude and strength of spirit needed to oppose those things which are against the orthodox faith, which harm piety or which damage the integrity of moral living. Let us be strong in the spirit of the Lord, in good judgment, and in courage. [66] We should not be like dumb watchdogs unable to bark, [67] allowing our flocks to fall prey to looting and our sheep to be devoured by every wild animal in the field. [68] Nor should anything deter us from throwing ourselves into battle for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls: “Think of the way he endured such opposition from sinners.” [69] If we are afraid of the audacity of worthless men, it affects the strength of the episcopacy and its sublime and divine power to govern the Church. Nor can we Christians endure or exist any longer – if it has come to that – if we become overly frightened by the snares or threats of the damned. Therefore, trusting not in ourselves but in the God who raises the dead to life, [70] we despise human affairs and cry out to the Lord: You are my hope in the day of disaster. [71] Let us never be exhausted in body or in spirit, for we are fellow workers with God. [72] The Lord Jesus is with us always even to the end of time. [73] Therefore let us not be weakened by scandal or persecution, lest we seem ungrateful for God’s favor, since his assistance is as strong as His promises are true.

In the Last Judgment We shall be called to give account on behalf of everybody and before everybody who is reckoned in the name of Christ. Therefore We beseech you that if some scandal or disagreement arises which you are unable to put down, to refer it to this See of the blessed Prince of the apostles. As from the head and apex of the episcopacy, that very episcopacy and every authority which bears the same name comes from here. All waters flow

from here as if from their very source, and they flow uncorrupted from a pure head through the various regions of the whole world. From here all the churches take what the water worthy of clean bodies avoids teaching and the people whom, as though fouled in unpurged filth, the water avoids washing. We trust first of all in the strength of God, then in the protection of St. Peter, whose care holds all present. We shall help you with advice, resources, and authority, for We are ready to be very near you, [74] to keep the churches and the brothers safe and sound. As for the rest, We trust in God under the weight of this burden we have received; [75] since He is the originator of this burden, He will also help us. In order that human weakness does not falter under the greatness of His grace, He who gave the dignity will also give the strength. Meanwhile in humble entreaty, beseech God in His merciful goodness to subdue now those who fight against Us, to strengthen your faith, and to increase devotion and peace. May He produce in Us, His humble servant, whom He wanted to oversee the government of His Church and to show the riches of His grace, enough strength in such a labor. May He make Us useful for your protection, and may He strive to extend to Our Papacy what was given to the age, for the profit of devotion. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you; We bless you and We greet you with a holy kiss. We lovingly impart to all of you, brother priests, and to all the faithful of your churches Our apostolic blessing. Given in Rome at St. Mary Major on September 14, in the year 1758 in the first year of Our pontificate.

Notes:

16. 1 Jn 2:6. 17. Lk 22:25. 18. 1 Pt 5:1-2. 19. Jn 10:12. 20. 1 Pt 5:1-2. 21. Jn 10:11. 22. 1 Pt 5:1-2. 23. Eccl. 4:4. 24. Nm 11:27. 25. Nm 11:29. 26. 2 Thes 3:15. 27. Jn 8:50. 28. Wis 7:6. 29. Prv 4:24. 30. Prov 29:12. 31. Gal 5:26. 32. Phil 3:19. 33. Rom 3:23. 34. 1 Pt 2:24. 35. Jn 14:13. 36. Phil 1:11. 37. Jude 1:25. 38. Phil 3:9. 39. Jas 2:15. 40. 1 Tm 6:6. 41. 1 Tm 6:8. 42. Is 58:10,11. 43. 1 Thes 5:17-18. 44. Rom 8:26. 45. Jas 1:5. 46. Heb 11:27. 47. Ps 70:6. 48. Lk 18:1. 49. Hab 2:3. 50. 1 Thes 4:3. 51. Col 4:3. 52. 1 Pt 3:18. 53. 1 Jn 2:17. 54. 2 Tm 3:16-17. 55. 1 Tm 5:22. 56. 1 Tm 5:22. 57. Mt 4:19. 58. 1 Cor 9:16. 59. 1 Cor 1:17. 60. Acts 6:2,4. 61. 1 Tm 4:13. 62. Ti 2:7. 63. Ti 2:8. 64. Ps 76:5. 65. Ept 4:12. 66. Mi 3:8. 67. Is 56:10. 68. Ez 34:8. 69. Heb 12:3. 70. 2 Cor 1:9. 71. Jer 17:17. 72. 1 Cor 3:9. 73. Mt 28:20. 74. 2 Cor 12:15. 75. 1 Thes 2:2. »

Pope Clement XIV, Cum Summi, 1769, To Bishops, Archbishops, Patriarchs and Primate:
« As for the rest, we consider it superfluous to review with you the other aspects of your pastoral office in any detail. For why should We pursue details and exhort you in matters you clearly know and of which, moreover, you have the added advantage of day-to-day experience and a spiritual outlook fully consonant with your function? One thing only We will mention:

try to follow the example of our Leader and the Chief of the apostles in all things, and to exemplify in yourselves that model of holiness, charity, and humility. For if Christ, assuming the weakness of our flesh, wished that men reclaimed by His humility and love become adoptive sons of God and His coheirs, then what can be better than for Us to preserve this union of men with Christ, and to ourselves as an example to all? For what other reason is there for him who preaches the gospel for Sion to climb a high mountain? If once you are inflamed with this desire, then this same ardor will spread among all your people. Indeed the force and authority of the pastor for moving the spirits of his flock is truly marvellous. For when they recognize that all his thoughts and actions are conformed to this model of true virtue, when they see in him nothing harsh, nothing arrogant, and nothing exalted, but rather charity, meekness, and humility, then truly they will feel themselves drawn most keenly to imitate these qualities. Moreover, when they see him paying no attention to private gain, instead serving the advantage of everyone else, coming to the aid of the needy with his resources, of the afflicted with his consolation, of the ignorant with his teaching, of all men with his service, advice and piety, even preferring their salvation to his life, they will listen to his voice as he teaches, exhorts, implores, and even blames and reproves in a most loving manner. For if pastors are hampered by private interests and prefer worldly things to heavenly, how can they rouse others to love of God and mutual kindness? If they seek after wealth, pleasure, honors, how can they rouse others to the contempt of human things? If they are puffed up with pride and arrogance, how can they rouse others to meekness and humility? Therefore, since you have taken upon yourselves the office of instructing souls in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, you must adhere to his holiness, innocence, and gentleness. Consider, too, that your proper business, is to instruct the people in this fashion, and that by carrying out this task correctly will come all your praise and good fortune, from neglecting it, your calamity and turpitude. Therefore, seek only those riches that come from gaining souls for Christ. Seek only that glory which comes from promoting divine worship, from adding to the beauty of the house of God, and from extirpating vice and promoting virtue.

Not even when you have been long and much tried in these labors should you think that there will ever be a limit to practicing virtue. To be sure, it is the condition of your office, the nature of the episcopal life, never to be free from cares or to attain leisure. But the expectation of the immortal and infinite reward awaiting you will lighten all troubles. Moreover, in addition to this hope of immortality, you will experience abundant joy even in sustaining the labors of the pastoral life, when you behold your people joined with the mutual bonds of charity, honesty, and piety and when you behold all the other outstanding fruits of your vigilance and toils gained for the Church. Would that We might see that splendid felicity of religion of ancient

days returned to the Church in this time of Our apostolate as a result of the unanimous accord of all our wills and labors. »

Pope Pius VI, *Inscrutabile*, 1775, To the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Entire Catholic Church:

« Therefore, since you know that the Church's chief good derives from admitting only those who are fully qualified into the clergy, We do not have to remind you to observe carefully the sanctions established in this matter by the canons. Prevent from entering the Church's service all who lack exceptional moral holiness, who are uninstructed in the law of the Lord, and who give little or no promise of becoming energetic members of the clergy. For instead of proving helpers to you in feeding and guiding your flock, they will increase your toil and troubles. They will hinder you from ensuring that the Lord receives from his workers the fruits of the vineyard which Christ in strictest justice will expect from you at the final judgment. A man who is going to be a priest should excel in holiness and learning. For God rejects as priests those who have rejected knowledge, and only the man who unites moral piety with the pursuit of knowledge can be a suitable worker in the Lord's harvest. Since this cannot occur without careful education, it has been decreed accordingly that each diocese should establish a college for clerics in accordance with its means; if such a college already exists, it should be carefully preserved. For how would young men, whose age impels them down the easy path, persevere in ecclesiastical training or make such progress in humane and sacred studies unless they were instructed in piety and religion from their early years and practiced in the interpretation of literature?

Such colleges have been established and carefully equipped with suitable regulations and even greatly expanded in individual dioceses as Benedict XIV recommended to each of you as an indispensable part of your office. [Encyclical of 1741] So just as We must praise the outstanding labor and concern shown in founding and expanding these colleges, We must also urge on strongly those in whose diocese a college has not been established or completed. »

Pope Pius VI, *Inscrutabile*, 1775, To the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Entire Catholic Church:

« Therefore cast out the old leaven, remove the evil from your midst. Forcefully and carefully banish poisonous books from the eyes of your flock, and at once courageously set apart those who have been infected, to prevent them harming the rest. The holy Pope Leo used to say, "We can rule those entrusted to us only by pursuing with zeal for the Lord's faith those who destroy and those who are destroyed and by cutting them off from sound minds with the utmost

severity to prevent the plague spreading.” [13] In doing this We exhort and advise you to be all of one mind and in harmony as you strive for the same object, just as the Church has one faith, one baptism, and one spirit. As you are joined together in the hierarchy, so you should unite equally with virtue and desire.

The affair is of the greatest importance since it concerns the Catholic faith, the purity of the Church, the teaching of the saints, the peace of the empire, and the safety of nations. Since it concerns the entire body of the Church, it is a special concern of yours because you are called to share in Our pastoral concern, and the purity of the faith is particularly entrusted to your watchfulness. “Now therefore, Brothers, since you are overseers among God’s people and their soul depends on you, raise their hearts to your utterance,” [14] that they may stand fast in faith and achieve the rest which is prepared for believers only. Beseech, accuse, correct, rebuke and fear not: for ill-judged silence leaves in their error those who could be taught, and this is most harmful both to them and to you who should have dispelled the error. The holy Church is powerfully refreshed in the truth as it struggles zealously for the truth. In this divine work you should not fear either the force or favor of your enemies. The bishop should not fear since the anointing of the Holy Spirit has strengthened him: the shepherd should not be afraid since the prince of pastors has taught him by his own example to despise life itself for the safety of his flock: the cowardice and depression of the hireling should not dwell in a bishop’s heart. Our great predecessor Gregory, in instructing the heads of the churches, said with his usual excellence: “Often imprudent guides in their fear of losing human favor are afraid to speak the right freely. As the word of truth has it, they guard their flock not with a shepherd’s zeal but as hirelings do, since they flee when the wolf approaches by hiding themselves in silence.... A shepherd fearing to speak the right is simply a man retreating by keeping silent.” [15] But if the wicked enemy of the human race, the better to frustrate your efforts, ever brings it about that a plague of epidemic proportions is hidden from the religious powers of the world, please do not be terrified but walk in God’s house in harmony, with prayer, and in truth, the three arms of our service. Remember that when the people of Juda were defiled, the best means of purification was the public reading to all, from the least to the greatest, of the book of the law lately found by the priest Helcias in the Lord’s temple; at once the whole people agreed to destroy the abominations and seal a covenant in the Lord’s presence to follow after the Lord and observe His precepts, testimonies and ceremonies with their whole heart and soul.” [16] For the same reason Josaphat sent priests and Levites to bring the book of the law throughout the cities of Judah and to teach the people. [17] The proclamation of the divine word has been entrusted to your faith by divine, not human, authority. So assemble your people and preach to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. From that divine source and heavenly teaching draw draughts

of true philosophy for your flock. Persuade them that subjects ought to keep faith and show obedience to those who by God's ordering lead and rule them. To those who are devoted to the ministry of the Church, give proofs of faith, continence, sobriety, knowledge, and liberality, that they may please Him to whom they have proved themselves and boast only of what is serious, moderate, and religious. But above all kindle in the minds of everyone that love for one another which Christ the Lord so often and so specifically praised. For this is the one sign of Christians and the bond of perfection.

Notes:

13. Epistles 7-8, chap. 2, to the bishops throughout Italy. 14. Jdt 8.21. 15. Reg. Pastor. 11, Operum, vol. 2, chap. 4, Paris. 16. 4 Kgs 22-23. 17. 2 Paralip. 17.7f. »

Pope Pius VII, *Diu Satis*, 1800, To all Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops and Bishops:

« Do not admit anyone to the clergy, entrust to no one the ministry of the mysteries of God, allow no one to hear confessions or preach sermons, do not transfer any administration or office to anyone, before you carefully weigh, examine and “test their spirit to see if they are of God.”

Would that We had not learned by experience how many “false apostles” the present age has spawned! These are “deceitful workmen who transform themselves into apostles of Christ.” Unless we are on our guard “they will destroy the understanding of the faithful as the serpent seduced Eve by his cleverness, and they will fall away from their simplicity which is in Christ.” [11] While you must care for the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishop, the watchfulness, eagerness, and effort of your fatherly love and benevolence is demanded in particular by boys and young men. Christ by example and statement has particularly entrusted these to us [12] and the enemies of private property and states who are striving to confound all laws, divine and human, hope to effect their wicked plans chiefly by corrupting their young minds. For they are aware that the young are like soft wax and can easily be drawn in any direction, bent and moulded and that they firmly retain a form once they have received it and it has been hardened by advancing years; then they will reject a different form. Hence the well-worn proverb from scripture: “A young man will not depart from his way even when he has grown old.” [13]

Do not allow “that the children of this world be wiser in their generation than the children of light.” Carefully investigate the directors given charge of boys and young men in seminaries and colleges, and the courses they are to follow, the teachers chosen for secondary schools, and

the schools which are to be run. Keep out the ravening wolves who do not spare the flock of innocent lambs, and expel them if necessary by the way they entered. Eliminate them at once “according to the power which the Lord gave you for edification.” [14] We must use to the full this power to eradicate this very serious threat to our children. This course is required for the safety of Church, state, leaders, and all human beings; their safety should be dearer and more important to Us than Our own life. Clement XIII treated this subject in his Brief to you on 25th November 1766.

Notes:

11. II Cor 11.

12. Mt 19, Mk 10, Lk 18.

13. Prv 22.

14. II Cor 13. »

Pope Leo XII, Ubi Primum, 1824, To all Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops:
« You know that the Apostle Peter instructed bishops in these words: “Feed God’s flock which is given to you, caring for them not under constraint but freely for God’s sake, not for the sake of base gain but willingly, nor as lording it over the clergy but being examples to your flock from the heart.” [2] From this you understand rightly the method of action which is proposed for you. You also understand the virtues of the mind which you should increasingly practice, the richer knowledge with which you should adorn it, and the fruit of piety and love which you should not only produce but also share with your flock. In this way you will certainly attain the object of your ministry and be examples to your flock from the heart. To some you will give milk, to others meat. You will train your flock not only by teaching, but by work and example as well, to lead a quiet life on earth in Christ Jesus. You will lead them to obtain eternal happiness with you. For the chief of the Apostles says: “And when the prince of shepherds appears you will receive an imperishable crown of glory.”

We had hoped to bring many matters to your attention but We shall simply touch on some of them, and then deal at greater length with the more serious questions as the need of Our sad times demands.

You already understand the teaching of the Apostle on the great caution required in promoting candidates to minor and especially to major orders. He writes to Timothy: “Lay hands on no one quickly.” [3] You understand also the decrees of the Council of Trent on the appointment

of pastors and on the seminaries for clerics [4] and the clarification of these decrees by Our predecessors.

You know too the importance of residing personally in your diocese, a duty to which your office strictly obliges you. This is evident from the decrees and apostolic constitutions of many councils, and was confirmed by the holy Council of Trent in the following words: “The divine commandment orders everyone entrusted with the care of souls to know their sheep and to offer sacrifice for them. They must also feed them by preaching the divine word, by administering the sacrament, and by setting a good example. Furthermore, they must take fatherly care of the poor and other wretched persons and perform their other pastoral duties. Since none of these can be accomplished by men who do not attend their flock but abandon it as hirelings do, the holy council warns and exhorts them to remember the divine commandments by being an example to their flock, feeding and guiding them in justice and in truth.” [5] Bound as We are by the obligation of this great office and zealous as We are for the glory of God, We heartily praise those who observe this command strictly. But We warn and exhort those who disobey these ecclesiastical sanctions – for it is sad but not surprising that there are some such men among the great number of bishops – to reflect seriously that the supreme judge will demand the blood of their sheep from their hands and judge with great strictness those who are their leaders.

This fearful sentence, as you know well, does not strike only those who do not reside in person in their diocese or seek to leave it on every empty pretext; it includes also those who refuse without reason to perform the task of visitation according to the prescriptions of the canons. For they will never satisfy the requirements of the decree of Trent unless they take care to approach their charges in person and like a good shepherd cherish the good while they seek the strays and lead them at last to the fold, by calling and driving some of them strongly and others gently.

Bishops who do not with due concern try to obey the precepts of residence or visitation will not avoid the fearful judgment of Our Savior the supreme shepherd by pleading that they fulfilled their duties through delegated ministers.

For care of the flock has been entrusted to themselves not to their ministers; it was to themselves that the gifts of the Spirit were promised. Consequently the sheep listen more gladly to the voice of their own shepherd than to that of a representative. They seek salutary food with more confidence from the shepherd’s hand than from his representative’s, and

rejoice more to obtain it. For His hand is as the hand of the Lord, whose person is revered in His bishops. All this is also amply borne out by experience, the world's instructor.

Notes:

2. I Pt 5:2-3. 3. I Tm 5:22. 4. Session 23, chap. 18. 5. Session 23 on reform, chap. 1. »

Pope Leo XII, *Charitate Christi*, 1825, To the Whole Catholic Flock:

« You must care for the faithful of all ages, but especially for those on which the future state of the Church and human society depends. Indeed impiety, sworn to achieve the destruction of both, attempts with all her might to bring the young under her banner. Either negligence or perversity in the education and discipline of the young must account for that disregard for the sanctity and duties of matrimony which now seems to have overtaken men. Often a civil contract, as they call it, is used in many regions, so that the holy laws of that sacrament so esteemed by Paul the Apostle and writer are violated. The iniquitous convention between Catholics and heretics has grown to such an extent that either all the children follow the religion of the father, or the boys that of the father and the girls that of the mother. You see therefore how solicitous you must be that the faithful adhere to Catholic doctrine about that sacrament and obey the laws of the Church. Strive to cleanse the faithful from the evil destruction that has overtaken Christian education. Strive with all your ability to saturate youth with Catholic customs and rules of life, demanding this of them, of their parents, and of their teachers. Especially however, see that they are on their guard against seduction, so that they may shudder at the evil opinions propagated by these miserable times and at the books inimical to religion, morals, and public peace, from which this foul crop of wickedness has grown. May it be kept as a pest, far from the faithful people. Remind them again and again how popes and princes of the past attacked such books; in this matter do not consider your care and vigilance too great. If the faithful are nourished with the word of God, if the frequent reception of the sacraments is stressed, if pious societies are promoted wherever they are, or established where they do not yet exist – if these things are done, the needs of every age, sex, and human condition will be met.

But to do these things you will need helpers, whom the Lord has called as laborers into his vineyard. Admonish them diligently not to be idle and to labor to keep the morals of the people within bounds. Seriously investigate their lives, their conversations, their lifestyles, and their habits, for “a dirty hand (as Gregory the martyr says) does not wash another, and an eye full of dust does not see the blemish; so one who desires to correct others must himself be clean.” Attend diligently to gravity and modesty in their external appearance. In order that they

may be suited to teach the faithful and perform the ecclesiastical ministries correctly, do not be content with the proof they may have given before ordination; take care that the initiated may never cease to exercise themselves actively in sacred studies. The Roman council held under Benedict XIII in the jubilee year 1725 decreed that meetings of clerics should be held once each week, in which cases of ceremony and conscience are discussed and resolved. We wish to commend this to you even more earnestly.

It is proper for the other ecclesiastics to excel in all things as they excel in dignity. For this reason you must observe them diligently so that the people may notice nothing reprehensible in those they look up to. Let them cooperate with you by counsel and labor in the work of the ministry, in the building up of the body of Christ, that they may be deservedly called a senate of the Church according to the Council of Trent. Sharpen especially the care and industry of parish priests, that, according to the prescriptions of the same holy synod, they may constantly and in person instruct the people. They should refresh them with the sacraments and pour out petitions and prayers daily to God. Finally by a laudable example of life and conduct and by their virtues and character, they should illumine all and point out before them the way of salvation as they perform the other prescribed offices.

Guard the seminary as the pupil of the eye, and may the education of clerics, who grow up as the hope of the Church, be your first care. Watch sharply lest anyone who does not give evidence by talent, virtue, and knowledge that he is truly called to the lot of the Lord is ordained. With no less care look into the practices of religious communities, using the authority which is given you by the sacred Council of Trent, either as ordinaries or as delegates of the Apostolic See. Inspect the schools and colleges frequently, to keep out the poison of the present corrupt age and to direct all things according to the norms of sacred discipline. Insist that nuns who have taken religious vows excel in their duties. See that the girls (as the Roman council admonishes) they have taken as boarders are piously instructed by them in the Catholic tradition, and see to it that their dress may not be inappropriate for girls living amidst the spouses of Christ. Take seriously the holding of synods and the visitation of the diocese as ordained by the Council of Trent. We exhort you repeatedly to discharge your obligations at the times prescribed by that council and in a religious manner. In so doing you will learn to know your sheep, understanding for which of their ills a remedy is required and what opportunities are considered suitable.

The care of all classes is committed to you, but especially that of the poor, for whom Christ confessed that he was sent by the Father and in whose favor he gave such renowned and

singular arguments of good will. However you understand how easy it is for the destitute to lose every benefit of God's presence. Therefore use the resources of the Church to fulfill the precepts of the Lord in an exemplary manner, what is left over, give in alms, and always do faithfully what the Church prescribes for bishops in the use of these goods. May the groans of the needy have easy access to you. Seek the aid of the wealthy for them in almsgiving, and defend them from all oppression and harm to the best of your ability. Move zealously against the injustice of money lenders, who, as the Roman catechism says, plunder the people and kill them with usury, for this evil has grown strong in present times. A defense against that evil theft was devised by pious men in the bank of commodities and of money lending, approved by popes and spread all over the world. We grieve that in many places they have been closed by the rapacity of those who had boasted to be liberators of the popular happiness. Strive to restore them, and inform the faithful of the indulgences which our predecessors granted to those who contribute to promote so pious a work.

Among the poor We commend especially to your loving care those for whom either orphanhood or illness is a burden added to their poverty. Diligently prepare homes to care for and educate young people of both sexes and to receive the sick and infirm, both for the needs of health and family and for the needs of the soul.

But enough. You are pastors and teachers of the people. For this reason, venerable brothers, it is not enough for you to watch lest the flocks entrusted to you suffer attacks from spiritual beasts. You must also nourish them with the warnings and salutary laws of heavenly doctrine, and especially with good example. In this regard the words of our Lord apply also to you when he said: "You are the light of the world . . . so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." This alone is sufficient to influence souls and to stop those who speak ill, according to these words of the Apostle: "In all things show yourself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity, with sound and irreprehensible speech, so that he who is opposed, fears, having nothing evil to say of you." Then it will come about not only that the people see what must be done, but that they themselves act, and so, like the Apostles, you too may be the salt of the earth. This means that when the odor of sin has been taken away and men have been instructed by you, the integrity of life and morality will be preserved for a long time. These are our desires, and We trust that, relying on your virtuous zeal and God's assistance, We shall obtain them. With error and vice banished and with piety strengthened, the chosen faithful may thus put on, as the Apostle exhorts, mercy, benignity, humility, and modesty; supporting one another patiently, they may give to each other, even as the Lord has given to us. Above all, however, may they have

love, the bond of perfection, which brings with it all the Christian virtues joined together. It preserves them and joins man with God – and the whole perfection of man consists in this. May you obtain this fruit of the sacred jubilee through the merits of Jesus Christ and all the saints. May the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation grant us Our desires through the same Son of God, our Redeemer, who had the same prayer: I ask you Father, that all may be one, as we are one. Begging this with all Our energy of soul, We most lovingly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you, and to the flocks committed to your care.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, December 25, 1825, in the third year of our pontificate. »

Pope Leo XII, *Quo Graviora*, 1826:

« Be attentive for yourselves and for the Universal flock over which the Holy Ghost has placed you as Bishops to Rule the Church of God. Devouring wolves indeed will seize upon you not sparing the flock: but do not fear, not consider your life more precious than yourselves. Maintain that Sacred Truth that the constancy of the men entrusted to you in Religion depends for the most part on you and on things done rightly. For although we may live in those days which are evil, and in that time in which many do not maintain sound Doctrine, nevertheless the Obedience of very many faithful to their Pastors endures, whom they receive with reason as Ministers of Christ and dispensers of His mysteries. Use, therefore, this Authority for the advantage of your sheep, which you maintain over their souls by an imperishable Honor of God. Make known through yourselves the deceits of the sects and with how much diligence they must guard against them and their social intercourse. Let them dread their perverse doctrine which mocks the Most Holy Mysteries of our Religion and the most pure Precepts of Christ, and which attacks every Legitimate Power, while you act as their models and teachers. »

Pope Pius VIII, *Traditi Humilitati*, 1829, To the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops:

« Also watch the seminaries more diligently. The fathers of Trent made you responsible for their administration [Session 25, chap. 18, on reform.]. From them must come forth men well instructed both in Christian and ecclesiastical discipline and in the principles of sound doctrine. Such men may then distinguish themselves for their piety and their teaching. Thus, their ministry will be a witness, even to those outside the Church and they will be able to refute those who have strayed from the path of justice. Be very careful in choosing the seminarians since the salvation of the people principally depends on good pastors. Nothing contributes more to the ruin of souls than impious, weak, or uninformed clerics. »

Pope Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos*, 1832, To all Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic World:

« Take up the shield of faith and fight the battles of the Lord vigorously. You especially must stand as a wall against every height which raises itself against the knowledge of God. Unsheath the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and may those who hunger after justice receive bread from you. Having been called so that you might be diligent cultivators in the vineyard of the Lord, do this one thing, and labor in it together, so that every root of bitterness may be removed from your field, all seeds of vice destroyed, and a happy crop of virtues may take root and grow. The first to be embraced with paternal affection are those who apply themselves to the sacred sciences and to philosophical studies. For them may you be exhorter and supporter, lest trusting only in their own talents and strength, they may imprudently wander away from the path of truth onto the road of the impious. Let them remember that God is the guide to wisdom and the director of the wise [Wis 7:15]. It is impossible to know God without God who teaches men to know Himself by His word [St. Irenaeus, bk. 14, chap. 10.]. It is the proud, or rather foolish, men who examine the mysteries of faith which surpass all understanding with the faculties of the human mind, and rely on human reason which by the condition of man's nature, is weak and infirm. »

Pope Gregory XVI, *Quo Graviora*, 1833, To the Bishops of the Province of Upper Rhineland:

« Venerable brothers, We are following a little more broadly the examples of Our predecessors in similar situations, as the cause of the apostolic duty seems to require. We resolved to discuss these things so that, with the errors of those men revealed, it might become known where the wicked passion for introducing novelties into the Church might lead. As for the rest, it is enough to suggest that the bitterness of the times in which Catholicism now finds itself oppresses Us with many sorrows. We mourn the pure spouse of the immaculate lamb, Jesus Christ, for it is pillaged by the attack of internal and external enemies and by the evils which oppress it and reduce it to this disgraceful captivity. We deplore with unending tears what is done by children shamefully straying from the bosom of a loving mother and uttering lies about her.

May We not fail in spirit! May We not stifle Our apostolic voice in so serious a Catholic necessity! May We not allow the Lord's flock to be plundered and the sheep of Christ to be devoured by all the beasts of the field, while We put aside the strength, judgment, and virtue of the spirit of the Lord like dumb dogs unable to bark. Know therefore, venerable brothers, that We are prepared to endure anything which threatens Us. We shall not retreat until the Catholic

Church is restored to the original freedom which totally belongs to its divine constitution and until the mouth of the slanderers is blocked up. We cannot do anything more than to arouse your constancy and virtue and to strongly exhort you to take up the cause of the Spirit of God and of the Church. You share in a part of the concern whose fulness is given to Us. It is your duty to protect the holy deposit of faith and sacred doctrine. It is your duty to drive every profane reform far away from the Church and to exert yourselves with your whole heart against those who try to infringe on the rights of this Holy See. Therefore, draw the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Preach as the apostle Paul impresses upon you in the person of Timothy his disciple. Stand firm in good times and in bad. Denounce, beseech, rebuke in all patience and teaching. Nothing should deter you from throwing yourselves into every conflict for the glory of God, for the protection of the Church, and for the salvation of the souls entrusted to your care. Meditate on Him who endured a similar opposition from sinners. If you fear the daring of the wicked, remember that the decision is made concerning the strength of the episcopacy and the divine power of governing the Church. So it only remains for you to remember the serious duties of your office and the difficult judgment which hangs over everyone in authority. The overseers of the house of Israel should especially meditate for a while at the feet of the Lord. We trust then that you will be aroused with zeal to help the Catholic religion and to protect it from the impious snares of its enemies. In this zeal you may show even greater results than these of which We wrote. Fully resolute and refreshed in that faith, We lovingly impart the apostolic blessing to you and to the people entrusted to your faith, as a sign of every good thing. »

Pope Gregory XVI, *Commissum Divinitus*, 1835, To the Clergy of Switzerland:

« While We intend to point these things out openly because of Our apostolic duty, it remains for Us to speak with paternal affection to you who have taken on a part of His governance, the fullness of which the Prince of Shepherds entrusted to Us. Among so many evils which besiege the Catholic Church in these evil times, what great trials press upon Our heart! We have experienced great sadness, especially from those things which were daringly attempted recently. It should be enough to direct your attention to it, and it should not be necessary to explain the details.

In Our sorrow We must not neglect to mention that what you did in guarding the Catholic cause and caring for the salvation of the flock entrusted to your care brought Us great solace. Therefore, We give thanks to the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation who comforted Us with you while We were oppressed by such tribulation. We must arouse your devotion. We exhort you to fight for the cause of God and the Church with greater zeal as the

attacks of the enemy become more severe. It is your duty to stand as a wall so that no other foundation can be placed other than the one which has already been laid. It is also your duty to keep the faith undefiled. There is another sacred trust which you should firmly defend, namely, the holy laws by which the Church establishes its discipline, and the rights of this Apostolic See. Therefore, act according to the position which you hold, according to the dignity with which you are vested, according to the authority which you received, according to the sacrament by which you bound yourselves in solemn consecration. Unsheathe the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. Denounce, beseech, rebuke in all patience and teaching. Labor and struggle for the Catholic religion, for the divine authority and laws of the Church, for the See of Peter and its dignity and rights “so that not only those who are upright may remain safe but also so that those who were deceived by seduction may be called back from error.”

Moreover, so that the desired outcome may result from these cares and labors undertaken by Our venerable brothers, We also address those of you who are ministers of the sacraments, shepherds of souls, and preachers of the divine word. It is your duty to be totally united with them in will, to be inflamed with the same zeal, and to be in harmony with them in this work so that the people might be protected from all danger of error and contamination. Exert yourselves so that everyone thinks the same thing and no one allows himself to be led astray by strange teachings. Let everyone avoid profane novelties, cling to the Catholic faith, and submit himself to the power and authority of the Church. Each person should bind himself ever more firmly to this See which the strong Redeemer of Jacob placed as an iron pillar and as a bronze wall against the enemies of religion. You should receive these enemies as people who ought to be educated in the law of Christ and of the Church. »

Pope Pius IX, *Qui Pluribus*, 1846, To All Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops:
« 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.[17]

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.

“It is an act of great piety to expose the concealments of the impious and to defeat there the devil himself, whose slaves they are.”[18] 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 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.”[19]

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,[20] 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.

However, “priests are the best examples of piety and God’s worship,”[21] 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.

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.”[22] 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.”[23] 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 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.

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.[24] 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.

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 eternal punishment and gain heavenly glory.

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.

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,[25] 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 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.

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.

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.

18. St. Leo. sermon 8.4. 19. Council of Trent, session 13, chap. on reform. 20. Rom 12.1-2. 21. Council of Trent, session 22. chap. 1 on reform. 22. Tm 4.12. 23. Benedict XIV, encyclical letter Ubi primum. 24. Heb 4.12. 25. Council of Trent, session 23, chap. 18, on reform. »

Pope Pius IX, *Nostis Et Nobiscum*, 1849, To the Archbishops and Bishops of Italy:

« So that all their efforts may be fruitless, sufficiently instruct the laity in Christian doctrine and the law of the Lord. Hopefully, they are not too weakened by long license in manifold and increasing vices to be able to recognize the snares laid for them and also the vileness of the errors proposed to them. So We earnestly require you, in your pastoral care, to ceaselessly ensure that the faithful entrusted to you are carefully taught the holy doctrines and precepts of our religion in accordance with their individual capacity; exhort and inspire them in every way to conform their lives and morals to these norms. For this purpose, inflame the zeal of the Churchmen, who care for these souls. Instruct them to reflect seriously on their ministry, to keep in view the prescripts of the Council of Trent, and to devote great energy to instructing the Christian people, as the state of the times demands. Let them be eager to sow in all hearts the words of God and the precepts of salvation. This they can accomplish by declaring in concise and comprehensible sermons the vices Christians should avoid and the virtues they should practice in order to escape eternal punishment and gain eternal glory.

In particular, ensure that the faithful are deeply and thoroughly convinced of the truth of the doctrine that the Catholic faith is necessary for attaining salvation. The Catholic laity and clergy should repeatedly offer special thanks to God in public prayers for the priceless gift of the Catholic religion. They should also beseech God to protect the profession of this faith in our country and to keep it unharmed. »

Pope Pius IX, *Nostis Et Nobiscum*, 1849, To the Archbishops and Bishops of Italy:

« But in all these affairs, one of your aims should be to instill in the faithful a greater aversion for sins which scandalize others; your priests should share this aim. You are aware of the increase in the number of those who sin in a scandalous manner: those who blaspheme the

heavenly saints and the holy name of God as well; those who live in concubinage and sometimes in incest; those who openly do servile work on holy days; those who despise in the presence of many the precepts of the Church on fasting and the selection of food; and those who shamelessly commit various other sins in the same way. So, make the faithful consider the seriousness of sins of this kind and the heavy penalties for them, both for the guilt of the sin itself and for the spiritual danger in which they place their brothers by the infection of their bad example. For it is written: “Woe to the world because of scandals . . . Woe to that man by whom the scandal comes!”[Mt. 16] »

Pope Pius IX, *Nostis Et Nobiscum*, 1849, To the Archbishops and Bishops of Italy:

« Candidates for holy orders especially must be examined at thorough length to determine whether their learning, serious morals and zeal for divine worship indicate that they will by their life and work edify and bring spiritual benefit to your flock, like lanterns burning in the house of the Lord. . . . To turn now to the selection of the secular clergy, We wish chiefly to recommend that you instruct and educate young clerics, since most suitable ministers of the Church are those who from their earliest years have been duly molded for these sacred duties. Continue then your energetic efforts to recruit very young men for God’s holy army. Then nurture them in religion, modesty, innocence of life, and ecclesiastical spirit. At the same time teach them literature and the major and minor fields of study, especially the sacred ones. Their teachers should be carefully selected and should follow doctrine which is free from all danger of error. »

Pope Pius IX, *Nemo Certe Ignorat*, 1852, To the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland:

« We are anxiously concerned to learn by what strategies the ancient enemy strives to damage and weaken your union of minds, since at present he is inciting dissensions. . . because of Our office of Apostolic ministry and because of the great love We entertain for you and for your faithful people, We cannot but impress upon you again and again the need of mutual concord. “For indeed We know and it is certain (to use the very words of St. Gregory the Great, Our predecessor) that the battle line of a camp appears terrible to an enemy when it is continuous and crowded together, with no open spaces. For if there is a vacant place by which the enemy could enter, then it no longer arouses fear in him. And therefore, since we make a spiritual line of battle against the evil spirits, we must of necessity always be found united, drawn together by love and never severed by discord. Whatever good works may be found in us, if love is lacking, a place is opened by evil discord in our line of battle by which the enemy is able to enter and to strike us.”[St. Gregory. on Ez, bk. 1, homil. 8.6.] You are daily bound together by a most stringent covenant of love, and you are obligated to spread the glory of God, to safeguard the

doctrine of the Catholic Church, to fight for its rights, to protect the safety of the flocks entrusted to you, to overthrow the plots and errors of the enemies, and to satisfy the other serious episcopal duties. Therefore, from the depths of our hearts, We exhort, even beg you to be more of one mind each day, unified in the same perceptions and in the same judgments, and concerned with preserving the unity of spirit in the bond of peace.

In your wisdom you know well how much this sacerdotal and trusting agreement of minds, wills, and judgment is necessary and advantageous to the good of the Church and the profit of the faithful. »

Pope Pius IX, *Nemo Certe Ignorat*, 1852, To the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland:

« Now, however, as you know, nothing instructs others more in piety and the service of God than the lives and example of those who have dedicated themselves to the divine ministry. Therefore labor so that all who are called to the vineyard of the Lord, mindful of their proper vocation and office, abstain entirely from things forbidden to clerics and from things that are not proper for them. Then they may be an example for the faithful in word, in their dealings with others, in love, in faith, and in chastity. They must wear a clerical habit appropriate to their order and dignity, and they must perform their ministry piously and reverently. »

Pope Pius IX, *Inter Multiplices*, 1853, To the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and Archbishops and Bishops of France:

« We cannot hide the grave sadness and grief which afflicts Us now, when We learn what dissensions the ancient enemy strives to excite among you in order to weaken your concord of minds. Therefore, because of Our Apostolic duty and the great love which We cherish for you and those faithful people, We write this letter in which We address you with the intimate affection of Our heart. At the same time We admonish and beseech you that, daily bound by a covenant of love and mutually perceiving the same things with one mind, you strive in virtue to drive off and eliminate all dissensions which the ancient enemy labors to sow. Strive with all humility and mildness to preserve an all-embracing unity of spirit in the bond of peace. For you are wise enough to know how necessary that sacerdotal and faithful unity of mind, will, and judgment is, and how it contributes to the prosperity of the Church and the procurement of eternal salvation. This concord of minds and wills must be cultivated among you with all zeal. . . your greatest aim should be unity among yourselves. We want you to confidently consult Us and this Apostolic See to remove controversy in all matters of whatever kind. »

Pope Pius IX, *Inter Multiplices*, 1853, To the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and Archbishops and Bishops of France:

« Never leave anything untried so that the clerics in your seminaries are formed early in all virtue, piety, and an ecclesiastical spirit; then they can grow in humility, without which we can never please God. At the same time, they should be diligently taught the humanities and the more austere disciplines, especially the sacred ones, free from the danger of any error. Thus they may acquire not only elegance in speaking and writing (this eloquence being both from the wisest works of the Holy Fathers and from the most renowned pagan authors expurgated of all flaws), but also an especially full and solid knowledge of the history of theological doctrines, ecclesiastical history, and the sacred canons, acquired from a source approved by this Apostolic See. »

Pope Pius IX, *Apostolicae Nostrae Caritatis*, 1854, To the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries:

« Nothing should be more important, nothing more preferable to you than to exhort the faithful entrusted to your care so that they, daily more firm and immovable, may persist in the profession of the Catholic faith; avoid the snares, lies, and deceptions of their enemies; advance more quickly in the ways of God's commandments; and carefully abstain from sin. From sin comes all the evils of the human race. »

Pope Pius IX, *Neminem Vestrum*, 1854, To the Archbishop Primate and the Bishops and to the Beloved Sons, Priests and Religious, and to all the Faithful of the Catholic Nation of Armenia in the Province of Constantinople:

« We also address all of you, beloved sons, both secular and religious priests. You have given yourselves to the Lord in ministry, as a part of your inheritance. Be subject to each of your bishops, as is fitting. Mindful of your vocation and dignity, strive to maintain them and protect them in seriousness of character and holiness of life, so that you might lead the people to a greater love and veneration of your order and bring about each day an increased growth for the Church. Therefore, you should carefully avoid everything which is prohibited to the clergy, everything which does not befit them. Never allow anything which could present a scandal to others. Take care to show yourselves more and more as a good example in word and unfeigned love, in learning, faith, and chastity. When you are busy in the homes of the people, either from necessity or the compulsion of your sacred ministry, strive to sustain the dignity and greatness of churchmen in all your deeds, so that you might be the good fragrance of Christ, shining with every virtue. »

Pope Pius IX, *Neminem Vestrum*, 1854, To the Archbishop Primate and the Bishops and to the Beloved Sons, Priests and Religious, and to all the Faithful of the Catholic Nation of Armenia in the Province of Constantinople:

« Now We address Ourselves principally to you, venerable brothers, the bishops of this ecclesiastical province of Constantinople. Continually exhort and enkindle the faithful entrusted to your care to mutual harmony, peace, and love, using unity of spirit and repeated efforts of word or deed or example. Break and suppress any dissension. Meet diligently all parts of your episcopal duty in the supreme harmony of spirit, will, and opinion. “Take care of the flock of God which is in your midst. Watch over it willingly as God would have you do, not under constraint . . . nor lording it over the clergy; but be examples to your flock.”[1 Pt. 5:2-3] First of all, do not spare anything, neither cares, nor advice, nor efforts, to preserve safe and sound the deposit of our divine faith in your dioceses. Take care to educate the clergy piously, forming them accurately to every virtue and ecclesiastical spirit. Educate them especially in the sacred disciplines, keeping them free from every foreign danger. Let the faithful be instructed more each day in the salutary teaching of the Catholic faith and in its holy precepts, and let them be strengthened by the gifts of grace so that, avoiding evil and doing good, they may grow in the wisdom of God. They will thus progress more quickly on the paths of the Lord and enter the way which leads to life. Thus moral decency, integrity of life and virtue, religion, and piety will grow each day, flourishing and dominating in the souls of all. Keep before your eyes the example of the Prince of shepherds who showed himself “meek and humble of heart and left us an example to follow in His footsteps. Venerable brothers, strive zealously on a spirit of forgiveness and kindness to bring back to the straight path of truth and justice those unfortunate people who stray. Explain, beseech, and reprove with all goodness, patience, and teaching, according to the apostle’s directive. “Kindness in correction often prevails more than harshness, exhortation more than threats, love more than power.”[5] Meanwhile if you take the side of harshness and severity when the seriousness of the disease prescribes sharp remedies and milder ones have already been tried in vain, consider the guilty person according to the prescription of the holy canons. Temper your judgment with mercy, your zeal with kindness, and your harshness with leniency. This especially befits the pastors of the Church, who should show themselves to their subjects as a mother in piety and a father in discipline.

We also address all of you, beloved sons, both secular and religious priests. You have given yourselves to the Lord in ministry, as a part of your inheritance. Be subject to each of your bishops, as is fitting. Mindful of your vocation and dignity, strive to maintain them and protect them in seriousness of character and holiness of life, so that you might lead the people to a greater love and veneration of your order and bring about each day an increased growth for the

Church. Therefore, you should carefully avoid everything which is prohibited to the clergy, everything which does not befit them. Never allow anything which could present a scandal to others. Take care to show yourselves more and more as a good example in word and unfeigned love, in learning, faith, and chastity. When you are busy in the homes of the people, either from necessity or the compulsion of your sacred ministry, strive to sustain the dignity and greatness of churchmen in all your deeds, so that you might be the good fragrance of Christ, shining with every virtue.

. . . All clergymen, both secular and religious, should pray unceasingly. Pray to God without fail that he might always more favorably bestow the abundant gifts of his heavenly grace upon you and the Christian people. Do not cease to refine the study of the religious literature and sacred disciplines with which you might respond to those who seek the law from you and with which you can teach the commandments of God to those who are ignorant and in error.

Beloved sons, seek with a special effort and diligence not what is yours but what is Jesus Christ's. Fulfill piously all the duties of your sacred ministry. Never cease to work together with your bishops in everything in order to obtain the eternal salvation of the faithful. In this way you will promote our holy religion and its teaching, and you will also remove the seeds of discord and bring about a love of Christian harmony and peace for everyone. As all wisdom comes from God, those among you who are wise should never exalt themselves, but rather give humble thanks to the most gracious God, the giver of all good things. They should use learning for their own edification and that of others, for they should seriously consider that God resists the proud but gives His grace to the humble. He will judge more severely whoever has received more than others, for, as St. Gregory the Great wisely warns: "As the gifts increase, the account of those gifts increases. Therefore, everybody should be more humble and quick to serve God as he sees himself more obliged to give account." [6] None of you should ever covet those gifts of others in your ecclesiastical order, gifts from which the spiritual welfare of your neighbor might flow.

5. Council of Trent, session 13, chap. 1 on Reform.

6. St. Gregory, homily 9 on the Gospels. »

Pope Pius IX, *Singulari Quidem*, 1856, To the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church and to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Austrian Empire:

« There is nothing more effective in laying others to virtue, piety, and divine worship than the life and example of those who have consecrated themselves to the holy ministry. »

Pope Pius IX, *Singulari Quidem*, 1856, To the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church and to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Austrian Empire:

« The lips of the priests must protect the wisdom which allows them to respond to those who consult them on the law and to convince those who combat it. It is thus necessary that you apply yourselves with the greatest care to the correct and precise instruction of the clergy. Especially in your seminaries, see that an excellent and entirely Catholic course of studies flourishes, a course by which the young clerics, under the direction of approved teachers, might be formed right from their most tender years to piety, virtue, and a Christian spirit. They should be instructed in the knowledge of Latin, in the humanities, and in philosophy, free from every danger of error. Then apply yourselves to teaching them carefully, for a sufficiently long period, dogmatic and moral theology based on the Holy Scriptures, on the tradition of the holy Fathers, and on the infallible authority of the Church. Give them a solid knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, of the sacred canons, of church history, and of the liturgy. Exercise the greatest precaution in choosing books, lest in the deluge of errors which prevails everywhere the young seminarians might be imprudently led off the path of sound doctrine. You know that there are learned men who dissent from this Holy See in religious matters and who are cut off from the Church. They are publishing the Holy Scriptures and the works of the holy Fathers, undoubtedly with a pleasing elegance but often – We cannot deplore this enough – in an altered condition, turned away from their true meaning by perverted commentaries.

Each of you knows how much the Church needs capable ministers, especially in these times. It needs ministers who valiantly watch over the cause of God and His holy Church. It needs ministers who stand out in holiness of living and reputation for salutary teaching, who are powerful in word and deed and who build a faithful house for the Lord. Do not neglect anything in educating the young clerics in holiness and wisdom even from their tender years, for they will not be able to become useful ministers of the Church unless they are properly taught. »

Pope Pius IX, *Singulari Quidem*, 1856, To the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church and to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Austrian Empire:

« The priests are your assistants in the government of your flock, and they are called to share your cares and to be your collaborators in the exercise of very important matters. Do not forget to enkindle their zeal so that they will fulfill their own duties with suitable diligence and piety. Encourage them to preach the divine word to the people entrusted to their care. They should administer the sacraments and bestow on the people the grace of God in all its aspects. Let

them lovingly and patiently instruct the ignorant – especially the children – in the mysteries of the Christian faith and in the teachings of our religion. Exhort them to bring back to the path of salvation those who have strayed, for they should use all their strength to destroy hatreds, rivalries, enmities, discords, and scandals. They should strengthen the weak and visit the infirm, helping them with all kinds of aids, especially spiritual ones. Encourage them to console the afflicted, and the unfortunate. They should exhort everyone in sound doctrine and warn all people to render conscientiously to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. They should teach everybody to be subject to the princes and to the authorities in everything that is not contrary to the laws of God and of the Church, not only because of the threat of punishment but also for the sake of conscience itself. »

Pope Pius IX, *Cum Nuper*, 1858, To the Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies:

« To Our mutual grief some clergy in your Kingdom, having forgotten their vocation, arouse the indignation of God by their reprehensible manner of life which, of course sets a bad example for the Christian people. For this reason you should strive to obliterate the corruption and abuses which have made their inroads into the conduct of the Clergy; support instead a sound way of life for them in keeping with the discipline of the holy canons. Properly train the younger clergy from their earliest years in piety, holiness, and religious spirit; see that they have a strong foundation in liberal arts, solid learning, and knowledge of the sacred canons.

First and foremost, keeping always in mind the precepts of the Apostle, be most careful not to lay hands prematurely on anyone and be extremely cautious in conferring sacred orders. Never, from a misplaced sense of obligation, partisanship, or favor, join to the clergy and promote to ecclesiastical grades and orders those who, not having even minimally the gifts required by the sacred canons, should be totally rejected from sacred ministry. He who does not fear to initiate into sacred orders those who are unworthy inflicts great harm on the Church. Therefore, your first concern is to strictly follow the prescriptions of the sacred canons. Carefully examine and scrutinize each candidate's origin, training, talents, character, and teaching. Ordain only those outstanding individuals who can truly benefit your dioceses. If they earnestly reject all things which are forbidden to clerics and which never become them, they may be an example to the faithful in "word, speech, charity, faith, and chastity."

Moreover, examine most intently the conduct, honesty, piety, knowledge, and prudence of those to whom the care and direction of souls is to be committed. Be ever vigilant that pastors fulfill their office zealously, wisely and holily. They should never fail to feed the Christian

people entrusted to them by means of preaching the divine word, of administering the sacraments, and of dispensing of the multiple grace of God. They should diligently imbue young people especially and the uneducated with the mysteries and teachings of our divine religion and form them in all piety and virtue. If pastors do not fulfill their duty, religion and public life are damaged, morals are perverted, Christian discipline weakens, the exercise of religious worship declines, and all sorts of vices overwhelm people. »

Pope Pius IX, *Cum Nuper*, 1858, To the Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies:

« Finally, venerable brothers, We greatly desire that you be careful to hold Provincial Councils according to the precepts of the holy canons. »

Pope Pius IX, *Amantissimus*, 1862, To the Bishops of the Eastern Churches:

« In order that you may more readily attain this goal, constantly inspire the zeal of guardians of souls that in the conscientious performance of their duty, they may untiringly announce the good news of the Gospel to the wise and the foolish. Urge them to help the Christian people by every good and holy work. Exhort them to give instruction, especially to boys and those inexperienced in the proofs of the Catholic Faith so that they may be guided in moral discipline. Always admonish your diocesan priests that, seriously reflecting upon the ministry they received in the Lord, they take care to fulfill it fervently. In such a way they give Christian people an example of all virtues, are attentive to prayer, perfectly cultivate sacred studies, and exert all their power to win the everlasting salvation of the faithful.

Then, too, that you may always have at hand diligent and industrious workers in cultivating the vineyard of the Lord, spare no effort, venerable brothers, that the most excellent teachers train young clerics in piety from the very beginning. May these be formed in a true ecclesiastical spirit and very carefully instructed, primarily in Sacred Scripture and the sacred sciences, against any danger of error. To be sure, we are by no means ignorant, venerable brothers, of the many difficulties you have been exposed to in the exercise of your episcopal ministry. Take comfort in the Lord, however, and recalling the powerful memory of his virtue, be ambassadors for Christ, who gave up his life for his sheep and left us an example that we may follow in his footsteps. »

Pope Pius IX, *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore*, 1863, To S. R. E. Cardinals, and to the Archbishops and Bishops of Italy:

« We are fully confident that you, our beloved sons and venerable brothers, strengthened by the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, will continue steadfast in your outstanding episcopal zeal. With one mind and heart and with redoubled dedication, may you persist in defending the House of Israel, may you fight the good fight for the faith and defend from the snares of the enemy the faithful entrusted to your care. Admonish and exhort them to be strong in our sacred faith, without which it is impossible to please God. Urge them to persevere firmly established in our divine religion, which alone is true and eternal and prepares for salvation and even, to a very great extent, preserves and prospers civil society.

Through the parish priests chiefly and other ecclesiastics known for integrity of life, gravity of morals, and constant adherence to sound doctrine, may you teach unremittingly and accurately: at one time preaching the divine word, at another instructing the people in the mysteries of our august religion, its doctrine, precepts, and discipline. You, above all, know that many evils generally arise from ignorance of divine matters essential for salvation. Hence, you will understand that it behooves you to use every care and diligence that so detrimental a condition be prevented. »

Pope Pius IX, *Maximae Quidem*, 1864, To Gregory, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, and Michael, Archbishop of Bamberg, and their Suffragan Bishops in Bavaria:

« And here We ask you to not forget what We wrote last December 21 to Gregory, Archbishop of Munich concerning the teaching of the disciplines of theology and philosophy. We exhort you to promote daily the correct education of the clergy. Leave nothing untried in order that your clergy may have that solid instruction, drawn from uncontaminated sources and based on the common teaching system of the Catholic Church. This system removes all those dangers inherent in the new modern style of teaching, which is based on the freedom – or rather license – of knowledge. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Cum Multa*, 1882:

« It happens often that in discussions as to the best manner of defending Catholic interests the authority of the Bishops has not that weight which should belong to it. Sometimes even, if a Bishop recommends or decrees something in virtue of his power, there are people who will submit to it but ill, or even openly criticize it, assuming that he has wished thereby to favor some or hinder others.

Yet it is easy to see how important it is that unity should exist among the minds of men, and all the more so that, amid the unfettered prevalence everywhere of error and in the war so

violently and insidiously waged against the Catholic Church, it is absolutely necessary that all Christians would unite their wills and powers in resistance, for fear that separately they may be crushed by the cunning and violence of their foes. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Cum Multa*, 1882:

« Now, even as the Roman Pontiff is the Teacher and Prince of the Universal Church, so likewise are Bishops the rulers and chiefs of the Churches that have been duly entrusted to them. Each has within his own jurisdiction the power of leading, supporting, or correcting, and generally of deciding in such matters as may seem to affect religion. For they share in the power which Christ Our Lord received from the Father, and transmitted to His Church: and therefore Gregory IX., Our Predecessor, said of Bishops, “We do not hesitate to declare that the Bishops called on to share Our cares are the representatives of God” This power has been given to Bishops for the supreme benefit of those over whom it is exercised; it tends by its very nature to the building up of the Body of Christ; and makes of each Bishop and bond which unites in faith and charity the Christians under his guidance at once with one another and with the Supreme Pontiff, as members with the head. Here is a weighty expression of St. Cyprian’s: “The Church is the people united with its pastors, and the flock that follows its Shepherd”: and another, still more weighty: “Know ye, that the Bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the Bishop: and if any one be not with the Bishop, the same is not in the Church”. Such, unchangeable and everlasting, is the constitution of the Christian commonwealth; if it be not religiously maintained, a disturbance of rights and duties ensues as a necessary consequence of the broken association of the members whose perfect union constitutes the body of the Church, that body which “by joints and bands being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth unto the increase of God” We see, therefore, that Bishops should have paid to them that respect which the eminence of their charge exacts, and receive in all matters within their office a perfect obedience. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Cum Multa*, 1882:

« Let those, especially, who are of the clergy, and whose words and example exercise such potent influence, scrupulously apply themselves to observe moderation and obedience. For be it known to them that their toil in the fulfillment of their duties will be most profitable to themselves and efficacious to their neighbor, when they follow in full submission the guidance of him who is placed over them as head of the diocese. Assuredly it is not conduct consonant with the duties of the priesthood to give oneself up so entirely to the rivalries of parties as to appear more busy with the things of men than with those of God. They must, therefore, studiously avoid overstepping the reserve imposed on them by their office. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Etsi Nos*, 1882:

« But your chief cares and thoughts, Venerable Brethren, must have for their object the due appointment of fitting ministers of God. For if it be the office of Bishops to use very much labor and zeal in properly training the whole of their youth, they ought to spend themselves far more on the clerics who are growing up as the hope of the Church, and are to be some day sharers in the most sacred duties. Indeed, grave reasons, common to all times, demand in priests many and great graces; but this time in which we live demands that they should be even more and greater. In truth the defense of the Catholic Faith, in which the industry of priests ought specially to be employed, and which is in these days so very necessary, demands no common nor ordinary learning, but that which is recondite and varies; which embraces not only sacred, but even philosophical studies, and is rich in the treatment of physical and historical discoveries. For the error which has to be eradicated is multiform, and saps all the foundations of Christian wisdom; and very often a battle has to be waged with adversaries well prepared, pertinacious in disputing, who astutely draw confirmation from every kind of science. Similarly, since in these days there is great and far extended corruption of morals, there is need in priests of singular excellence of virtue and constancy. They can by no means avoid associating with men; by the very duties of their office, indeed, they are compelled to have intimate relations with the people; and that in the midst of cities where there is hardly any lust that has not permitted and unbridled license. From which it follows that virtue in the clergy ought at this time to be strong enough peacefully to guard itself, and both conquer all the blandishments of desire and securely overcome dangerous examples. Because of laws that have been established to the detriment of the Church, there is a scarcity of clerics everywhere: thus it is clearly necessary that those who by the gift of God are commissioned to holy orders double their work, and by outstanding diligence, zeal, and devotion, compensate for their small supply. And, indeed, they cannot do this advantageously unless they possess a soul resolute of purpose, mortified, incorrupt, ardent with charity, ever prompt and quick in undertaking labors for the salvation of men. But for such tasks a long and diligent preparation must be made; for one is not accustomed to such great things easily and quickly. And they indeed will pass their time in the priesthood holily and purely, who have exercised themselves in this way from their youth, and have so advanced in discipline that they seem not so much to have been instructed to those virtues, of which We have spoken, as to have been born to them. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens*, 1884:

« At present, as far as the laws allow, You are applying your most earnest care and attention to procure for youth numerous facilities for a good education, nor are You backward in

demonstrating how pernicious to the State itself are the plans which some men entertain against the Church. No one, therefore, will have the right to accuse You of yielding to human considerations or of warring against the established order of things; for, when God's honor, when the salvation of souls are endangered, the duty of your office is to take up the protection and defense of all such matters. Continue, therefore, to fulfill with prudence and firmness, the duties of your episcopal ministry; teaching the precepts of heavenly doctrine, and pointing out to Your people the path to follow amid the great wickedness of the times. There must be a perfect union of mind and will, and where the cause is the same, the mode of action should likewise be the same. See that schools are never wanting in which the young may be carefully imbued with the ideas of the rewards of heaven and of their duties to God; and in which they may obtain accurate knowledge of the Church and learn submission to her teaching, so that they may understand and feel that they should be ready to brave all risks for it. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens*, 1884:

« Above all, care must be taken that the ranks of the clergy shall be more and more filled with worthy and capable men. Let the authority of their Bishops be sacred to the priest; let the latter be convinced that their ministry will be neither holy, nor profitable, nor respected, if it be not exercised under the guidance of their Bishops. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Quod Multum*, 1886, To the Bishops of Hungary:

« If the education of all youth in general contributes a great deal to the true welfare of the state, this is much more true of the education of those aiming at ordination. To this matter you must give special attention; it should occupy the greater portion of your vigils and labors, since the youths destined for orders are the hope and, as it were, the incomplete form of future priests. You surely know how much the reputation of the Church and the eternal salvation of her people depend on priests. — In the education of clerics, two elements are absolutely necessary: learning for the development of the mind and virtue for the perfection of the spirit. To the ordinary humanistic subjects in which youths are educated must be added Sacred and Canonical studies. Care must be taken that their content is sound and everywhere pure, in full harmony with the documents of the Church and eloquent, so that the priest may be able to exhort . . . even those who contradict. — Holiness of life, without which knowledge puffs up and does not edify, consists not only in good and honorable habits, but also in that group of sacerdotal virtues which makes good priests exemplars of Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest. For this purpose there are sacred seminaries. You have some for youths preparing for the priesthood and others for the education of seminarians, all of them well-founded. Choose teachers and spiritual directors for these institutions thoughtfully. They should be men of

sound doctrine and good morals, men to whom you can confidently entrust a matter of such great importance. Choose rectors and spiritual guides who are outstanding in prudence, counsel, and experience. The common life and discipline should be so arranged by your authority that not only will the students never offend against piety, but that there will be an abundance of all aids which nourish piety. The students should thus be encouraged to make daily progress in acquiring the sacerdotal virtues. Your industrious and diligent labors in the education of priests will bear much desirable fruit, making your episcopal office easier to administer and producing a richer profit for all.

But it is necessary that your paternal care extend further, namely to the assistance of priests in the exercise of their duties. Skillfully and sweetly, as becomes your love, see to it that they are not exposed to worldly temptations and that they are not led by selfish desires or concern for secular affairs. See to it that they excel in virtue, providing an example of deeds well-done. Further, see to it that they never fail in their devotion to prayer and that they approach the sacred mysteries spotlessly. When supported and strengthened by these defenses, they will gladly fulfill their daily sacred duties and fittingly turn to the studious cultivation of the spirits of their people, especially by the ministry of word and sacraments. — But to renew the strength of soul which human weakness does not allow to flourish constantly, nothing seems more effective than that they retire from time to time to meditation, devoting all of their time solely to God and themselves. This is the custom in other places and has proven very successful. Furthermore you will easily and spontaneously get to know the talents and the habits of individual priests as you go about administering your dioceses. You will also learn what you have to do by way of prohibition in this matter, and what evils have to be eradicated. To do this and to save ecclesiastical discipline from violation, you must use the just severity of canon law where necessary. All must understand that both the priesthood and the various grades of dignity are no more than a reward for useful labors. For this reason they are reserved for those who have served the Church, who have labored in the care of souls, and who are distinguished for their learning and the holiness of their lives.

When the clergy is distinguished by these virtues, the people will profit in no small measure, since they love the Church, are very devoted to the ancestral religion, and easily and willingly submit to the directives of their pastors. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Pergrata*, 1886:

« Good example is the best means of cultivating in men the love of virtue. For this reason let all priests take care not only that nothing is noted in them which is at variance with their office

and the rules of their state, but also that the holiness of their lives and morals may shine forth, like a lamp on a lampstand, giving light to all in the house. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Iampridem*, 1886:

« As for you, venerable brothers, you are aware of the true nature of the Church, of the constitution which its divine founder gave it, and of the rights and duties associated with it. Nobody can subtract from or destroy these rights and duties. Certainly, the Church is a supernatural society and perfect in its order, as we have recently declared in Our encyclical “*Immortale Dei*”. As its purpose is to bring its children to eternal happiness, it has received from God the means and aids to bring them into possession of the heavenly goods. It begins on earth and in the struggles of this life to construct an edifice which will have its final crowning and supreme splendor only in heaven. It is solely the Church’s duty to make rules concerning its inner life, whose nature was determined by our Lord Jesus Christ, the restorer of our salvation. Christ ordered that this free and independent power belong to Peter and to his successors, and, under the authority of Peter, to the bishops in their respective churches. This episcopal power includes by its very nature clerical discipline regarding the sacred ministry and the conduct of the priests, for the priests are attached to the bishop like the strings of a lyre.

The priestly order, heir of such a sublime ministry, renews itself from age to age without changing. Those who are called to this order must thus follow by their sincerity of doctrine and innocence of life, in the footsteps of the first sowers of the faith, whom Christ Himself chose. The right and duty to teach young people whom God calls to become His ministers and the dispensers of His mysteries falls to the bishops alone. The people are to take their religious training from those to whom it was said, “teach all nations.” If this is so, how much greater is the obligation imposed on bishops to give the nourishment of sound doctrine as they see fit to these ministers, who will be the salt of the earth and will take the place of Jesus Christ among men? This duty is not the only one incumbent on the bishops; in addition, they must look after the welfare of the seminarians. They should initiate them quickly into the practices of a firm piety, a piety whose absence would leave them unworthy of the priesthood and incapable of fulfilling its duties.

You know very well from theory and practice the difficulties and prolonged labors which this instruction of seminarians requires. Those who have chosen God as their inheritance should show themselves to the Christian people as living models of virtue and self-restraint, according to the teaching of the Prince of the Apostles. Under the authority of the bishops and the instruction of appointed teachers, they should learn to dominate their passions, to despise the

things of this world, and to seek heavenly goods. Fortified by heavenly thoughts and inflamed by heavenly love, they will remain chaste and pure amidst the corruption of this world. They must also become quickly accustomed to constantly and fearlessly explaining and defending Catholic truth, which the world despises and persecutes with an implacable hatred. The times demand a vigorous struggle to preserve the cause of the Church. What could we expect, then, if our ministers were not prepared long in advance by religious training and love to faithfully support their bishops, to listen to their words, and to endure boldly the harshest difficulties for the name of Jesus Christ? Seminaries and other institutions of sacred learning give the seminarians, far from the bustle of daily concerns, the qualities required to fulfill the apostolic ministry properly. Their education also teaches them to endure joyously all the inconveniences of life and all those types of work necessary to save souls. Under the vigilance and protection of the bishops and the priests delegated by them by virtue of their long experience in sacred studies, the students will learn to equitably measure their strengths and to recognize what they are capable of. The pastors can test the abilities and character of each one, in order to judge wisely who is worthy of the honor of the priesthood and to dissuade those who are unworthy. But what salutary fruits can be obtained if the pastors do not have full liberty to remove obstacles and to use the means appropriate to that end? On this subject, since your nation counts among its distinctions the glory of the military, We can draw an analogy. Would the heads of government permit young men placed in military institutions to have any other teachers than those who excel in this art? Do we not choose appropriate military men to teach army discipline, the use of arms, and the military spirit?

The Church's concern for its seminaries is therefore easy to understand. From the earliest years of the Church, the popes and the Catholic bishops took special care to establish centers for candidates to the priesthood. Here, either by themselves or with the help of suitable teachers (sometimes taken from the priests of the cathedral church), they taught the humanities, theology, and above all the conduct suitable to their vocation. The houses which the bishops and monks opened to receive clerics are celebrated up to this day. Among them shines the memory of the Lateran Patriarchate; from here, as from a fortress of wisdom and virtue, illustrious popes and bishops appeared, men remarkable for their holiness and for their teaching. The careful and diligent teaching of clerics seemed very important and necessary even from the beginning of the sixth century. The Council of Toledo, speaking about "those whom their parents forced to enter the clerical state as children," commands "that after having received tonsure or being ordained lector, they must be educated in the Church under the vigilance of the bishop." Thus we see why we must strive to organize and govern the seminaries of your dioceses according to the rules established by the fathers of the Council of Trent. That

is also why in the previous agreements between the popes and the secular authorities from different periods, the Apostolic See — especially watched over the preservation of seminaries and reserved to the bishops the right to govern them, to the exclusion of all other powers. Among other documents, we have a clear example in the apostolic letter beginning “De salute animarum.” Pius VII published this encyclical on July 18, 1821, after reaching an agreement with the king of Prussia concerning a new delimitation of dioceses.

Therefore, may the bishops have the full and entire right to train in the seminaries the peaceful army of Jesus Christ. May they be free to choose officials according to their own judgment for the clerical hierarchy, and may they place priests in various posts to fulfill their pastoral duties without obstacles.

From what We have just said, venerable brothers, you see the truth and justice in Our demands for ecclesiastical freedom. The Church lives and acts by this freedom, in order to arrive at the happy and lasting agreement so long and ardently desired by both powers. We are confident that the secular authorities will be fair to Us and grant what We ask, based on holy laws.

Our demands are not the kind which will diminish the dignity or power of the secular authorities. Rather there may result some substantial and solid advantages for the public welfare. In effect, venerable brothers, what you and your assistants teach concerning civil responsibility comes down to this: every person should be subject to higher powers “not only for fear of punishment, but also because of his conscience.” We should bear public duties happily, abstaining from plots and conspiracies. We should show fraternal love to each other and fulfill faithfully our duties to society. If the number of your assistants were to increase, at the same time the number of those who propagate these useful teachings would increase. It would simultaneously become easier to furnish good priests to parishes so long deprived of their pastors. Catholics ask this with all their hearts. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Officio Sanctissimo*, 1887:

« But when Our provident God allows His Church to be vexed with grievous storms, He himself justly demands from Us dispositions and powers more prepared to assist her. But you, O Venerable Brethren, each one equally with Us, behold with grief the strange and unhappy times upon which the Church has fallen; you were amongst the first to notice the conditions in which you are placed, and the difficulties with which you have to contend. Wherefore you know by experience that your office has greater duties than formerly, and that to perform them

well you ought to strive very earnestly for watchfulness, diligence, strength, and Christian prudence.

And firstly We urge and exhort you concerning the preparation and welfare of the clergy. For the clergy are like an army, which, as they obey the laws and perform their duties so that they may be of service to the Christian multitude under the authority of the bishops, will bring honor and stability to public affairs in proportion to their number and discipline. Wherefore this has always been the first care of the Church that she should choose and bring up to the priesthood those young men, whose dispositions and desires afford a hope that they will persevere in the ministry of the Church (Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii., de reform cxviii.), and again, that the young men should have been educated from their early years in piety and religion, before evil habits have gained possession of them as young men, (Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii., de reform cxviii.), and for them she founded proper seats of training and seminaries, and laid down rules full of wisdom, especially in the holy Council of Trent (ibid.), so that this college of the ministers of God might be a perpetual seminary (ibid.). In several places indeed, certain laws are in force which, if they do not stop, yet hinder the clergy in their training and discipline. We deem that it behoves Us now as at other times openly to speak Our mind on this matter, which is of the greatest possible interest, and to preserve the holy law of the Church inviolate by every means in Our power. For indeed the Church, as a body, which is by its nature perfect, has an inalienable right of ordering and instructing its own forces, hurtful to none, helpful to many in that kingdom of peace which Jesus Christ founded upon earth for the salvation of the human race.

The clergy, however, will fulfill the duties committed to their charge fully and as a whole when, by the care of the bishops such a disposition of mind and intention has been brought about in the sacred seminaries as the dignity of the Christian priesthood and the natural change of times and manners require; they ought, indeed, to surpass others in the excellence of their teaching, and, which is the chief thing, in great reputation for virtue, so that they may attract the minds of men to it and lead them to its observance.

It is necessary that Christian wisdom, which abounds in a wonderful light, should shine before the eyes of all, so that the darkness of ignorance, which is the greatest enemy to religion, having been dispelled, the truth may shine forth far and wide, and happily reign. Nay more, it behoves that those manifold errors be refuted and dispelled which, taking their rise either in ignorance or wickedness or prejudiced opinions, perversely call away the minds of men from Catholic truth, and engender a certain hatred of it in their dispositions. This great duty, which is “to

exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers” (Ep. Tit. i., 9), belongs to the order of priests, who hold it legitimately, imposed by Christ our Lord when He sent them forth to teach all nations, by His divine power, “going into the whole world preach the gospel to every creature” (Mar. xvi. 15), equally plainly as the bishops, chosen in place of the apostles, are set over the Church of God, the priests are their assistants. If ever these duties have been fully and perfectly carried out it was in the first ages of our religion and in the following centuries during that great struggle with heathen tyranny which raged for so long a time, whence the priestly band and the most holy order of Fathers and Doctors whose wisdom and eloquence will be ever held in memory and admiration, obtained their great glory. For indeed Christian doctrine deeply treated of by them, fully explained, and most valiantly maintained, by that means spread forth the more its truth and divine excellence. On the other hand appeared the doctrine of the heathens, confuted and despised even by the unlearned, as having no consistency, full of absurdities, useless. But in vain did the adversaries try to arrest and stop that course of Catholic wisdom; in vain did they seek objections from the schools of Greek philosophy, especially from those of Plato and Aristotle, with high-sounding words indeed. For our champions, declining not even that kind of contest, applied themselves to the learning and study of the heathen philosophers; having examined with the greatest diligence what each one of them had professed, they took these things into consideration one by one; they examined them, they compared them; many things were rejected or corrected by them; not a few were justly approved of and accepted; they also discovered and established by them, that those things which are proved to be false by human reason and intelligence, are in the same manner opposed to Christian doctrine, so that he who withstands and opposes this doctrine, of necessity equally withstands and opposes reason. Contests of this kind were entered into by our fathers, and splendid victories obtained, and these were achieved, not only by the virtue and arms of faith, but also by the aid of human reason; which indeed, guided by the light of divine wisdom, entered boldly upon the path of truth, from ignorance of many things, and as it were out of a forest of errors. This admirable agreement and consent of the faith with reason, although it has been honored by the learned works of many, yet as it were built up in one edifice and shown at one view, shines forth especially in that work of St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, and equally in the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, in which books, indeed, are contained whatever things were deeply thought out and considered by wise men, and in them we may seek for the beginnings and fount of that eminent school of learning called Christian theology. The memory of such illustrious examples should be remembered and cherished by the clergy, since in many ways ancient weapons are being sharpened by our adversaries, and nearly the same old battles are to be re-fought. Thus only the heathen formerly objected to the Christian religion, that they should not be led away from the ancient and accustomed rites of their

divinities, but now the most iniquitous endeavor of wicked men contend that they should eradicate from Christian people all divine and most necessary teaching connected with Our holy faith, and that they may use them worse than the heathen, and may involve them in the greatest misery, namely, the subversion and contempt of all faith and religion. Of which impure plague, than which none is more detestable, those were the founders who attributed to man that by the light of nature each one could know and judge concerning doctrine divinely revealed by virtue of his own reason and judgment, and that there was no necessity to submit to the authority of the Church and the Roman Pontiff, whose sole right it is, by divine command and appointment to be the guardian of that doctrine, to hand it on and to judge truly concerning it. Thence the way easily opened, though to them it lay open most miserably, for denying and discarding all things and the powers of man: then insolently denying that there was any authority which emanated from God or even that there was a God, they at length lapsed into absurd theories of Idealism and Materialism. But this prostitution of the highest things, those who are named Rationalists or Naturalists do not hesitate to call by the false name of scientific and social progress, which in truth is nothing less than the destruction and ruin of both.

Thus, indeed, Venerable Brethren, you may know and see why and in what way the younger members of the Church ought to be instructed in higher doctrines that they perform their duties with ease and utility at the present time. That these may be thoroughly grounded and accomplished in the study of humanities they should not enter upon the study of sacred theology before having undergone a preparation in philosophy. We mean that deep and real philosophy, the investigator of the loftiest problems, the best patron of truth: by virtue of which they themselves will not be tossed about nor carried away “by every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men, by the craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephes. iv. 14), and will enable them to give to other doctrines the aid of truth, by the discussion and refutation of captious and deceptive theories. With this object we have already advised that the works of the great Aquinas should be in their hands, and should be constantly and carefully explained; and We have often laid stress upon the same thing with solemn words; and We believe that the best fruits are thence received by the clergy, and We shall confidently look for fruits still more excellent and abundant. Indeed, the method of the Angelic Doctor is admirably adapted for training minds, wonderfully fitted for use in making comments, in philosophizing, in discoursing forcibly and incontrovertibly: for it shows clearly each subject connected one with another in a continuous series, all however joined together and fitting into each other, all leading to the highest principles; then it raises one to the contemplation of God, Who is the efficient cause and strength and highest type of all things, to Whom finally all

philosophy and man himself, such as he is, ought to be referred. Thus truly the knowledge of things are held together, as they are admirably shown, so also are they most firmly established by St. Thomas; by conflict with which knowledge, as the ancient sects of errors have entirely disappeared, so the new, unlike them rather in name and kind than in fact, as soon as they have put forth their heads fall, laid low by the same blows, as indeed many of Our writers have shown. Truly human reason desires to penetrate freely into the hidden and secret knowledge of things, nor can it do otherwise, but with Aquinas for Our author and master it does this more quickly and freely because it does it safely without any danger of passing over the boundaries of truth. For neither can you rightly call that liberty which gathers and scatters opinions according to its own will and pleasure, nay rather it is to be reputed the vilest license, lying, and false science, a disgrace and slavery of the mind. He indeed is the true Doctor who walks within the confines of truth, who not only never differs from God, the Head and Fount of all truth, but is always strictly in accordance with Him and always follows Him when disclosing His secrets in any manner; who no less piously listens to the Roman Pontiff when speaking, reverses in him the divine authority and fully holds that “submission to the Roman Pontiff is necessary to salvation.” (Opusc. contra errores Graecorum.) In his school, therefore, let the cleric be brought up and exercised both in philosophy and theology: for he will then be learned and strong as the mightiest to fight the sacred combats.

But it is scarcely possible to express how great is the utility of the light of doctrine which shines from the clergy, and is poured among the different orders of Christian people, if indeed it shines as it were from a beacon of virtue. For in the precepts which tend to the correction of men’s morals, the acts of their masters are of more avail than their precepts, nor will any easily feel confidence when dealing with one whose deeds do not accord with his words and precepts. We turn Our eyes and minds to Jesus Christ; who, as He is the truth, has taught Us what We ought to believe, as He is the life and way, has offered Himself to Us a perfect example, how We should lead a good life and eagerly seek after Our final good. He Himself desired His disciples to be ordered and perfected after His own pattern, “so let your light shine,” that is in doctrine “before men, that they may see your good works,” not differing from the principles of your doctrine “and glorify your Father Who is in heaven” (Mat. v. 16.), having combined together the doctrine and excellence of the gospel which He committed to them to preach. It is right that those precepts should be divine by which the life of priests is ordered and directed. Above all it is necessary that they persuade themselves and have it almost written in their minds, that they are now no longer in the companionship of God, and though passing their time in the communion of the world, still live the life of Christ our Lord. Who if they really live by Him and in Him, will in no way seek “those things which are their own,” but will be entirely taken

up with “those things which belong to Jesus Christ” (Philipp. ii. 21), nor will they receive the empty favor of men, but will seek after the solid favor of God; they will, moreover, abstain from and abhor these lower and contemptible things, and industriously trying to become rich in heavenly blessings, will generously and gladly pour them forth, as is the part of holy charity; further, they will never permit themselves to oppose or prefer their own to the judgment and will of the bishops, but by obeying and giving way to them as bearing the person of Christ, they will obtain most happily in the Lord’s vineyard abundance of most choice fruit which will remain with them forever. But whosoever severs himself in thought or will from his shepherd and from the chief of shepherds, the Roman Pontiff, is in no way joined to Christ, “he that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me” (Luke x. 16), but whosoever is separated from Christ scatters rather than gathers together—whence, moreover, is evident the kind and measure of consideration due to men who are placed in positions of public authority. For it is by no means intended that any one should desire to deny or derogate from their rights; rather those are to be diligently observed by other citizens, and especially carefully by priests: “Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s.” (Matt. xxii. 21.) For those functions are most noble and honorable which God the highest lord and ruler has imposed upon men who are princes, that, by counsel, reason, and all care of justice they should govern, preserve, and increase the state. Wherefore let the clergy carefully attend to and perform every duty as citizens, not after the manner of one who is servile, but of one who holds them in reverence, on account of religion, not on account of fear; at the same time with due observance, maintaining their own dignity, being both citizens and priests of God. But if it should happen that the civil power should invade the rights of God and of His Church, then let a marked example be set by priests, as every Christian man ought to persevere in the path of duty during times of religious trouble; let him bear many things in silence, with unstained virtue; let him be cautious in bearing evil deeds, nor let him ever assent or consent to the wicked in any matter; but if it be a question of choice which he should do, whether the laws of God were to be broken or men pleased let him freely use that memorable and most dignified answer of the Apostles: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts v. 29.) »

Pope Leo XIII, *Exeunte Iam Anno*, 1888:

« Here it is fitting We should exhort you whom God has made His helpers by giving the divine power to dispense His Sacraments, to turn to meditation and prayer. If the reformation of private and public morals is needed, it scarcely requires to be said that in both respects the clergy ought to set the highest example. Let them therefore remember that they have been called by Jesus Christ, “the light of the world, that the soul of the priest should shine like a light illuminating the whole world.[17] The light of learning, and that in no small degree is needed

in the priest, because it is his duty, to fill others with wisdom, to destroy errors, to be a guide to the many in the steep and slippery paths of life. Learning ought to be accompanied by innocence of life, because in the reformation of man example is far better than precept. “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works.”[18] The meaning of the divine word is that the perfection of virtue in priests should be such that they should be like a mirror to the rest of men. “There is nothing which induces others more effectively to piety and the worship of God, than the life and example of those who have dedicated themselves to the divine ministry: for, since they are separated from the world and placed in a higher sphere, others look on them as though on a mirror, to take examples from them.”[19] Therefore if all men must watchfully heed against the allurements of sin, and against seeking too eagerly fleeting pleasures, it is clear how much more faithful and steadfast ought priests to be. The sacredness of their dignity, moreover — as well as the fact that it is not sufficient to restrain their passions — demands in them the habit of stringent self-restraint, and also a guard over the powers of the soul, particularly the intellect and will, which hold the supreme place in man. “Thou who hast the mind to leave all (says St. Bernard), remember to reckon thyself among what thou wouldst abandon—nay, deny thyself first and before everything.” Not before the soul is unshackled and free from every desire, will men have a generous zeal for the salvation of others, without which they cannot properly secure their own everlasting welfare. “There will be one thing only sought (says St. Bernard) by His subjects, one glory, one pleasure — to make ready for the Lord a perfect people. For this they will give everything with much exertion of mind and body, with toil and suffering, with hunger and thirst, with cold and nakedness.” The frequent meditation upon the things of heaven wonderfully nourishes and strengthens virtue of this kind, and makes it always fearless of the greatest difficulties for the good of others. The more pains they take to meditate well, the more clearly will they understand the greatness and holiness of the priestly office. They will understand how sad it is that so many men, redeemed by Jesus Christ, are running headlong to eternal ruin; and by meditation upon God they will be themselves encouraged, and will more effectually excite others to the love of God. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Pastoralis*, 1891:

« It has come to pass that the faith itself is among many in danger, and that every effort must be made, that, through ignorance or indifference, it should not fall and fail from souls, but rather that it should take deep root in hearts and should bring forth in good works and the practice of virtue a glad and plentiful sweetness of perfect fruits. Strife must be made against the attempts of the enemies of truth, lest the evil stain which drops from their bad example and their widely disseminated teaching should spread more and more. Many wounds are to be healed which the dishonest toil of such men, and the unhappiness of the times, have struck in

the flocks committed to your care, many ruins are to be built up, many hardships still oppress the souls of the faithful, which — though haply it is impossible to destroy them — may at least be lightened.

These needs which, as We have said, demand your care and your industry, will be more fully and more suitably attended to if day by day the concord between the Bishops is strengthened, and if their work is made more cooperative in remedying the needs of clergy and laity, in taking counsel and in making such decisions as shall seem to align best with the common good, both for the particular requirements of separate dioceses, and for those that reach farther and rise higher, with which the prosperity and the weal of the whole people are associated. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Pastoralis*, 1891:

« Moreover, from the Annual Congresses of Bishops, of which We speak, this great benefit also flows, that the laity, moved to greater zeal by new impulses, resolve to walk in the paths set for them, themselves to hold meetings, to join in council, and by a union of strength to strive for the common cause of religion, and in obedience to their pastors to perform sedulously those duties which they accept from their teachings and exhortations. Nor in your annual assemblies will you find that there is lack of matter whereunto to devote your zeal and your energy. For beyond the special business of the separate dioceses, which can more easily be furthered under the light of a shared experience, the ordering of those works which are most effective for rousing the zeal of the priesthood already laboring in the Lord's vineyard, and for the education of students who will one day have to shine in the house of God with the light of solid wisdom, with the merit of a true ecclesiastical spirit, with every sacerdotal virtue—this will afford a large field of work to your prudence and your common deliberations. Another matter which will require your fatherly watchfulness will be the diligent inquiry into the means of best filling the mind of the people with the rudiments of faith, of directing their morals, of circulating writings which sow the seed of true faith and make for virtue, of setting a-foot works which shall pour out the benefits of charity and of securing that those already founded shall be confirmed in new strength. »

Pope Leo XIII, *In Ipso*, 1891:

« But Our special appeal has been directed to Our venerable brother bishops, whom the Holy Spirit has set up as leaders in the Church and has imbued with the abundant light of His grace. We urge them to keep watch as sentinels in all parts of the world so that they might know both what remedies are to be applied in the present circumstances and what snares are to be avoided in the case of each individual nation. Thus they should be Our best helpers in Our efforts to

obtain the salvation of Catholic nations. And, indeed, We owe abundant thanks to God for the admirable unanimity and concern with which the entire body of bishops has responded to Our exhortation; they use their talents and devotion to defend the Catholic faith and preserve human society. They recall it to the virtues consonant with that faith, away from the greatest ills, thus bringing it to true prosperity. »

Pope Leo XIII, *In Ipso*, 1891:

« Indeed, We recently learned that you collectively sent a letter to the faithful of your dioceses; this proves the most profound union of your wills when there is question of defending Catholic interests. Accordingly, that this unanimity might flourish in the future and that your efforts might proceed in the same pathway to the same determined end, it would be opportune for the bishops to hold annual conferences among themselves; these may be the source of a fruitful union of minds and action. Meetings like these already flourish in many places and have already produced happy results. For, by this means the bishops have had a greater abundance of counsel made available to them. In addition, their resolution of spirit has been strengthened, their zeal for things of religion has been aroused, and no small number of decisions have been carried out which are helpful for the Catholic enterprise. Moreover, such agreement has not only increased the respect and immense gratitude of their people toward them, but has also encouraged lay people, even of other nations, to deliberate equally harmoniously on how they might best undertake the defense of religion, as well as the state, in its present affliction.

Indeed, from these assemblies and exhortations on the part of bishops, Catholics have been inspired to hold and attend similar assemblies on the national, provincial, or local level, an undertaking of the greatest foresight. For, if evil men, strong in numbers and acumen unite here and there and conspire together to treacherously deprive Catholics of the gift of faith and its attendant advantages, surely it is right and necessary that Catholics should utilize their zeal and abilities to resist. In such gatherings, they can more freely and firmly undertake the profession of their faith and repel the enemy attacks upon it.

Moreover, there will be important subjects for the assembled bishops to discuss. In these calamitous and trying times, We judge that above all efforts should be made to unite the hierarchy with Christian families to effect a more perfect union. Then the faithful may adhere to their bishops with all good will and reverence, and in a special manner may bravely profess their fidelity, obedience, and filial piety toward the bishop of the universal church. For, surely, to support the view that the Roman Pontiff should not be subject to any human power, but

remain completely free, is the sacred obligation not of any one nation, but of the whole Catholic world. Therefore the bishops with united minds and efforts should see to it that the zeal of the faithful be aroused for this most just cause and that they urge its speedy accomplishment.

In these same assemblies the bishops can conveniently communicate with one another if some more complex problems have arisen in their local churches; also they can discuss certain matters in common letters or decrees, if it seems useful. Likewise the care for the formation and education of the clergy, which is the greatest and most salutary concern for a bishop, will occupy its place in these discussions: how the discipline of life in seminaries may conform to the norms of the Council of Trent; by what principal means piety and noble qualities may be inculcated in the seminarians; how they can be encouraged to excel in higher learning; and what methods the clergy can use to save souls.

As for the faithful, who are exposed to such dangers and snares, propose various aids which they can themselves apply: sermons on divine subjects; catechetical instruction suitable for different persons, ages, and places, pious sodalities of many kinds, which the Church recommends; the proper observation of the religious feasts; those institutes or works which will preserve the faithful, especially young people, from corruption and will encourage frequent reception of the sacraments; finally, books, newspapers, and similar publications which will advance the faith and safeguard morals.

It is very important that you encourage Catholic writers and editors so that they may develop and extend publications in a more effective way. Excellent writings of this sort, which are published regularly, have everywhere greatly helped both religion and the state, either because they support and advance them directly or because in recanting the damaging writings of the adversaries, they restrain their improper contagion. In the Austrian empire their value is immense, since the enemies of the Church publish their writings regularly. With their abundant means, they disseminate their publications easily and widely. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to match for writing in equal number, and thus be able to blunt their weapons, detect their evil designs, check their malice, and promote the cause of duty and virtue. Accordingly, it will be helpful if each region has its own newspapers — champions, as it were, of the altar and hearth — that conform to the prudence and direction of the bishop. Moreover, the clergy should benignly favor them and offer them the assistance of their learning; Catholics should support them well.

In addition, another matter which is close to your hearts must be safeguarded. In fact, you have already sent a joint letter to the faithful. It is the cause of workers, who sorely need the support of religion both for the honorable accomplishment of their labors and for the alleviation of their sufferings. Their cause is closely connected with the social question; the more difficulties it encounters, the more pressing is its need for attention. If the bishops direct their attention to this question, if they see to it that justice and charity influence all classes of society and are deeply imprinted in souls, if by their authority and activity they come to the aid of the lowly condition of workers, they will have deserved well of the Church and society alike. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, 1893, All Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic World, in *Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See*:

« Let our first care, then be to see that in Seminaries and Academical institutions the study of Holy Scripture be placed on such a footing as its own importance and the circumstances of the time demand. With this view, the first thing which requires attention is the wise choice of Professors. Teachers of Sacred Scripture are not to be appointed at hap-hazard out of the crowd; but they must be men whose character and fitness are proved by their love of, and their long familiarity with, the Bible, and by suitable learning and study.

It is a matter of equal importance to provide in time for a continuous succession of such teachers; and it will be well, wherever this can be done, to select young men of good promise who have successfully accomplished their theological course, and to set them apart exclusively for Holy Scripture, affording them facilities for full and complete studies. Professors thus chosen and thus prepared may enter with confidence on the task that is appointed for them; and that they may carry out their work well and profitably, let them take heed to the instructions We now proceed to give.

At the commencement of a course of Holy Scripture let the Professor strive earnestly to form the judgment of the young beginners so as to train them equally to defend the sacred writings and to penetrate their meaning. This is the object of the treatise which is called “Introduction.” Here the student is taught how to prove the integrity and authority of the Bible, how to investigate and ascertain its true sense, and how to meet and refute objections. It is needless to insist upon the importance of making these preliminary studies in an orderly and thorough fashion, with the accompaniment and assistance of Theology; for the whole subsequent course must rest on the foundation thus laid and make use of the light thus acquired. Next, the teacher will turn his earnest attention to that more fruitful division of Scripture science which has to do with Interpretation; wherein is imparted the method of using the word of God for

the advantage of religion and piety. We recognize without hesitation that neither the extent of the matter nor the time at disposal allows each single Book of the Bible to be separately gone through. But the teaching should result in a definite and ascertained method of interpretation—and therefore the Professor should equally avoid the mistake of giving a mere taste of every Book, and of dwelling at too great length on a part of one Book. If most schools cannot do what is done in the large institutions—that is, take the students through the whole of one or two Books continuously and with a certain development—yet at least those parts which are selected should be treated with suitable fullness; in such a way that the students may learn from the sample that is thus put before them to love and use the remainder of the sacred Book during the whole of their lives. The Professor, following the tradition of antiquity, will make use of the Vulgate as his text; for the Council of Trent decreed that “in public lectures, disputations, preaching, and exposition,”²⁹ the Vulgate is the “authentic” version; and this is the existing custom of the Church. At the same time, the other versions which Christian antiquity has approved, should not be neglected, more especially the more ancient MSS. For although the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek is substantially rendered by the Vulgate, nevertheless wherever there may be ambiguity or want of clearness, the “examination of older tongues,”³⁰ to quote St. Augustine, will be useful and advantageous. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Constanti Hungarorum*, 1893:

« For the rest, We appreciate your concerted efforts to maintain the seats of highest studies under the authority of the Church and bishops in accord with the will of their founders. We, nevertheless, exhort you to continue to fulfill this obligation. It would certainly not be equitable to deny Catholics that which is granted adversaries of the Catholic cause. It is of common interest, moreover, that what our predecessors established so piously and wisely should never be used to the detriment of the Church and Catholic faith, but for the protection and defense of both and hence, for the continuous good of the state itself.

Finally, these recommendations also apply to seminarians and priests. You should expend even greater effort on them that they may be worthy of the priesthood and that they may manifest virtue fitting the times. For this reason, the sacred seminaries justly claim the greater part of your attention. Direct them in the best way possible and provide them with all that is necessary so that through the dedication of selected teachers, seminarians will be trained in the morals and virtues required by their order and, moreover, in all the beauty and glory of doctrine, both human and divine.

For your clergy, the times require a very particular unanimity in your guidance. concern and love in admonishing and exhorting them, and extraordinary firmness in defending ecclesiastical discipline. In turn, all priests should have strong faith in their bishops, accept their directives, and support their undertakings. In their sacred duties and their pastoral work, they should always be ready and zealous, guided by love.

Because, moreover, priests set an example, they should be living models of virtue and constancy. They should be cautious, however, not to get too involved in civilian or political affairs, and let them often recall this passage from St. Paul, “No one serving as God’s soldier entangles himself in worldly affairs, that he may please him whose approval he has secured.”

To be sure, as St. Gregory the Great admonishes, it is not right to abandon foresight in external matters in one’s anxiety for spiritual matters. Explicitly, when it is a question of defending religion or promoting the common good, the latter is not to be disregarded. A priest must be cautious not to overstep his dignity and deportment lest he seem more concerned for human than heavenly affairs. Most aptly the same Gregory the Great says, “Therefore, worldly occupations are sometimes to be tolerated out of compassion, never however to be pursued out of love; lest they, by burdening the mind of the lover, overwhelm him and make him sink under their weight from heaven into the depths.”

We also desire that you counsel pastors to take conscientious care of church property and manage it most carefully. Where any negligence has crept in, apply the most suitable remedy. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Orientalium Dignitas*, 1894:

« In point of fact there is more importance than can be believed in preserving the Eastern rites. Their antiquity is august, it is what gives nobility to the different rites, it is a brilliant jewel for the whole Church, it confirms the God-given unity of the Catholic Faith. »

For that very reason, even as her Apostolic origin is all the more proven especially by these Churches of the East, at the selfsame moment there shines out and is made manifest these Churches’ original, complete unity with the Roman Church. Nothing else, perhaps, is so breathtakingly effective for illustrating the mark of Catholicity in God’s Church than that striking sight of differing forms of ceremonies and noble examples of the tongues of the ancient past – made all the more noble by their use by the Apostles and Fathers – rendering their submission to the Church. This is almost an image of that most excellent submission that was

rendered to the newly-born Christ, the divine Founder of the Church, when the Magi were drawn from the different regions of the East and came to adore Him¹.

At this place it is opportune to notice the fact that the sacred rites, although not instituted specifically for proving the truth of the dogmas of the Catholic Faith incontrovertibly, are effectively the living voice of Catholic Truth, the oft-sounded expression of it. For that very reason the true Church of Christ, even as she shows great zeal to guard inviolate those forms of divine worship – since they are hallowed and are not to be changed – sometimes grants or permits something novel in the performance of them in certain instances. This she does especially when they are in conformity with their venerable antiquity. By this means, her vitality does not appear ever-aging; she stands out more wondrously as the very Bride of Christ whom the wisdom of the Holy Fathers recognized in prefigurement in the words of David: “The queen stood at your right hand arrayed in apparel embroidered with spun gold she is clothed with embroidery of diverse figures and spun gold fringe.”

Inasmuch as this diversity of liturgical form and discipline of the Eastern Churches is approved in law, besides its other merits, it has redounded tremendously to the glory and usefulness of the Church. They ought not figure any less as subjects of Our charge. So much is this the case that it is in the best interest of all that their discipline not haphazardly borrow anything that would be ill-suited from Western ministers of the Gospel whom love for Christ compels to go to those peoples. The decisions that Our illustrious Predecessor Benedict XIV in his wisdom and foresight decreed in the Constitution of 24 December 1743 remain in force. This constitution was addressed as a letter to the Greek Melkite Patriarch of Antioch and to all the Bishops of that rite subject to him. The truth is that in the long course of time, given that the state of affairs has changed in those regions, that Latin rite missionaries and institutes have multiplied there as well, it now happens that some of the special concerns of the Apostolic See on the new conditions should be set out.

Frequently in recent years We recognized that this would be very useful: Our Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs in the East, confirmed Our desires in very similar terms more than once in correspondence. That the result of this deliberation might be made more plain and intelligible and that well-suited, far-sighted plans be defined, We thought it well to invite those same Patriarchs to Rome and confer with them over what they might advise. Then We convened in Our presence a meeting with them that was well attended by some of Our beloved sons, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, to deliberate on this matter. After weighing carefully and with due reflection all those matters that were put forward and discussed in

conference, We resolved to make more explicit and far-reaching certain of the measures set out in the Constitution of Benedict XIV that would be more in keeping with the new state of affairs prevailing in these nations. For the execution of this, We single out this directive from among them as their fundamental condition for success: Latin rite priests are to be sent to those regions by the Apostolic See only for the purpose of assisting or helping the Patriarchs or Bishops there. The former are to be careful not to use the faculties granted them for acting in a way prejudicial to the Patriarchs or Bishops or for reducing the number of their subjects. By the force of these laws, evidently, the duties of the Latin clergy are to be kept within their proper limits in their relations with the Eastern rite hierarchy.

Inasmuch as the following protocols have seemed proper to ordain and sanction in Our Lord, by Our Apostolic Authority We do declare now that it is Our will and decree that the aforesaid decree of Benedict XIV originally promulgated respecting the Greek Melkites, now apply globally to all the faithful of any Eastern rite whatever.

Any Latin rite missionary, whether of the secular or religious clergy, who induces with his advice or assistance any Eastern rite faithful to transfer to the Latin rite, will be deposed and excluded from his benefice in addition to the ipso facto suspension a divinis and other punishments that he will incur as imposed in the aforesaid Constitution Demandatam. That this decree stand fixed and lasting We order a copy of it be posted openly in the churches of the Latin rite. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Orientalium Dignitas*, 1894:

« We have the greatest concern that seminaries, schools, and institutes of all types be built in more advantageous locales in the East, and most especially those for the priestly formation of native men in their own ancestral rite to help their own people. We have resolved upon this course of action; it is difficult to say with just how much zeal and devotion We hope to attempt it, to advance it, relying greatly, as We do, upon the support and resources of Catholics.

We recently made clear in an encyclical letter that We issued last year on the erection of colleges for clergy in East India, that the efforts of indigenous priests, since they direct them in ways more congruent with their Churches' particular situation and undertake them more avidly, will be more fruitful than those of foreigners. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Litteras A Vobis*, 1894:

« In the first place, let men preparing for sacred orders be taught the best things, those for which there is the greatest need and which will enable them to teach Catholic truths and to defend them strenuously against all assaults. All too often daily experience makes it plain that where the ministers lack appropriate doctrinal knowledge, their people generally suffer from ignorance of the faith and religion. For it is from the mouth of the priest that the faithful ought to learn the law: He is the angel of the Lord. For this reason we read the proclamation: the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge.[Malachi 2:6] The Apostle too mentions knowledge among other reasons for proving himself your servant in Jesus.[2 Corinthians 4:6] And where this knowledge is wanting, this evil also follows for the priests: they are condemned by the people, with God also exacting a penalty for their neglect of duty. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all people.[Malachi 2:9] — But the embellishment of learning and its defense never leads to their goal if they are separated from sanctity of life and morals. Indeed, knowledge without love does not build up but inflates.[1 Corinthians 8:1] This is the usual practice of man. Though Christ taught that learning is to be accepted from the sacred ministers without regard for any deeds of theirs which do not conform to the doctrine; nevertheless men are more influenced by what they see than by what they hear. For this reason we read the clear testimony concerning God the Savior, who was not only the teacher of shepherds but also became their model, that he began to do and to teach. Hence the priest's actions must confirm the doctrine which he preaches and commends. Before all else he who is appointed to rule a parish must not be impatient with the labor. Called to the vineyard of the Lord, let him diligently cultivate it, aware that he must render a serious account sometime for the souls entrusted to him. Nor does he labor in vain if at all times and in all matters he holds fast to learning. We must indeed fight strenuously for Christ, but only at the will and authorization of those whom Christ has chosen as leaders. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Litteras A Vobis*, 1894:

« For the rest, may suitable love and concord of minds flourish among you by thinking alike with one soul and one mind.[Philippians 2:2] For this reason we strongly recommend that you share your plans frequently among yourselves and hold episcopal synods in various places to satisfy the obligations of your sacred office. You have with you the Legate of the Apostolic See, who will tell you Our mind and Our counsels. Then too, because of the paternal love with which We embrace you, you have Us at all times ready to lend aid to your work. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Depuis Le Jour*, 1899:

« Called by the will of God to be the saviour of the world, priests must always, and above all things, remember that they are by the very institution of Jesus Christ, “the salt of the earth,”

and hence St. Paul, writing to Timothy, justly concluded that “by their charity, their faith and their purity, they must be an example to the faithful in their words and in their relations with their neighbors.” »

Pope Leo XIII, *Depuis Le Jour*, 1899:

« And in the first place it is clear that the more important, complex and difficult an office is the longer and more careful should be the preparation undergone by those who are called to fill it. But is there on earth a dignity higher than that of the priesthood or a ministry imposing a heavier responsibility than that whose object is the sanctification of all the free acts of man? Is it not of the government of souls that the Fathers have rightly said that it is “the art of arts;” that is, the most important and most delicate of all tasks to which a man may be applied for the benefit of his kind? – “Ars artium regimen animarum”? Nothing must then be neglected to prepare those whom a divine vocation calls to this mission in order that they may fulfill it worthily and fruitfully. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Depuis Le Jour*, 1899:

« The priests who labor, under your superintendence, for the formation of the youth called to enroll itself later on in the ranks of the sacerdotal army, cannot too often meditate before God on the exceptional importance of the mission with which you entrust them. They have not simply to instruct their children in the elements of letters and human science, like the general run of masters—that is the least part of their task. Their attention, zeal and devotion must be ever on the watch and active, in order, on the one hand, to study continually, under the eye and in the light of God, the souls of the children and the indications of their vocation to the service of the altar, and, on the other, to help the inexperience and feebleness of their young disciples in order to protect the precious grace of the Divine call against all deadly influences, both from without and from within. They have therefore to exercise a ministry that is humble, laborious and delicate, and requires constant abnegation. To sustain their courage in the fulfillment of their duties, they will take care to temper it in the purest sources of the spirit of faith. They must never lose sight of the fact that the children whose intelligence, heart and character they are engaged in forming are not being prepared for earthly functions, however legitimate or honorable. The Church confides those children to them in order that they may one day be fit to become priests; that is to say, missionaries of the Gospel, continuers of the work of Jesus Christ, distributors of His Grace and His Sacraments. Let this purely supernatural consideration incessantly imbue their double function as professors and educators, and be the leaven, so to say, which is to be mixed with the best flour, according to the Gospel parable, so as to transform it into sweet and substantial bread. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Depuis Le Jour*, 1899:

« the studies of aspirants to the priesthood must remain faithful to the traditional methods of past ages. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Depuis Le Jour*, 1899:

« But if the methods of pedagogy in vogue in the State establishments have been for several years past progressively reducing the study of Latin and suppressing the exercises in prose and poetry which our fathers justly considered should hold a large place in college classes, the junior seminaries must put themselves on their guard against these innovations, inspired by utilitarian motives and working to the detriment of the solid formation of the mind. To the ancient methods so often justified by their results we would freely apply the words of St. Paul to his disciple Timothy, and with the apostles we would say to you, Venerable Brothers, “Guard the deposit” with jealous care. If it should be destined—which God forbid!—one day to disappear from the other public schools, let your junior seminaries and free colleges keep it with an intelligent and patriotic solicitude. Doing so, you will be imitating the priests of Jerusalem, who, saving the sacred fire of the temple from the barbarian invader, so hid it as to be able to find it again and restore it to its splendor when the evil day should have passed.

Once in possession of the Latin tongue—the key, so to say, of sacred science—and their mental faculties sufficiently developed by the study of the belles lettres, young men destined for the priesthood pass from the junior to the senior seminary. There they will prepare themselves by piety and the exercise of the priestly virtues for the reception of Holy Orders, while devoting themselves to the study of philosophy and theology.

In our Encyclical “*Aeterni Patris*,” which we once again recommend to the attentive perusal of your seminarists and their masters, we declared, with St. Paul as our authority, that it is by the empty subtleties of false philosophy “*per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam*” that the minds of the faithful are most frequently led astray and the purity of the faith corrupted among men, we added, and the events of the last twenty years have furnished bitter confirmation of the reflections and apprehensions we expressed at the time. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Depuis Le Jour*, 1899:

« In our times the students in your junior and senior seminaries can less than ever afford to be strangers to the study of physical and natural science. To it, therefore, they must apply themselves—but in due measure and in wise proportions. It is by no means necessary that in

the scientific course annexed to the study of philosophy the professors should feel themselves obliged to expound in detail the almost innumerable applications of physical and natural sciences in the different branches of human industry. It is enough that their pupils have an accurate knowledge of the main principles and summary conclusions, so as to be able to solve the objections which infidels draw from these sciences against the teachings of Revelation.

It is of capital importance that the students of your senior seminaries should study, for at least two years, with great care, “rational” philosophy, which, as the learned Benedictine Mabillon, the glory of his order and of France, used to say, will be of the greatest assistance to them, not only in teaching them how to reason well and arrive at right conclusions, but in putting them in a position to defend the orthodox faith against the captious and often sophistical arguments of adversaries.

Next come the sacred sciences, properly so called—Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture, Church History and Canon Law. These are the sciences proper to the priest—in them he receives a first initiation during his sojourn in the senior seminary, but he must pursue his studies in them throughout the remainder of his life.

Theology is the science of the things of faith. It is nourished, Pope Sixtus V. tells us, at those ever-willing springs—“the Holy Scriptures, the decisions of the Popes, the decrees of the Councils.”

Called positive and speculative or scholastic, according to the method followed in studying it, theology does not confine itself to proposing the truths which are to be believed; it scrutinizes their inmost depths, shows their relations with human reason, and, aided by the resources which true philosophy supplies, explains, develops and adapts them accurately to all the needs of the defense and propagation of the faith. Like Beseleel, to whom the Lord gave His spirit of wisdom, intelligence and knowledge, when intrusting him with the mission of building His temple, the theologian “cuts the precious stones of divine dogma, assorting them skilfully, and, by the setting he gives them, brings out their brilliancy, charm and beauty.”

Rightly, then, does the same Sixtus V. call theology (and here he is referring especially to scholastic theology) a gift from heaven, and ask that it be maintained in the schools and cultivated with great ardor, as being abundant in fruitfulness for the Church.

Is it necessary to add that the book par excellence in which students may with most profit study scholastic theology is the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas? It is our wish, therefore, that professors be sure to explain to all their pupils its method, as well as the principal articles relating to Catholic faith.

We recommend equally that all seminarists have in their hands, and frequently peruse, that golden book known as the Catechism of the Council of Trent, or Roman Catechism, dedicated to all priests invested with the pastoral office (*Catechismus ad Parochos*). Noted both for the abundance and accuracy of its teaching and for elegance of style, this catechism is a precious summary of the whole of theology, dogmatic and moral. The priest who knows it thoroughly has always at his disposal resources which will enable him to preach with fruit, to acquit himself fitly in the important ministry of the confessional and the direction of souls, and be in a position to refute triumphantly the objections of unbelievers.

With regard to the study of the Holy Scriptures, we call your attention once more, Venerable Brothers, to the teachings we laid down in our Encyclical "*Providentissimus Deus*," which we wish the professors to put before their disciples, with the necessary explanations. They will put them specially on their guard against the disturbing tendencies which it is sought to introduce into the interpretation of the Bible, and which would shortly, were they to prevail, bring about the ruin of its inspiration and supernatural character. Under the specious pretext of depriving the adversaries of the revealed word of apparently irrefutable arguments against the authenticity and veracity of the Holy Books, some Catholic writers have thought it a clever idea to adopt those arguments for themselves. By these strange and perilous tactics they have worked to make a breach with their own hands in the walls of the city they were charged to defend. In our Encyclical above quoted, and in another document, we have spoken our mind on this rash, dangerous policy. While encouraging our exegetists to keep abreast with the progress of criticism, we have firmly maintained the principles which have been sanctioned in this matter by the traditional authority of the Fathers and Councils, and renewed in our own time by the Council of the Vatican.

The history of the Church is like a mirror, which reflects the life of the Church through the ages. It proves, better far than civil and profane history, the sovereign liberty of God and His providential action on the march of events. They who study it must never lose sight of the fact that it contains a body of dogmatic facts which none may call in question. That ruling, supernatural idea which presides over the destinies of the Church is at the same time the torch whose light illumines her history. Still, inasmuch as the Church, which continues among men

the life of the Word Incarnate, is composed of a divine and human element, this latter must be expounded by teachers and studied by disciples with great probity. “God has no need of our lies,” as we are told in the Book of Job.

The Church historian will be all the better equipped to bring out her divine origin, superior as this is to all conceptions of a merely terrestrial and natural order, the more loyal he is in naught extenuating of the trials which the faults of her children, and at times even of her ministers, have brought upon the Spouse of Christ during the course of centuries. Studied in this way, the history of the Church constitutes by itself a magnificent and conclusive demonstration of the truth and divinity of Christianity.

Lastly, to finish the cycle of studies by which candidates for the priesthood should prepare themselves for their future ministry, mention must be made of Canon Law, or the science of the laws and jurisprudence of the Church. This science is connected by very close and logical ties with that of Theology, which it applies practically to all that concerns the government of the Church, the dispensation of holy things, the rights and duties of her ministers, the use of temporal goods which she needs for the accomplishment of her mission. “Without a knowledge of Canon Law (as the Fathers of one of your provincial councils very well said), theology is imperfect, incomplete, like a man with only one arm. Ignorance of Canon Law has favored the birth and diffusion of numerous errors about the rights of the Roman Pontiffs and of Bishops, and about the powers which the Church derives from her own Constitution—powers whose exercise she adapts to circumstances.”

We shall sum up all we have just said concerning your junior and senior seminaries in this sentence of St. Paul, which we recommend to the frequent meditation of the masters and pupils of your ecclesiastical athenaeums: “O Timothy, carefully guard the deposit which has been confided to you. Fly the profane novelties of words and objections which cover themselves with the false names of science, for all they who have made profession of them have erred in the faith.”

And now we have a word to say to you, dearly beloved sons, who have been ordained priests and become the cooperators of your Bishops. We know, and the whole world knows with us, the qualities which distinguish you. There is no good work of which you are not the inspiration or the apostles. Docile to the counsels we gave you in the Encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*,” you go to the people, to the workers, to the poor. You endeavor by all means in your power to help them, raise them in the moral scale, render their lot less hard. To this end

you form reunions and congresses; you establish homes, clubs, rural banks, aid and employment offices for the toilers. You labor to introduce reforms into economic and social life, and in the difficult enterprise you do not hesitate to make serious sacrifices of time and money; and with the same scope you write books and articles in the newspapers and reviews. All these are, in themselves, highly praiseworthy, and in them you give no equivocal proofs of good will and of intelligent and generous devotedness to relieve the most pressing needs of contemporary society and of souls.

Still, beloved sons, we deem it our duty paternally to call your attention to some fundamental principles to which you will not fail to conform if you desire that your activity be really fruitful and reproductive.

Remember, above all, that zeal, to be profitable and praiseworthy, must be “accompanied by discretion, rectitude and purity.” Thus does the grave and judicious Thomas a Kempis express himself. Before him St. Bernard, the glory of your country in the twelfth century, that indefatigable apostle of all great causes touching the honor of God, the rights of the Church or the good of souls, did not fear to say that “zeal, separated from knowledge and from the spirit of discernment or discretion, is insupportable . . . that the more ardent zeal is, the more necessary is it that it be accompanied by that discretion which puts order into the exercise of charity and without which even virtue may be changed into a defect and a principle of disorder.”[19] And discretion in activity and in the choice of means of rendering activity successful is all the more indispensable from the fact that the present times are disturbed and environed with numerous difficulties. This or that act, measure or practice, suggested by zeal, while excellent in themselves, can only—owing to the circumstances of the race—produce bad results. Priests will avoid this inconvenience and this evil, if before and during their action they take care to conform to established order the rules of disciplines. And ecclesiastical discipline demands union among the different members of the hierarchy, and the respect and obedience of inferiors to their superiors. In our recent letter to the Archbishop of Tours we said the same thing: “The edifice of the Church of which God Himself is the architect, rests on a very visible foundation, primarily on the authority of Peter and his successors, but also on the Apostles and the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops, so that to hear their voice or to despise it is tantamount to hearing or despising Jesus Christ Himself.”[20]

Listen, then, to the words addressed by St. Ignatius, the great martyr of Antioch, to the clergy of the primitive Church: “Let all obey their Bishops, as Jesus Christ obeyed His Father. In all things touching the sense of the Church do nothing without your Bishop, and as our Lord did

nothing but in close union with His Father, so priests, do you nothing without your Bishop. Let all members of the priestly body be united, as all the strings of a harp are united in the instrument.”

Should you, on the contrary, act as priests independently of this submission to and union with your Bishops, we would repeat to you the words of our predecessor, Gregory XVI, viz., that “you utterly destroy, as far as in you lies, the order established with a most wise forethought by God, the author of the Church.”[22]

Remember, too, beloved sons, that the Church is rightly compared to an army in battle array “sicut castrorum acies ordinata,”[23] because it is her mission to combat the enemies, visible and invisible, of God and men’s souls. Wherefore did St. Paul recommend Timothy to bear himself “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”. [24] Now, that which constitutes the strength of an army and contributes most to its victory is discipline and the exact and rigorous obedience of all toward those in command.

Just here zeal out of place and without discretion may easily become the cause of real disaster. Call to mind one of the most memorable facts of sacred history. Certainly neither courage, willingness, nor devotion to the sacred cause of religion were lacking in those priests who gathered round Judas Maccabeus, to fight with him against the enemies of the true God, the profaners of the temple, the oppressors of their nation. And yet, releasing themselves from the rules of discipline, they rashly engaged in a combat in which they were vanquished. The Holy Spirit tells us of them “that they were not of the race of those who might save Israel.” Why? Because they would obey only their own inspirations, and threw themselves forward without awaiting the orders of their leaders. “In die illa ceciderunt sacerdotes in bello, dum volunt fortiter facere, dum sine consilio exeunt in praelium.[25] Ipsi autem non erant de semine virorum illorum, per quos salus facta est in Israel.”[26]

On this point our enemies may serve us for an example. They are well aware that union is strength, “vis unita fortior,” so they do not fail to unite close when it comes to attacking the holy Church of Jesus Christ.

If, then, you desire, as you certainly do, beloved sons, that in the formidable contest being waged against the Church by anti-Christian sects and by the city of the evil one, the victory be for God and His Church, it is absolutely necessary for you to fight all together in perfect order and discipline under the command of your hierarchical leaders. Pay no heed to those

pernicious men who, though calling themselves Christians and Catholics, throw tares into the field of the Lord and sow division in His Church by attacking and often even calumniating the Bishops “established by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God.”[27] Read neither their pamphlets nor their papers. No good priest should in any way lend authority either to their ideas or to their license of speech. Can he ever forget that on the day of his ordination he promised “obedientiam et reverentiam” to his Bishop before the holy altar?

Above all things, remember, beloved sons, that an indispensable condition of true zeal and the best pledge of success in the works to which hierarchical obedience consecrates you is purity and holiness of life. “Jesus began by practicing before preaching.”[28] Like Him, the priest must preface preaching by word by preaching by example. “Separated from the world and its concerns (say the Fathers of the Council of Trent), clerics have been placed on a height where they are visible and the faithful look into their lives as into a mirror to know what they are to imitate. Hence clerics and all they whom God has called specially to His service should so regulate their actions and morals that there may be nothing in their deportment, manners, movements, words and in all the other details of their life which is not deeply impressed with religion. They must carefully avoid faults which, though trivial, in others would be very serious to them, in order that there be not a single one of their acts which does not inspire respect in all.”[29] With these recommendations of the sacred Council, which we would wish, beloved sons, to engrave in all your hearts, those priests who certainly fail to comply, who adopted in their preaching language out of harmony with the dignity of their priesthood and the sacredness of the word of God; who attended popular meetings where their presence could only excite the passions of the wicked and of the enemies of the Church, and who exposed themselves to the grossest insults without profit to any one, and to the astonishment, if not scandal, of the pious faithful; who assumed the habits, manners, conduct and spirit of laymen. Salt must certainly be mingled with the mass which it is to preserve from corruption, but it must at the same time defend itself against the mass under pain of losing all savor and becoming of no use except to be thrown out and trampled under foot.[30]

So, too, the priest who is the salt of the earth must in his necessary contact with the society by which he is surrounded, preserve modesty, gravity and holiness in manner, action and speech, and not allow himself to become infected with the levity, dissipation and vanity of the worldly. He must, on the contrary, in the midst of the men, keep his soul so united with God that he lose nothing of the spirit of his holy state, and be not constrained to make before God and his conscience the sad and humiliating avowal: “I never go among laymen that I do not return less a priest.”

Is it not because they have, with a zeal that is presumptive, set aside those traditional rules of discretion, modesty and prudence that certain priests consider as out of date and incompatible with “the present needs of the ministry those principles of discipline and conduct which they received from their masters in the senior seminary”? They are to be seen rushing, as if by instinct, into the most perilous innovations in speech, manners and associations. Several of them, alas! rashly putting themselves on the slippery incline from which they have no native power to escape, and despising the charitable warnings of their superiors and their older and more experienced colleagues, have ended in apostasies which rejoice the hearts of the adversaries of the Church and brought bitterest tears into the eyes of their Bishops, their brothers in the priesthood and the pious faithful. St. Augustine tells us: “When a man is out of the right way the more quickly and impetuously he advances, the more he errs.”[31]

There are, of course, some changes which are advantageous and calculated to advance the kingdom of God in men’s souls and in society. But, as the Holy Gospel tells us,[32] it is the province of the “Father of the household” and not of the children or servants to examine them, and, if he judges well, to give them currency side by side with the time-honored and venerable usages, which make up the rest of his treasury.

Lately when fulfilling the apostolic duty of putting the Catholics of North America on their guard against innovations, tending, among other things, to substitute for the principles of perfection consecrated by the teaching of doctors and the practice of saints moral maxims and rules of life more or less impregnated with that naturalism which nowadays endeavors to penetrate everywhere, we proclaimed aloud that far from repudiating and rejecting “en bloc” the progress accomplished in the present epoch, we were only too anxious to welcome all that goes to augment the patrimony of science or to give greater extension to public prosperity. But we took care to add that this progress could be of efficacious service to the good cause only when harmonized with the authority of the Church.[33]

As a conclusion to this letter we are pleased to apply to the clergy of France what we formerly wrote for the priests of our diocese of Perugia. We reproduce here a portion of the pastoral letter we addressed to them on July 19, 1866:

“We ask the ecclesiastics of our diocese to reflect seriously on their sublime obligations and on the difficult circumstances through which we are passing and to act in such wise that their conduct be in harmony with their duties and always conformable to the rules of an enlightened

and prudent zeal. For thus even our enemies will seek in vain for motives of reproach and blame: qui ex adverso est vereatur nihil habens malum dicere de nobis.[34]

“Although difficulties and dangers are every day multiplying, the pious and fervent priest must not for that be discouraged – he must not abandon his duties or even draw rein in the accomplishment of the spiritual mission he has received for the welfare and salvation of mankind and for the maintenance of that august religion of which he is herald and minister. For it is especially by difficulties and trials that his virtue becomes strong and stable; it is in the greatest misfortunes, in the midst of political transformations and social upheavals that the salutary and civilizing influence of his ministry shines forth with greatest brilliancy.

“ . . . To come down to practice we find a teaching admirably adapted to the circumstances in the four maxims which the great Apostle St. Paul gave to his disciple Titus. In all things give good example by your works, your doctrine, the integrity of your life, by the gravity of your conduct, using none but holy and blameless language.[35] We would that each and every member of our clergy meditate on these maxims and conform his conduct thereto.

“In omnibus teipsum praebe exemplum bonorum operum. In all things give an example of good works; that is, of active and exemplary life, animated by a true spirit of charity and guided by the maxims of evangelical prudence – of a life of sacrifice and toil, consecrated to the welfare of your neighbors, not with earthly views or for a perishable reward, but with a supernatural object. Give an example by that language at once simple, noble and lofty, by that sound and blameless discourse which confounds all human opposition, calms the long standing hatred the world has sworn against you, and wins for you the respect and even esteem of the enemies of religion. Every one devoted to the service of the sanctuary has been at all times obliged to show himself a living model and perfect exemplar of all the virtues; but g this obligation becomes all the more instant when, as a consequence of social upheavals, we are treading a difficult and uncertain path where we may at every step discover ambushes and pretexts of attack....

“In doctrina. In the face of the combined efforts of incredulity and heresy to consummate the ruin of Catholic faith, it would be a real crime for the clergy to remain in a state of hesitancy and inactivity. In such an outpouring of error and conflict of opinion he must not prove faithless to his mission, which is to defend dogma assaulted, morality travestied and justice frequently outraged. It is for him to oppose himself as a barrier to the attacks of error and the deceits of heresy; to watch the tactics of the wicked who war on the faith and honor of this Catholic country; to unmask their plots and reveal their ambushes; to warn the confiding,

strengthen the timid and open the eyes of the blinded. Superficial erudition or merely common knowledge will not suffice for all this – there is need of study, solid, profound and continuous, in a word of a mass of doctrinal knowledge sufficient to cope with the subtlety and remarkable cunning of our modern opponents....

“In integritate. No better proof of the importance of this council could be had than the sad evidence of what is going on around us. Do we not observe that the lax life of some ecclesiastics brings discredit and contempt on their ministry and proves the occasion of scandals? If men, endowed with minds as brilliant as they are remarkable, now and then desert the ranks of the sacred soldiery and rise in revolt against the Church – that mother who, in her tenderness and affection had advanced them to the direction and for the salvation of souls, their defection and wanderings have most frequently had their origin in want of discipline and evilness of life

“In gravitate. By gravity is to be understood that serious, judicious, tactful conduct which should be characteristic of every faithful and prudent minister chosen by God for the government of His family. While thanking God for having vouchsafed to raise him to this honor, he must show himself faithful to all his obligations, and at the same time balanced and prudent in all his actions; he must not allow himself to be dominated by base passions, nor carried away by violent and exaggerated language; he must lovingly sympathize with the misfortunes and weaknesses of others; do all the good he can to every one, disinterestedly, unostentatiously, and maintaining ever intact the honor of his character and sublime dignity.”

We return now to you, beloved sons in the French clergy, and we are firmly convinced that our perceptions and counsels, solely inspired as they are by our paternal affection, will be understood and received by you in this sense and bearing we wished to give them in addressing you this letter.

We expect much from you, because God has richly endowed you with all the gifts and qualities necessary for performing great and holy deeds for the advantage of the Church and society. We would that not one among you permit himself to be tarnished by those imperfections which dim the splendor of the sacerdotal character and injure its efficacy.

The present times are evil; the future is still more gloomy and menacing, and seems to herald the approach of a redoubtable crisis and social upheaval. It behooves us, then, as we have said on many occasions, to honor the salutary principles of religion, as well as those of justice, charity, respect and duty. It is for us to imbue men’s souls with these principles – and especially

those souls which have become captive to infidelity or disturbed by destroying passions, to bring about the reign of the grace and peace of our Divine Redeemer, Who is the Light and the Resurrection and the Life, and in Him to unite all men, notwithstanding the inevitable social distinctions which divide them.

Yes, now more than ever, is there need of the help and devotedness of exemplary priests, full of faith, discretion and zeal, who, taking inspiration from the gentleness and energy of Jesus Christ, Whose true ambassadors they are, “pro Christo legatione fungimur,”[36] to announce with a courageous and inexhaustible patience the eternal truths which are seldom fruitless of virtue in men’s souls.

Their ministry will be laborious – often times even painful, especially in countries where the people are absorbed in worldly interests and live in forgetfulness of God and His holy religion. But the enlightened, charitable and unwearied influence of the priest fortified by Divine grace will work, as it has already worked, prodigies of resurrection almost beyond belief. »

Pope Leo XIII, Paternae, 1899:

« However, there are some things which are so important for the progress of the Catholic religion that it does not suffice to mention them only once; they demand to be recalled and recommended often. Such is the concern for establishing seminaries, to the condition of which the future fortunes of the Church are intimately joined. Therefore, in setting up their discipline, that which some bishops have already performed should be your highest priority: that the aspirants to the priesthood should live in special houses called “seminaries” with their own rules and laws. The houses for young people destined for civil life, can be called episcopal colleges. Experience indicates that mixed seminaries do not respond effectively to the plan and the wisdom of the Church. This common life with the laity is the principal reason clerics abandon their vocation. We should accustom future clerics from an early age to bear the yoke of the Lord, to find time for spiritual exercises, to be devoted to their sacred duties, and to conform themselves to the example of the priestly life. Therefore, they should be protected from dangers, separated from everything worldly, and educated according to the rules set forth by Saint Charles Borromeo just as We see accomplished in the major seminaries of Europe.

In order to avoid dangers, vacations in the country should be provided for these students, but they should not return to their homes. Many bad examples lie in wait for the unwary, especially in settlements where the families of workers are crowded together. Thus, these young men, inclined toward youthful desires, may be either turned away from their undertaking or they, as

future priests, may become a stumbling block to the people. We recommend this system to you which has already been tried with good results by several bishops. We ask that you improve the protection of the young clergy in the future by a law commonly agreed upon.

It is also Our desire, as We have already told you, that effort should be devoted to publishing and distributing Catholic newspapers since at the present time the people form their opinions and draw their moral guidelines from no other source than from the daily reading of such newspapers. It is with regret that We see these weapons cast down among good people since these are drawn from the hands of the impious and lead to the ruin of faith and morals. Therefore, the style of your newspapers should be sharpened and the literary expression aroused so that frivolity may give way to truth and the minds of men may gradually follow the voice of right reason.

Joined to the advantage of the religious press is another advantage, that which results from the access of Catholics to public office and from their admission to the legislative assemblies. For the word is no less powerful than the pen; influence and authority can serve the good cause as well as the written word. It would even be appropriate to send men in holy orders to these legislative assemblies.

But they should beware lest the effort made toward this end be so great that they seem to be motivated more by miserable ambition and blind partisanship than by love of the Catholic cause. What is more undignified than that clerics engage in struggle, and by their administration of the State introduce sedition and discord, the most pernicious things for the State? And what if, following bad counsel, they continually oppose the established authority?

The only result of such behavior is a great scandal for the people and a source of ill-feeling toward the clergy. Civil power should be exercised with moderation; every suspicion of ambition should be avoided; public offices should be won prudently, and no deviation should be made from true obedience to the supreme authority.

It pleases Us to encourage those arts by which the Christian cause may be promoted among you. May your resources not be less than your good will and may the realization of your excellent plans not be hindered by the lack of money! Contrary to the past, the public treasury no longer provides money for you, for the canons, for the seminaries, for the priests, or for the construction of churches. That leaves you only one resource: the charity of the people. . . . There are many ways to come to the aid of the Church. The most useful, in Our opinion, is to

establish in each diocese a fund to which the faithful can contribute an annual offering collected by men and women selected from the more noble families, under the orders and direction of the priests. These people should also be the principal givers. They will accomplish this best if they give something from their assured income which is often very considerable, and if from their uncertain income they impose on themselves a contribution like a tax.

Another aid, no less important, can be furnished to poor bishops by the monasteries and the pious associations which have a surplus. These associations would contribute more to the common good if they gave the sum of money which some of them are accustomed to spend on public shows to the diocesan fund.

Finally, if the wealthier of the faithful want to follow the laudable custom of their ancestors and to exercise their kindness by making provision in their wills for religious associations or other pious groups, We strongly encourage them to bequeath a portion of their fortune to the bishops so that the bishops, provided with resources, might guard the interests of the Church and their own dignity.

We have promoted your cause, Venerable Brothers. The injustices of the age compel even Us to have recourse to Peter's pence constantly. Take courage in the thought that you can have confidence in God "because He Himself takes care of Us." Keep in mind these words of the Apostle: "He who provides seed for the sower and bread for the eater will provide in abundance; He will multiply the seed you sow and increase the yield of your righteousness."

May the priests and people at whose head the Holy Spirit placed you as bishops keep before their eyes the liberality of the first Christians who "were of one heart and one mind" who, more concerned for the society of the Church than for their own fortune, "sold their property, brought the price, and placed it at the feet of the apostles." May they remember the words of Paul with which We shall conclude: "We beg you, brothers, respect those among you whose task it is to exercise authority in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them with the greatest love because of their work." »

Pope Leo XIII, *Omnibus Compertum*, 1900:

« I. Concerning the rights, privileges, duties, and prerogatives of the patriarch, We wish that nothing be taken away from them nor be decreased; but at the same time, We strongly ask Our venerable brother, the patriarch of Antioch, to show a fitting respect for and to embrace with fraternal charity the bishops of his nation "whom the Holy Spirit has placed in charge of the

Church of God,” in conformity with the precept of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles: “Be not as masters among your people, but from the heart become an example for the flock.”⁴ That is also what the beautiful words of St. Bernard express: “May love accomplish more than power.”

II. We also remind all the bishops of the same nation that they owe homage and deference to the patriarch We have praised. They should show him the submission that is due him as their legitimate superior. If some controversy arises between them, they should humbly submit it first of all to the judgment of the patriarch. If it turns out that the question cannot be resolved, it should be respectfully referred to the Holy See.

III. To prevent future contestations of rights, it would be most effective to convene a plenary Council. That is why, as We have already recommended to you on other occasions, We prescribe it for you now by this letter. The Council should be convened as soon as possible. The following matters should be discussed: the rights of the patriarch and of the bishops; the correct administration of the faithful; the discipline of the clergy, monastic orders, and other religious institutions; the needs of missions; the beauty of divine worship; the sacred liturgy; and other related matters which should be considered with prudent care to ensure the greater glory of God and to increase the honor of the Greek Melchite church. As the other Eastern churches have drawn great profit from the meeting of their national council in arranging their affairs and in restoring ecclesiastical discipline, so We can rightly promise magnificent results for your church from the composition and promulgation of written laws. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Urbanitatis Veteris*, 1901, to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Latin Church in Greece:

« Continue to exercise your episcopal duty skillfully, as indeed you do: labor so that whoever obeys your sacred authority may everyday be more aware of what the profession of the Catholic faith demands, and learn from your example to unite the proper love of their country with a love and zeal for their holy faith. As for Our part, We will be zealous to defend, preserve, and strengthen the Catholicism in your midst with all possible labor and exertion. We know full well the great role played for the protection of morals, for civil discipline, and for the very glory of the Catholic name by the education of souls and the practice of the arts of the mind. »

Pope Leo XIII, *In Amplissimo*, 1902:

« Your magnificent work on behalf of the ecclesiastical seminaries has assuredly been calculated to increase the prospects of good to be done by the clergy and to add to their dignity. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Fin Dal Principio*, 1902:

« From the beginning of our Pontificate having gravely considered the serious conditions of society, we are not slow to recognize, as one of the most urgent duties of the Apostolic office, that of devoting a most special care to the education of the clergy.

We see in fact that all our designs to bring about a restoration of Christian life among our people, would be in vain if in the ecclesiastical state the sacerdotal spirit was not preserved intact and vigorous. This we have not ceased to do, as far as was possible to us, both with institutions and writings directed to that end. And now a particular solicitude regarding the clergy of Italy moves us, venerable brethren, again to treat on this subject of so great importance. It is true, beautiful and continued testimonies have been shown of learning, piety and zeal, among which we are glad to praise the alacrity with which, seconding the impulse and direction of their bishops, they cooperate in that Catholic movement which we have so much at heart. We cannot altogether, however, hide the preoccupation of our soul at seeing for some time past a certain desire of innovation insinuating itself here and there, as regards the constitution as well as the multiform actions of the sacred ministry. Now it is easy to foresee the grave consequences which we should have to deplore if a speedy remedy were not applied to this innovating tendency.

Therefore, in order to preserve the Italian clergy from the pernicious influences of the times, we deem it opportune, venerable brethren, to recall in this our letter, the true and invariable principles that should regulate ecclesiastical education and the entire sacred ministry. The Catholic priesthood—divine in its origin, supernatural in its essence, immutable in its character, is not an institution that can accommodate itself with ease to human systems and opinions. A participation of the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, it must perpetuate even to the consummation of ages the same mission that the Eternal Father confided to His Incarnate Word: “Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos.” To work the eternal salvation of souls will always be the great commandment of which it must never fall short, as to faithfully fulfil it, it must never cease to have recourse to those supernatural aids and those divine rules of thought and of action which Jesus Christ gave His Apostles when He sent them throughout the whole world to convert the nations to the Gospel. Therefore St. Paul in his letters reminds us that the priest can never be anything but the legate, the minister of Christ, the dispenser of His mysteries,[2] and he represents him to us as dwelling in a high place [3] as a mediator between heaven and earth, to treat with God, about the supreme interests of the human race, which are those of everlasting life. The idea that holy books give us of the Christian priesthood, is that it

is a supernatural institution superior to all those of earth, and as far separated from them as the divine is from the human.

This same high idea is clearly brought out by the works of the Fathers, the laws of the Roman Pontiffs, and the Bishops, by the decrees of the Councils, and by the unanimous teaching of the Doctors and of the Catholic schools. Above all, the tradition of the Church with one voice proclaims that the priest is another Christ, and that the priesthood though exercised on earth merits to be numbered among the orders of heaven[4]; because it is given to them to administer things that are wholly celestial and upon them is conferred a power that God has not trusted even to the angels[5]; a power and ministry which regard the government of souls, and which is the art of arts.[6] Therefore, education, studies, customs, and whatever comprises the sacerdotal discipline have always been considered by the Church as belonging entirely to herself, not merely distinct, but altogether separate from the ordinary rules of secular life. This distinction and separation must, therefore, remain unaltered, even in our own times, and any tendency to accommodate or confound the ecclesiastical life and education with the secular life and education must be considered as reprov'd, not only by the traditions of Christian ages, but by the apostolic doctrine itself and the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

Certainly in the formation of the clergy and the sacerdotal ministry, it is reasonable that regard should be had to the varied conditions of the times. Therefore we are far from rejecting the idea of such changes as would render the work of the clergy still more efficacious in the society in which they live, and it is for that reason that it has seemed necessary to us to promote among them a more solid and finished culture, and to open a still wider field to their ministry; but every other innovation which could in any way prejudice what is essential to the priest must be regarded as altogether blameworthy. The priest is above all constituted master, physician and shepherd of souls, and a guide to an end not enclosed within the bounds of this present life. Now he can never fully correspond if he is not well versed in the science of divine and sacred things, if he is not furnished with that piety which makes a man of God; and if he does not take every care to render his teachings valuable by the efficacy of his example, conformably to the admonition given to the sacred pastor by the Prince of the Apostles: "Forma facti gregis ex animo." [7] For those who watch the times and the changeable condition of society, these are the right and the greatest gifts that could shine in the Catholic priest, together with the principles of faith; every other quality natural and human would certainly be commendable, but would not have with regard to the sacerdotal office anything but secondary and relative importance. If, therefore, it is reasonable and just that the clergy should accommodate themselves as far as is permitted to the needs of the present age, it is still more necessary that the

present depravity of the century should not be yielded to, but strongly resisted; and this while corresponding naturally to the high end of the priesthood, will also render their ministry still more fruitful by increasing its dignity, and therefore gaining it respect. It is seen everywhere how the spirit of naturalism tends to penetrate every part of the social body, even the most healthy; a spirit which fills the minds with pride and causes them to rebel against every authority; depraves the heart and turns it after the desire of earthly goods, neglecting those eternal.

It is greatly to be feared that some influence of this spirit, so evil, and already so widely diffused, might insinuate itself even among ecclesiastics, particularly among those of less experience. What sad effects would not arise if that gravity of conduct which belongs to the priest, should be in any way lessened; if he should yield with lightness to the charm of every novelty; if he should deport himself with pretentious indocility towards his superiors; if he should lose that weight and measure in discussion which is so necessary, particularly in matters of faith and morals.

Would it not be a still more deplorable thing, causing as it would the ruin of Christian people, if he, in the sacred ministry of the pulpit, should introduce language not conformable to his character of a preacher of the Gospel? Moved by such considerations we feel it our duty again and still more warningly to recommend that above all things the Seminaries should with jealous care keep up a proper spirit with regard to the education of the mind as well as to that of the heart. They must never lose sight of the fact that they are exclusively destined to prepare young men not for merely human offices, however praiseworthy and honorable, but for that higher mission, which we lately spoke of, as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God.[8] From such a reflection altogether supernatural, it will be easy, as we have already said in our Encyclical to the clergy of France, dated September 8, 1899, to draw precious rules, not merely for the correct education of clerics, but also to remove far from the institutes in which they are educated, every danger, whether external or internal, or of a moral or religious order.

With respect to the studies, in order that the clergy should not be strangers to the advancement of all good discipline, everything that is truly useful or good will be recognized in the new methods; every age can contribute to the knowledge of human learning. However, we desire that on this subject, great attention shall be paid to our prescriptions regarding the study of classic literature. principally philosophy, theology, and the like sciences—prescriptions which we have given in many writings, chiefly in the above-mentioned Encyclical, of which we send

you an extract, together with the present. It would certainly be desirable that the young ecclesiastics should all follow the course of studies always under the shadow of the sacred institutes. However, as grave reasons sometimes render it necessary that some of them should frequent the public universities, let it not be forgotten with what and how great caution bishops should permit this.[9]

We desire likewise that they should insist on the faithful observance of the rules contained in a still more recent document, which in a particular manner regards the lectures on anything else that could give occasion to the young men to take part in external agitations.[10] Thus the students of the seminaries, treasuring up this time, so precious and full of the greatest tranquillity for their souls, will be able to devote themselves entirely to those studies which will render them fitted for the grand duties of the priesthood, particularly that of the ministry of preaching and the confessional. They should reflect well on the gravity of the responsibilities of those priests who in spite of the great need of the Christian people neglect to devote themselves to the exercise of the sacred ministry, and of those also who, not bringing to it an enlightened zeal for both the one and the other, correspond sadly with their vocation in things which are of the greatest importance in the salvation of souls.

Here we must call your attention, venerable brethren, to the special instruction which we wish given regarding the ministry of the Divine Word;[11] and from which we desire they should draw copious fruit. With respect to the ministry of the confession: let them remember how severe are the words of the most enlightened and mildest of moralists towards those who, without purifying their own souls, do not hesitate to seat themselves in the tribunal of Penance,[12] and how not less severe is the lament of the late great Pontiff, Benedict XIV., who numbers among the greatest calamities of the Church the defect in confessors of a science, both theological and moral, added to the gravity that such a holy office requires.

To the noble end of preparing worthy ministers of the Lord, it is necessary, venerable brethren to watch with an ever-increasing vigor and vigilance not only over the scientific instruction, but also over the disciplinary and educative systems of your seminaries. Do not accept young men other than those who exhibit well-founded desires of consecrating themselves for ever to the ecclesiastical ministry.[13] Keep them removed from contact and still more from living together with youths who are not aspiring to the sacred ministry. Such intercourse may, for certain just and grave reasons, be allowed for a time, and with great caution, until they can be properly provided for according to the spirit of ecclesiastical discipline. Those who during the course of their education shall manifest tendencies little suited to the priestly vocation, must be

dismissed, and in admitting clerics to the sacred orders the utmost discretion must be used, according to the grave admonition of St. Paul to Timothy, “Manus cito nemini imposueris.”[14] In this matter it is only right that every consideration should be put on one side that is inferior to the most important one of the dignity of the sacred ministry. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that in order to render the pupils of the sanctuary living images of Jesus Christ (which is the end of ecclesiastical education), that the directors and teachers should unite to the diligent fulfilment of their office the example of a truly priestly life. The exemplary conduct of those in authority is, especially to young men, the most eloquent and persuasive language to inspire in their souls the conviction of their own duties and the love of virtue.

A work of such importance requires from the directors of souls a more than ordinary prudence and an indefatigable care; and it is our desire that this office, which we wish should not be lacking in any seminary, should be confided to an ecclesiastic of great experience in the ways of Christian perfection. It can never be sufficiently recommended to him to found and cultivate in his pupils that piety which is for all, but especially for the clergy, of the greatest fruitfulness and inestimable utility.[15] Therefore, he will be solicitous to warn them against a pernicious snare not unfrequent among young men—that of giving themselves so entirely and with such ardor to their studies as to neglect their advancement in the science of the saints. The deeper root piety has taken in clerics’ souls, so much the more will they be filled with that strong spirit of sacrifice which is altogether necessary to work for the divine glory in the salvation of souls. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Fin Dal Principio*, 1902:

« In this manner, aided by loving care and fitting culture of soul and mind, step by step the young Levite will be brought up to recognize both the sanctity of his vocation and the needs of the Christian people. The training, ’tis true, is not short; and yet it is to be wished that the time in the seminary could be prolonged. It is necessary, indeed, that the young priests are not left without guidance in their first labors, but should be strengthened by the experience of their seniors, who will ripen their zeal, their prudence and their piety; and it is expedient also that either with academic exercises or with periodical conferences they should be encouraged to continue with their sacred studies.

It is plain, venerable brethren, that what we have here recommended will aid in a singular manner that social usefulness of the clergy which we have on many occasions inculcated as necessary to our times. Therefore, by exacting the faithful observance of those rules this usefulness will draw therefrom its spirit and life.

We repeat again, and still more warmly, that the clergy go to a Christian people tempted on every side, and with every kind of fallacious promise offered by Socialism to apostatize from the true faith. They must therefore submit all their actions to the authority of those whom the Holy Spirit has constituted Bishops, to rule the Church of God, without which would follow confusion and the most grave disorders to the detriment even of the cause they have at heart to defend and promote. It is for this end that we desire that the candidates for the priesthood, on the conclusion of their education in the seminary, should be suitably instructed in the pontifical documents relating to the social question, and the Christian democracy, abstaining, however, as we have already said, from taking any part whatever in the external movement. When they are made priests they will direct themselves with particular care to the people, always the object of the Church's loving care. They will raise the children of the people from the ignorance of things both spiritual and eternal, and with industrious tenderness they will lead them to an honest and virtuous life. They will strengthen the adults in their faith, dissipating the contrary prejudices and confirm them in the practices of Christian life. They will promote among the Catholic laity those institutions which they all recognize as really efficacious in the moral and material improvement of the multitude. Above all they will propose to them the principles of justice and evangelical charity, to which are equally united all the rights and duties of civil and social life, such should be the way in which they fulfil their noble part in the social action.

Let them, however, have it always present to their minds that the priest even in the midst of his people must preserve intact his august character as a minister of God, being as he is placed at the head of his brethren.[16] Any manner whatever, in which he employs himself among the people, to the loss of the sacerdotal dignity, or with danger to the ecclesiastical duties and discipline, can only be warmly reprov'd. »

Pope Leo XIII, *Fin Dal Principio*, 1902:

« To you, ministers of Christ, we can say with more reason than did St. Paul to the mere faithful, "Obsecro itaque vos ego vinctus in Domino, ut digne ambuletis vocatione qua vocati estis." [17] The love of our common mother the Church renews and reinvigorates between you that concord of thought and action which redoubles the strength and renders the work more fruitful. In these times, so dangerous to religion and society, when the clergy of every nation are called on to unite together in defense of the Faith and Christian morals, it belongs to you, beloved sons, joined by a special bond to this Apostolic See, to give to all an example and be the first in unlimited obedience to the voice and command of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. »

Pope Leo XIII, Quae Ad Nos, 1902:

« The notices which daily come to Us about the state of your dioceses and the departure of large numbers from the rites and practices of Catholicism cause Us great sorrow and grief. Certainly We do not doubt that you strenuously apply every argument to repair the misfortunes of the flock entrusted to you and to prevent losses from becoming worse with each day. If the enemies of the faith spare neither labor nor money, and strain with all their might to destroy your flock, you, whom Christ wished to be Pastors, must not be idle; you must use every available means to defend your flock. However, the magnitude of the danger persuades Us to goad the willing. »

Pope St. Pius X, E Supremi, 1903, To the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See:

« Let your first care be to form Christ in those who are destined from the duty of their vocation to form Him in others. We speak of the priests, Venerable Brethren. For all who bear the seal of the priesthood must know that they have the same mission to the people in the midst of whom they live as that which Paul proclaimed that he received in these tender words: “My little children, of whom I am in labor again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. iv., 19). But how will they be able to perform this duty if they be not first clothed with Christ themselves? and so clothed with Christ as to be able to say with the Apostle: “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me” (Ibid. ii., 20). “For me to live is Christ” (Phlipp. i., 21). Hence although all are included in the exhortation “to advance towards the perfect man, in the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ” (Ephes. iv., 3), it is addressed before all others to those who exercise the sacerdotal ministry; thus these are called another Christ, not merely by the communication of power but by reason of the imitation of His works, and they should therefore bear stamped upon themselves the image of Christ.

This being so, Venerable Brethren, of what nature and magnitude is the care that must be taken by you in forming the clergy to holiness! All other tasks must yield to this one. Wherefore the chief part of your diligence will be directed to governing and ordering your seminaries aright so that they may flourish equally in the soundness of their teaching and in the spotlessness of their morals. Regard your seminary as the delight of your hearts, and neglect on its behalf none of those provisions which the Council of Trent has with admirable forethought prescribed. And when the time comes for promoting the youthful candidates to holy orders, ah! do not forget what Paul wrote to Timothy: “Impose not hands lightly upon any man” (I. Tim. v., 22), bearing carefully in mind that as a general rule the faithful will be such as are those

whom you call to the priesthood. Do not then pay heed to private interests of any kind, but have at heart only God and the Church and the eternal welfare of souls so that, as the Apostle admonishes, “you may not be partakers of the sins of others” (Ibid.). Then again be not lacking in solicitude for young priests who have just left the seminary. From the bottom of Our heart, We urge you to bring them often close to your breast, which should burn with celestial fire—kindle them, inflame them, so that they may aspire solely after God and the salvation of souls. Rest assured, Venerable Brethren, that We on Our side will use the greatest diligence to prevent the members of the clergy from being drawn to the snares of a certain new and fallacious science, which savoureth not of Christ, but with masked and cunning arguments strives to open the door to the errors of rationalism and semi-rationalism; against which the Apostle warned Timothy to be on his guard, when he wrote: “Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called which some promising have erred concerning the faith” (1. Tim. vi., 20.). This does not prevent Us from esteeming worthy of praise those young priests who dedicated themselves to useful studies in every branch of learning the better to prepare themselves to defend the truth and to refute the calumnies of the enemies of the faith. Yet We cannot conceal, nay, We proclaim in the most open manner possible that Our preference is, and ever will be, for those who, while cultivating ecclesiastical and literary erudition, dedicate themselves more closely to the welfare of souls through the exercise of those ministries proper to a priest jealous of the divine glory. “It is a great grief and a continual sorrow to our heart” (Rom. ix., 2) to find Jeremiah’s lamentation applicable to our times: “The little ones asked for bread, and there was none to break it to them” (Lam. iv., 4). For there are not lacking among the clergy those who adapt themselves according to their bent to works of more apparent than real solidity—but not so numerous perhaps are those who, after the example of Christ, take to themselves the words of the Prophet: “The Spirit of the Lord hath anointed me, hath sent me to evangelize the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to announce freedom to the captive, and sight to the blind” (Luke iv., 18-19). »

Pope St. Pius X, Allocution to the Bishops assembled in Rome for the anniversary
Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, December 12, 1904:

« Venerable brethren, there is only one piece of advice that I offer to you: watch over your seminaries and over candidates for the priesthood.

As you yourselves know, an air of independence which is fatal for souls is widely diffused in the world, and has found its way even within the sanctuary; it shows itself not only in relation to authority but also in regard to doctrine.

Because of it, some of our young clerics, animated by that spirit of unbridled criticism which holds sway at the present day, have come to lose all respect for the learning which comes from our great teachers, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the interpreters of revealed doctrine.

If ever you have in your seminary one of those new-style savants, get rid of him without delay; on no account impose hands upon him. You will always regret having ordained even one such person: never will you regret having excluded him. »

Pope St. Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis*, 1905, To the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See:

« We must now consider upon whom rests the obligation to dissipate this most pernicious ignorance and to impart in its stead the knowledge that is wholly indispensable. There can be no doubt, Venerable Brethren, that this most important duty rests upon all who are pastors of souls. On them, by command of Christ, rest the obligations of knowing and of feeding the flocks committed to their care; and to feed implies, first of all, to teach. “I will give you pastors according to my own heart,” God promised through Jeremias, “and they shall feed you with knowledge and doctrine.”[9] Hence the Apostle Paul said: “Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel,”[10] thereby indicating that the first duty of all those who are entrusted in any way with the government of the Church is to instruct the faithful in the things of God.

We do not think it necessary to set forth here the praises of such instruction or to point out how meritorious it is in God’s sight. If, assuredly, the alms with which we relieve the needs of the poor are highly praised by the Lord, how much more precious in His eyes, then, will be the zeal and labor expended in teaching and admonishing, by which we provide not for the passing needs of the body but for the eternal profit of the soul! Nothing, surely, is more desirable, nothing more acceptable to Jesus Christ, the Savior of souls, Who testifies of Himself through Isaias: “To bring good news to the poor he has sent me.”[11]

Here then it is well to emphasize and insist that for a priest there is no duty more grave or obligation more binding than this. Who, indeed, will deny that knowledge should be joined to holiness of life in the priest? “For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge.”[12] The Church demands this knowledge of those who are to be ordained to the priesthood. Why? Because the Christian people expect from them knowledge of the divine law, and it was for that end that

they were sent by God. “And they shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.”[13] Thus the bishop speaking to the candidates for the priesthood in the ordination ceremony says: “Let your teaching be a spiritual remedy for God’s people; may they be worthy fellow-workers of our order; and thus meditating day and night on His law, they may believe what they read, and teach what they shall believe.”[14]

If what We have just said is applicable to all priests, does it not apply with much greater force to those who possess the title and the authority of parish priests, and who, by virtue of their rank and in a sense by virtue of a contract, hold the office of pastors of souls? These are, to a certain extent, the pastors and teachers appointed by Christ in order that the faithful might not be as “children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men,” but that practicing “the truth in love,” they may, “grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ.”[15]

For this reason the Council of Trent, treating of the duties of pastors of souls, decreed that their first and most important work is the instruction of the faithful.[16] It therefore prescribes that they shall teach the truths of religion on Sundays and on the more solemn feast days; moreover during the holy seasons of Advent and Lent they are to give such instruction every day or at least three times a week. This, however, was not considered enough. The Council provided for the instruction of youth by adding that the pastors, either personally or through others, must explain the truths of religion at least on Sundays and feast days to the children of the parish, and inculcate obedience to God and to their parents. When the Sacraments are to be administered, it enjoins upon pastors the duty to explain their efficacy in plain and simple language.

These prescriptions of the Council of Trent have been summarized and still more clearly defined by Our Predecessor, Benedict XIV, in his Constitution “Esti minime.” “Two chief obligations,” he wrote, “have been imposed by the Council of Trent on those who have the care of souls: first, that of preaching the things of God to the people on the feast days; and second, that of teaching the rudiments of faith and of the divine law to the youth and others who need such instruction.” Here the wise Pontiff rightly distinguishes between these two duties: one is what is commonly known as the explanation of the Gospel and the other is the teaching of Christian doctrine. Perhaps there are some who, wishing to lessen their labors, would believe that the homily on the Gospel can take the place of catechetical instruction. But for one who reflects a moment, such is obviously impossible. The sermon on the holy Gospel is addressed to those who should have already received knowledge of the elements of faith. It is,

so to speak, bread broken for adults. Catechetical instruction, on the other hand, is that milk which the Apostle Peter wished the faithful to desire in all simplicity like newborn babes.

The task of the catechist is to take up one or other of the truths of faith or of Christian morality and then explain it in all its parts; and since amendment of life is the chief aim of his instruction, the catechist must needs make a comparison between what God commands us to do and what is our actual conduct. After this, he will use examples appropriately taken from the Holy Scriptures, Church history, and the lives of the saints—thus moving his hearers and clearly pointing out to them how they are to regulate their own conduct. He should, in conclusion, earnestly exhort all present to dread and avoid vice and to practice virtue.

We are indeed aware that the work of teaching the Catechism is unpopular with many because as a rule it is deemed of little account and for the reason that it does not lend itself easily to the winning of public praise. But this in Our opinion is a judgment based on vanity and devoid of truth. We do not disapprove of those pulpit orators who, out of genuine zeal for the glory of God, devote themselves to defense of the faith and to its spread, or who eulogize the saints of God. But their labor presupposes labor of another kind, that of the catechist. And so if this be lacking, then the foundation is wanting; and they labor in vain who build the house. Too often it happens that ornate sermons which receive the applause of crowded congregations serve but to tickle the ears and fail utterly to touch the hearts of the hearers. Catechetical instruction, on the other hand, plain and simple though it be, is the word of which God Himself speaks through the lips of the prophet Isaias: “And as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth and water it, and make it to spring and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be, which shall go forth from my mouth. It shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it.”[17] We believe the same may be said of those priests who work hard to produce books which explain the truths of religion. They are surely to be commended for their zeal, but how many are there who read these works and take from them a fruit commensurate with the labor and intention of the writers? The teaching of the Catechism, on the other hand, when rightly done, never fails to profit those who listen to it. »

Pope St. Pius X, *Acerbo Nimis*, 1905, To the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See:

« We, therefore, Venerable Brethren, desirous of fulfilling this most important obligation of Our Teaching Office, and likewise wishing to introduce uniformity everywhere in so weighty a

matter, do by Our Supreme Authority enact the following regulations and strictly command that they be observed and carried out in all dioceses of the world.

I. On every Sunday and holy day, with no exception, throughout the year, all parish priests and in general all those having the care of souls, shall instruct the boys and girls, for the space of an hour from the text of the Catechism on those things they must believe and do in order to attain salvation.

II. At certain times throughout the year, they shall prepare boys and girls to receive properly the Sacraments of Penance and Confirmation, by a continued instruction over a period of days.

III. With a very special zeal, on every day in Lent and, if necessary, on the days following Easter, they shall instruct with the use of apt illustrations and exhortations the youth of both sexes to receive their first Communion in a holy manner.

IV. In each and every parish the society known as the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is to be canonically established. Through this Confraternity, the pastors, especially in places where there is a scarcity of priests, will have lay helpers in the teaching of the Catechism, who will take up the work of imparting knowledge both from a zeal for the glory of God and in order to gain the numerous Indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs.

V. In the larger cities, and especially where universities, colleges and secondary schools are located, let classes in religion be organized to instruct in the truths of faith and in the practice of Christian life the youths who attend the public schools from which all religious teaching is banned.

VI. Since it is a fact that in these days adults need instruction no less than the young, all pastors and those having the care of souls shall explain the Catechism to the people in a plain and simple style adapted to the intelligence of their hearers. This shall be carried out on all holy days of obligation, at such time as is most convenient for the people, but not during the same hour when the children are instructed, and this instruction must be in addition to the usual homily on the Gospel which is delivered at the parochial Mass on Sundays and holy days. The catechetical instruction shall be based on the Catechism of the Council of Trent; and the matter is to be divided in such a way that in the space of four or five years, treatment will be given to the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Precepts of the Church.

Venerable Brethren, We decree and command this by virtue of Our Apostolic Authority. It now rests with you to put it into prompt and complete execution in your respective dioceses, and by the power of your authority to see to it that these prescriptions of Ours be not neglected or, what amounts to the same thing, that they be not carried out carelessly or superficially. That this may be avoided, you must exhort and urge your pastors not to impart these instructions without having first prepared themselves in the work. Then they will not merely speak words of human wisdom, but “in simplicity and godly sincerity,”[24] imitating the example of Jesus Christ, Who, though He revealed “things hidden since the foundation of the world,”[25] yet spoke “all . . . things to the crowds in parables, and without parables . . . did not speak to them.”[26] We know that the Apostles, who were taught by the Lord, did the same; for of them Pope Saint Gregory wrote: “They took supreme care to preach to the uninstructed simple truths easy to understand, not things deep and difficult.”[27] In matters of religion, the majority of men in our times must be considered uninstructed.

We do not, however, wish to give the impression that this studied simplicity in imparting instruction does not require labor and meditation—on the contrary, it demands both more than any other kind of preaching. It is much easier to find a preacher capable of delivering an eloquent and elaborate discourse than a catechist who can impart a catechetical instruction which is praiseworthy in every detail. No matter what natural facility a person may have in ideas and language, let him always remember that he will never be able to teach Christian doctrine to children or to adults without first giving himself to very careful study and preparation. They are mistaken who think that because of inexperience and lack of training of the people the work of catechizing can be performed in a slipshod fashion. On the contrary, the less educated the hearers, the more zeal and diligence must be used to adapt the sublime truths to their untrained minds; these truths, indeed, far surpass the natural understanding of the people, yet must be known by all—the uneducated and the cultured—in order that they may arrive at eternal happiness.

And now, Venerable Brethren, permit Us to close this letter by addressing to you these words of Moses: “If any man be on the Lord’s side, let him join with me.”[28] We pray and entreat you to reflect on the great loss of souls due solely to ignorance of divine things. You have doubtless accomplished many useful and most praiseworthy works in your respective dioceses for the good of the flock entrusted to your care, but before all else, and with all possible zeal and diligence and care, see to it and urge on others that the knowledge of Christian doctrine pervades and imbues fully and deeply the minds of all. Here, using the words of the Apostle

Peter, We say, “According to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”[29] »

Pope St. Pius X, *Tribus Circiter*, 1906, To the Archbishops of Warsaw, and Bishops of Plotsk and Lublin among the Poles:

« But their profession of fidelity to the Vicar of Christ is vain in those who, in fact, do not cease to violate the authority of their Bishops. For “by far the most august part of the Church consists of the Bishops, (as Our Predecessor Leo XIII of holy memory wrote in his letter of December 17, 1888, to the Archbishop), inasmuch as this part by divine right teaches and rules men; hence, whoever resists them or pertinaciously refuses obedience to them puts himself apart from the Church. . . On the other hand, to pass judgment upon or to rebuke the acts of Bishops does not at all belong to private individuals – that comes within the province only of those higher than they in authority and especially of the Sovereign Pontiff, for to him Christ entrusted the charge of feeding not only His lambs, but His sheep throughout the world. At most, it is allowed in matters of grave complaint to refer the whole case to the Roman Pontiff, and this with prudence and moderation as zeal for the common good requires, not clamorously or abusively, for in this way dissensions and hostilities are bred, or certainly increased.” »

Pope Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, 1914:

«Now, in order that all these recommendations should have the results We hope for, you know, Venerable Brethren, how necessary is the prudent and assiduous work of those whom Christ our Lord sends as “labourers into His harvest,” that is to say the clergy. Remember, therefore, that your chief care must be to foster in the holiness which becomes them the clergy you already possess, and worthily to form your ecclesiastical students for so sacred an office by the very best available education and training. And although your carefulness in this respect calls for no stimulus, nevertheless We exhort and even implore you to give the matter your most careful attention. Nothing can be of greater importance for the good of the Church; but as Our Predecessors of happy memory, Leo XIII and Pius X, have definitely written on this subject, there is no need of further counsels from Us. We only beg of you that the writings of those wise pontiffs, and especially Pius X’s “Exhortation to the Clergy,” should, thanks to your insistent admonitions, not be forgotten, but ever attended to carefully.

There remains one matter which must not be passed over in silence, and that is, to remind the priests of the whole world, as Our most dear sons, how absolutely necessary it is, for their own salvation, and for the fruitfulness of their sacred ministry, that they should be most closely

united with their Bishop and most loyal to him. The spirit of insubordination and independence, so characteristic of our times, has, as We deplored above, not entirely spared the ministers of the Sanctuary. It is not rare for pastors of the Church to find sorrow and contradiction where they had a right to look for comfort and help. Let those who have so unfortunately failed in their duty, recall to their minds again and again, that the authority of those whom “the Holy Spirit hath placed as Bishops to rule the Church of God” (Acts xx. 28) is a divine authority. Let them remember that if, as we have seen, those who resist any legitimate authority, resist God, much more impiously do they act who refuse to obey the Bishop, whom God has consecrated with a special character by the exercise of His power. “Since charity,” wrote St. Ignatius Martyr, “doth not suffer me to be silent concerning you, therefore was I forward to exhort you, that you run in harmony with the mind of God: for Jesus Christ also, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, even as the bishops that are settled in the farthest parts of the earth are in the mind of Jesus Christ. So then it becometh you to run in harmony with the mind of the bishop” (Ep. ad Ephes. iii.). These words of the illustrious Martyr are re-echoed throughout the ages by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

Moreover, bishops have a very heavy burden in consequence of the difficulties of the times; and heavier still is their anxiety for the salvation of the flock committed to their care: “For they watch as being to render an account of your souls” (Heb. xiii. 17). Are not, then, they to be termed cruel who, by the refusal of the obedience which is due, increase that burden and its bitterness? “For this is not expedient for you” (Heb. xiii. 17), the Apostle would say to them, and that, because “the Church is a people united to its bishop, a flock which adheres to its pastor” (St. Cyprian: Ep. 66 [al. 69]), whence it follows that he is not with the Church who is not with the bishop.»

Pope Benedict XV, *Humani Generis Redemptionem*, 1917:

«For the duty of preaching, as the Council of Trent teaches, “is the paramount duty of Bishops.” [Sess., xxiv, De. Ref., c.iv] And the Apostles, whose successors the bishops are, looked upon it as something peculiarly theirs. St. Paul writes: “For Christ sent us not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. [I Cor. i:17] And the other Apostles were of the opinion that: “It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables.” [Acts vi:2] But although preaching is properly the duty of Bishops, nevertheless, since it is impossible that they should always or everywhere be able to discharge it in person, distracted as they are by the many cares which they meet in the government of their churches, they must of necessity comply with this obligation through others. Wherefore it cannot be doubted that all those who in addition

to the Bishops are thus engaged, are employed in the performance of an episcopal duty. Let this then be the first law laid down: that no one on his own responsibility undertake the office of preaching. In order to fulfill that duty everyone must have a lawful mission, and that mission can be conferred by the Bishop alone. "How shall they preach, unless they be sent?" [Rom. x:15] Now the Apostles were sent and sent by Him who is the supreme pastor and Bishop of our souls [I Pet. ii:25]; so too, were the seventy-two first disciples; nay, St. Paul himself, although constituted by Christ a vessel of election to carry His name, before Gentiles and kings, [Acts ix:15] entered upon his apostolate only after the elders in obedience to the command of the Holy Ghost, "Separate me Saul for the work" [Acts xiii:2], had imposed hands upon him and sent him forth. The same practice was constantly followed in the early days of the Church. For all without exception, both those who distinguished themselves in the priestly order like Origen, and those later on were raised to the dignity of the episcopate, like Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Augustine and the other more ancient Doctors of the Church, undertook the office of preaching with the sanction and authority of their Bishops. . . . Here therefore we would have you pay the greatest heed to whom you commit so sacred a duty. By the decree of the Council of Trent Bishops are permitted to select for this office those only who are "fit," i.e. those who "can exercise the ministry of preaching with profit to souls."

"With profit to souls," well note that the word which expresses the rule does not mean eloquently or with popular applause, but with spiritual fruit. This is the end for which the ministry of the Divine Word is instituted. If now you would have Us define more exactly the qualifications of those who are really to be considered fit, We answer: those in whom you find the signs of a Divine vocation. Whatever is required for admission to the priesthood, is likewise needed if one is to be considered eligible and fit for the office of preaching. "Neither doth any man take this honor to himself, but he that is called by God." [Heb. v:4] Such a vocation is easily determined. For Christ Our Lord and Master, when about to ascend into heaven, did not by any means bid His Apostles forthwith go into diverse places and begin their preaching: "But stay you in the city," He said, "till you be indued with power from on high." [Luke xxiv:49] This, therefore, is the sign by which you may know whether any one is Divinely called to this task: if he "is indued" with power from on high. What this means, Venerable Brethren, may be gathered from what took place in the case of the Apostles as soon as they had received power from on high. For when the Holy Spirit had descended upon them, not to mention here the wonderful gifts with which they were endowed, they were transformed from frail unlettered disciples into learned and perfect men. If a priest therefore has the required knowledge and virtue together with those natural qualifications necessary, without which he would be tempting God, he may be considered as having a true vocation for the office of preaching and

there is no reason why he may not be admitted by the Bishop to this ministry. Such is the meaning of the Council of Trent when it decrees that the Bishop is not to permit any to preach unless they are “of approved virtue and learning.” (Loc cit.) Wherefore it is the duty of the Bishop long and thoroughly to examine those who are to be entrusted by him with the function of preaching that he may find out the nature and extent of their learning. If any one acts carelessly and negligently in this duty, he clearly offends in a grievous matter, and on him will fall the responsibility of the errors which the untrained preacher may spread or of the scandal and the bad example which the unworthy one may give.

To make your task easier in this matter, Venerable Brethren, We desire that hereafter severe judgment be passed on these two points: on the character, namely, and learning of those who seek to obtain authority to preach, just as is done on the character and learning of those priests, who would hear confessions. Whoever, therefore, is found defective in either regard must without any consideration whatever be debarred from a function for which he is not qualified. Your dignity demands this, since, as We have said, the preachers are your substitutes. The good of Holy Church demands it, for surely if any one should be the “salt of the earth and the light of the world,” [Matt. v: 13, 14], it is the man who is engaged in the ministry of the Word. With these rules duly laid down it may seem superfluous to proceed further and explain what should be the purpose and method of the sacred function of preaching. For if we select our sacred orators in accordance with the norm given by Us, they cannot fail to be endowed with the requisite virtues, or set before themselves a worthy purpose or follow the right method in their preaching. Nevertheless it will be serviceable to throw some light on these two points, that thus the reason may become clearer why some fall short of the ideal of a good preacher.

The purpose which sacred orators should keep before their mind in performing their duty may be understood from the fact that they may and ought to say of themselves, as did St. Paul “For Christ therefore we are ambassadors.” [II Cor. v:20] If then they are ambassadors of Christ they ought to have the same purpose in discharging their office that Christ had in conferring it on them, nay, the very one that Christ Himself had while living upon earth. For neither the Apostles, nor the preachers who followed the Apostles had a different mission from Christ’s: “As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.” (John xx:21) Now we know why Christ descended from heaven, for He says expressly: “For this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth.” (John xviii:37) “I am come that they may have life.” (John x:10)

Both these purposes therefore must be carried out by the men who devote themselves to the sacred ministry of preaching. They must diffuse the light of truth made known by God, and in

those who hear them they must quicken and nourish the supernatural life. In a word, by seeking the salvation of souls they are to promote the glory of God. As it would, therefore, be wrong to call anyone a doctor who does not practice medicine, or to style anyone a professor of some art who does not teach that art, he who in his preaching neglects to lead men to a fuller knowledge of God and on the way of eternal salvation may be called an idle declaimer, but not a preacher of the Gospel. And would there were no such declaimers! What motive is it that sways them mostly. Some are moved by the desire of vain-glory and to satisfy it: "They ponder how they can express high rather than practical thoughts, causing weak minds to admire them, instead of working out the salvation of their hearers. They are ashamed of what is simple and plain, lest they be thought to know nothing else. They are ashamed to give milk to the little ones. [Gillebertus Abb. In Cant. Cantico. Serm xxvii, 2.] Whereas Jesus Christ proved by the lowliness of his hearers that He was the One whom men were awaiting: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." [Matt. xi:5] What efforts do such men make to acquire reputation by their sermons from the size and wealth of the cities and splendor of the great churches in which they preach? But since among the truths revealed by God there are some which frighten the weakness of our corrupt nature, and which therefore are not calculated to attract the multitude, they carefully avoid them, and treat themes, in which, the place accepted, there is nothing sacred. Not seldom it happens that in the very midst of a discourse upon the things of eternity, they turn to politics, particularly if any questions of this kind just then deeply engross the minds of their hearers. They seem to have only one aim, to please their hearers and curry favor with those whom St. Paul describes as "having itching ears." [II Tim. vi:3] Hence that unrestrained and undignified gesture such as may be seen on the stage or on the hustings, that effeminate lowering of the voice or those tragic outbursts; that diction peculiar to journalism; those frequent allusions to profane and non-Catholic literature, but not to the Sacred Scriptures or the Holy Fathers; finally that volubility of utterance often affected by them, wherewith they strike the ears and gain their hearers' admiration, but give them no lesson to carry home. How sadly are those preachers deceived! Granted that they receive the applause of the uneducated, which they seek with such great favor, and not without sacrilege, is it really worth while when we consider that they are condemned by every prudent man, and, what is worse, have reason to fear the stern judgment of Christ? . . . Learning, as We have said, is absolutely necessary for the preacher, for if he is without the light of learning he easily falls into error, since "Ignorance is the mother of all errors," as the Fourth Lateran Council so truthfully observes. We would not be understood, however, to mean every sort of knowledge, but only that which it becomes a priest to possess, that is to say, the knowledge, to phrase it briefly, which consists of a knowledge of self, of God and his duties. For self-knowledge, We maintain, will lead a priest to renounce his own advantage. The knowledge of God will lead him to make

everyone else know and love God, and the knowledge of his office will lead him to discharge his own duties and to teach others to do theirs. If he lacks these three kinds of knowledge, whatever other learning he has, will only puff him up, and will be useless.»

Pope Benedict XV, *Ad Beatissimi Apostolorum*, 1914, To the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and Other Local Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See:

« There remains one matter which must not be passed over in silence, and that is, to remind the priests of the whole world, as Our most dear sons, how absolutely necessary it is, for their own salvation, and for the fruitfulness of their sacred ministry, that they should be most closely united with their Bishop and most loyal to him. The spirit of insubordination and independence, so characteristic of our times, has, as We deplored above, not entirely spared the ministers of the Sanctuary. It is not rare for pastors of the Church to find sorrow and contradiction where they had a right to look for comfort and help. Let those who have so unfortunately failed in their duty, recall to their minds again and again, that the authority of those whom “the Holy Spirit hath placed as Bishops to rule the Church of God” (Acts xx. 28) is a divine authority. Let them remember that if, as we have seen, those who resist any legitimate authority, resist God, much more impiously do they act who refuse to obey the Bishop, whom God has consecrated with a special character by the exercise of His power. “Since charity,” wrote St. Ignatius Martyr, “doth not suffer me to be silent concerning you, therefore was I forward to exhort you, that you run in harmony with the mind of God: for Jesus Christ also, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, even as the bishops that are settled in the farthest parts of the earth are in the mind of Jesus Christ. So then it becometh you to run in harmony with the mind of the bishop” (Ep. ad Ephes. iii.). These words of the illustrious Martyr are re-echoed throughout the ages by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

Moreover, bishops have a very heavy burden in consequence of the difficulties of the times; and heavier still is their anxiety for the salvation of the flock committed to their care: “For they watch as being to render an account of your souls” (Heb. xiii. 17). Are not, then, they to be termed cruel who, by the refusal of the obedience which is due, increase that burden and its bitterness? “For this is not expedient for you” (Heb. xiii. 17), the Apostle would say to them, and that, because “the Church is a people united to its bishop, a flock which adheres to its pastor” (St. Cyprian: Ep. 66 [al. 69]), whence it follows that he is not with the Church who is not with the bishop. »

Pope Benedict XV, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, 1920:

« Nor is it only the “uncultured” whom Jerome condemns. Learned clerics sin through ignorance of the Bible; therefore he demands of them an assiduous reading of the text.

Strive, then, Venerable Brethren, to bring home to your clerics and priests these teachings of the Sainted Commentator. You have to remind them constantly of the demands made by their divine vocation if they would be worthy of it: “The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and men shall ask the Law at his mouth, for he is the Angel of the Lord of hosts” (Mal. 2:7). They must realize, then, that they cannot neglect study of the Bible, and that this can only be undertaken along the lines laid down by Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*. »

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume III, pp. 67-68:
« Clerics in Rome: Public Theaters, Cinemas, Athletic Exhibitions (Vic. Urb., 1 Feb., 1938) Private.

A Decree of the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, 1 Feb., 1938, approved by the Holy Father, repeats and extends the prohibitions of the earlier decree of 25 May, 1919. The new Decree forbids clerics, seminarians, and students in ecclesiastical colleges from attending public theaters, cinemas, or any other public shows, such as riding and athletic exhibitions.

(Private); Vic. Urb., 1 Feb., 1938. See *Bolletino del Clero Romano*, 1918, p. 20. »

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume III, pp. 68-69:
« Business and Trading Forbidden to Clerics and Religious: New Penalty for Violation of This Canon (S. C. Conc., 22 March, 1950) AAS 42—330.

A Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council:

It is clear from many documents that secular businesses, especially business and trading, have at all times in the Church been forbidden under severe penalties and censures to clerics who are called to the inheritance of the Lord.

Indeed the Apostle himself in the Second Epistle to Timothy (Chapter II, verse 4) already sounded the warning: “No man, being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses.” It is no wonder then that the Council of Trent (Sess. XXII, Chapter I, *de*

reformatione), treating of these crimes, did not hesitate to decree, “that the copious and useful provisions which have already been enacted by the Supreme Pontiffs and the Sacred Councils to the effect that clerics are to abstain from secular businesses, are in future to be observed under the same or greater penalties, to be imposed at the discretion of the Ordinary.”

Accordingly the Code of Canon Law, adhering completely to this tradition, provided, in canon 142, regarding this matter: “Clerics are forbidden to conduct business or trade, either personally or through agents, either for their own benefit or that of other persons.” And this prohibition applies also to religious according to canon 592. Moreover, the Code armed this prescription of law with special sanctions in canon 2380, where it is further provided: “Clerics or religious who, personally or through others, conduct commerce or trading in violation of the provision of canon 142, are to be visited with appropriate penalties by the Ordinary according to the gravity of the case.”

To the end that a firmer and more uniform ecclesiastical discipline may be had in that matter and that abuses may be forestalled, His Holiness Pius XII has deigned to provide that all clerics and religious of the Latin rite mentioned in canons 487-681, not even excepting members of the recent secular Institutes, who conduct trade or business of any kind, even that which consists in exchange of currencies, either in person or through others, whether for their own benefit or that of others, in violation of the provision of canon 142, shall incur, as being guilty of this crime, a *latae sententiae* excommunication specially reserved to the Holy See, and shall in a proper case be further punished by the penalty of degradation.

Superiors who shall have failed to prevent these same crimes according to their office and power, are to be deprived of their office and declared incapable of any office of government or administration. Finally, for all persons to whose malice or negligence such crimes are attributable, there remains the obligation to make good the damages that have been caused.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding. Given at Rome, 22 March, 1950.

AAS 42—330; S. C. Conc., Decree, 22 March, 1950. *Periodica*, 39-231 (Abellán); *Commentarium pro Religiosis*, 1950, p. 183; 1951, p. 151, etc. (Gutiérrez); *Monitor Ecclesiasticus*, 1950, p. 171 (***) . »

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., and Fr. James I. O’Connor, S.J., A.M., S.T.L., J.C.D., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume IV, pp. 97-102:

« Priest Workers: Three Published Official Documents (S. C. Sem., 27 July, 1953; Declaration of French Cardinals; Declaration of French Bishops, 19 Jan., 1954) Private.

The *Commentarium pro Religiosis*, Vol. 33 (1954), p. 41, after a brief introduction in Latin, gives three official documents in French. We present an exact translation of the introduction and of the three documents.

DOCUMENTS ON PRIEST WORKERS

We have gathered three of the principal ecclesiastical documents which have been made public, concerning the apostolate of the so-called *Priest Workers*. I. A Letter of the S. C. of Seminaries and Universities to the Archbishops and Bishops of France; II. A Declaration of the Commission of French Cardinals upon their return to France after their consultation in Rome; III. A Declaration of the Bishops of France who have Priest Workers under their jurisdiction, after the Congress held in Paris, 19 January, 1954.

It is probable that the Sacred Consistorial Congregation and the Sacred Congregation of Religious have issued special decrees for their respective competencies; but these, with great discretion, have remained reserved.

I. A Letter of the S. C. of Seminaries

To Their Most Reverend Excellencies,
the Archbishops and Bishops of France
Rome, 27 July, 1953

Your Excellency:

In some dioceses of France the practice has been introduced of allowing to seminarians a “stage” in direct contact with the people, to the end that they may gain a more intimate knowledge of the dechristianized masses among whom, when they become priests they will have to exercise their priestly ministry. It is not unusual for young aspirants to the priesthood to find employment during the vacation as regular workmen in factories or docks, on ships, in hotels, and so forth.

Certainly one can well credit with sincerity the zeal which inspires such apostolic experiments; these seminarians are responding to a holy desire to reach a world so far removed from and yet

so eager for the Christian ideal. Nor can we doubt the good faith of those who, distressed by the sad spectacle of a society shockingly removed from the influence of the Church, are striving to discover new methods of apostolate, and consider it legitimate to engage seminarians specifically in such works during the years of their ecclesiastical formation.

The S. C. of Seminaries and Universities does not mean to pronounce an appraising judgment on the theoretical goodness of such projects, which may well present some undoubtedly attractive aspects. This consideration has already in the past prompted an attitude of prudent waiting: events themselves would determine the value of the practical results. But several years of experience make it possible now to say, on the strength of documented proofs, that these projects are failing of their purpose; nay more, their results are rather negative as regards the training of young clerics, and for that reason they are rather to be discouraged.

Accordingly, this Sacred Congregation, moved solely by the desire to fulfill its grave obligation to cooperate with the Hierarchy of France, after mature deliberation, absolutely forbids all students of seminaries in France, without exception, to engage themselves as “stagiaires” in any kind of work. And, that there may be no exceptions, the S. C. asks their Most Reverend Excellencies the Archbishops and Bishops to revoke any permission they may heretofore have given.

Thanks to the assiduous and constant labors of wise educators who can gradually put seminarians in contact with the outside world without compromising their ecclesiastical training, we think it is possible even today to train authentic apostles who measure up to the more difficult and specific tasks of the modern ministry. We must not forget the precious collaboration of the pastor, who is the natural auxiliary of the Seminary in the formation of clerics. It is he who will take care to initiate the young clerics in the different forms of the apostolate during the time of vacation, with prudent diligence and upon his personal responsibility.

Strengthened by this charitable help, the seminarian will easily assimilate the principles which little by little will make of him “*homo Dei ad omne opus bonum instructus*,” a capable workman in the vineyard of the Lord.

Your Excellency’s most humble servant,

Joseph, Card. Pizzardo.

II. A Declaration of the French Cardinals

Cardinals Liénart, Gerlier, and Feltin, who came to Rome in order to present their views on Priest Workers to the Holy See, were received as a group by the Sovereign Pontiff.

This meeting, marked by great confidence on both sides, paternal and filial, brought out clearly – together with the anguish of the Holy Father, which is shared by the Cardinals, at the formidable difficulties and dangers of this apostolate – the definite determination of the Church never at any cost to abandon the effort she is making for the evangelization of the masses of workers, sadly dechristianized.

After ten years of trial the experiment of the Priest Workers as it has developed up to now, cannot be continued in its present form. But the Church, solicitous to preserve the contact which has been established between herself and the world of labor by the pioneers in this Apostolate, is quite willing that priests who have given proof of the requisite qualifications should carry on a priestly apostolate in a thoroughly working-class environment.

However, she requires:

- 1) That these priests be especially selected by their Bishop.
- 2) That they receive a suitable and solid training, both as regards doctrine and spiritual direction.
- 3) That they apply themselves to manual labor during only a limited time, so as to safeguard for them the readiness to meet all the exigencies of their priestly state.
- 4) That they accept no temporal assignment which might lead to responsibilities in connection with labor unions, or other offices which should be left to laymen.
- 5) That they do not live by themselves, but be attached to parish and contribute some collaboration to the life of the parish

Investigations will be made, in accord with the Holy See, determine ways and means of applying these norms; their execution must be undertaken calmly and pursued with a high spirit of faith and docility to the Church.

Pierre Marie, Card. Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon

Achille, Card. Liénart, Archbishop of Lille

Maurice, Card. Feltin, Archbishop of Paris

III. *A Declaration of the French Bishops Who Have Priest Workers Under Their Jurisdiction*

After their meeting in Paris on 19 Jan., 1954, the Bishops of France who have Priest Workers in their dioceses or under their jurisdiction, issued the following Declaration:

1. *The Evangelization of the World of Labor.* Profoundly distressed by the religious situation of the world of labor, We the Bishops here present, while once more expressing our regard for the priests who are devoting themselves to the service of working people in the parochial ministry, as well as for the lay apostles of the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne and the Action Catholique Ouvrière, deem it necessary, at least in certain districts, to assign a certain number of priests to a special apostolate designed to make the Gospel and the Church more accessible to the working class. We are therefore decided to set aside priests so that, in alliance with the parochial clergy and the militant laity, a priestly apostolate in the world of labor may be assured.

2. *Form of the Priestly Apostolate in the World of Labor.* The Church alone can decide what forms of life are compatible with the exercise of the priesthood. While We recognize the generosity and the magnificent devotion of the priests whom we had sent into the field of labor and permitted to work in factories, We declare, in intimate union with the Sovereign Pontiff, that this experiment, as it has developed up to now, cannot be continued in its present form, and that henceforth the priestly apostolate in the field of labor must conform to the directives contained in the declaration of Cardinals Liénart, Gerlier, and Feltin, a declaration which was approved by the Holy Father.

3. *Exigencies of the Priestly Life.* The Church wishes first of all to safeguard that which constitutes the proper mission of the priest. It is priests that she wishes to give to the world of labor, priests who, while they live in that environment and for its benefit, live a completely sacerdotal life. Now, the priest is consecrated to offer to God the adoration of all the people, in the first place by the celebration of Holy Mass and the public prayer of the Breviary. He is moreover the dispenser to men of the divine blessings, by the preaching of the word of God, and the administration of the Sacraments. That is why the Church demands that the priests whom she sends into the labor environment shall hereafter work for only a limited time. It is also to safeguard the essential orientation of their priesthood that she requires them to renounce all temporal engagements. In order that in the future there may no longer be any room for confusion, the priests who shall exercise an apostolate in the labor environment shall no longer be called Priest Workers but “Priests of the Labor Mission.”

4. *The Church and Manual Labor.* The Church has always held manual work in honor, first of all in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though the Son of God, chose to work with His hands. The Apostle Saint Paul worked. In certain monasteries not only the lay brothers but also the priests devote several hours every day to manual work. If the Church demands that Priests of the Labor Mission work for only a limited time each day, it is to enable them to fulfill all the duties of prayer and the apostolate, which they assumed in becoming priests.

5. *A Call to Prayer.* The Bishops ask the clergy and the faithful to pray for those priests who, having engaged themselves little by little in a form of life and activity which cannot be continued, surely suffer from the directives now given. In conformity with the Declaration of the three Cardinals, We the Bishops here present have informed them of the practical norms to be applied. More than ever in these hours of trial they need the prayers of all.

(Private): Documents published in *Commentarium pro Religiosis*, Vol. 33, pp. 41-45. »

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume III, p. 216:
« Religious: Permission Rarely to Be Given to Go to Bathing Resorts: Precautions to Be Taken (S. C. Rel., 15 July, 1926) Private.

A letter of the Sacred Congregation of Religious to all General Superiors of religious Orders and Congregations, after calling attention to the fact that dangers and scandals can arise from the attendance of clerics and religious at bathing resorts (*stationes balneares*) and mineral springs, gives the following prescriptive norms:

- a) Superiors are to see to it that the religious of their Institute do not easily get permission to attend such places.
- b) When there is sufficient and reasonable cause for such permission from the standpoint of health, they are to see to it that their religious live in some religious house or at least in some respectable house suitable to their state.
- c) The religious are to be absolutely forbidden their religious habit for any reason, and to attend theaters, plays, cinemas, and other shows of the kind; and they are to avoid all companionship of the sort that is unbecoming to religious men.

d) Superiors are to exercise due supervision to see that these prescriptions are observed, and in case of violation the subjects to lay aside are to be severely punished. Attention is called to the fact that the Sacred Congregation of the Council (in the letter of 1 July, 1926; CANON LAW DIGEST, Vol. 1, p. 138) enjoined upon Ordinaries of places to be watchful in this matter even as regards religious.

(Private); S. C. Rel., 15 July, 1926. Cf. Schaefer, *De Religiosas*, 3 ed, 1940, n. 312, p. 667, note 25; *Analecta Ord. Min. Cap.*, Vol. 42, p. 244. »

Pope Pius XII, Speech to All Clerical Students in Rome, 24 June, 1939, AAS 31—245:

« As for those who have already entered or are about to enter the priestly state, We exhort them to make their consecration complete and generous. Take care that you be not surpassed in generosity by countless laymen who in these days patiently bear all sorts of hardships for the glory of God and the faith of Christ; in this combat you must show them the way by your example; by your labors and devotion you must win for them and for all men divine grace in life and in death.

Furthermore “this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God love also his brother” (I John IV, 21). This love of the neighbor, our Lord declared to be the sign and as it were the token of every Christian; much more should it be characteristic of the Catholic priest. For that matter, it cannot be dissociated from the love of God, as the Apostle Paul clearly shows when, in his magnificent encomium of charity, he beautifully represents the love of God and of the neighbor as two aspects of the same thing (I Cor. XIII). This love of the neighbor knows no limitations: it extends to all men, of whatever tongue, or nationality, or race. Take advantage, dear sons, of the precious and extraordinary opportunity which your stay in Rome affords you to practice this charity toward the multitude of your companions who, though they come from various and far-distant countries, yet all belong to the same time, have the same faith, the same vocation, the same love for Christ, and finally the same standing in the Church. Use this opportunity to cultivate the charity of Christ, and let neither word nor act on your part wound it in the slightest. Leave political alliances to others; it is not your business to treat of them. Do you communicate to each other the things that concern and promote the apostolate, the care of souls, the condition and progress of the Church. » ~ Rev. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume II, p. 432.

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., and Fr. James I. O’Connor, S.J., A.M., S.T.L., J.C.D., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume IV, pp. 303-315:

« Thorough Examination of Candidates for Orders Strongly Emphasized (Circular Letter, S. C. Sacr., 27 Dec., 1955) Private.

A reserved “Circular Letter to the Most Excellent Local Ordinaries in which is emphasized the examination of candidates which is to be made before they are promoted to Orders” is *verbatim* as follows:

Your Most Reverend Excellency,

Great indeed is the pleasure of the Church in these our times to see the great number of candidates for Orders in both divisions of the clerical militia who seriously apply themselves to ecclesiastical training in seminaries and religious institutes under the leadership of skillful Moderators and the careful vigilance of the Bishops and who generously occupy themselves in forming their minds to piety toward God, learning proper discipline, and making themselves ready in the sacred sciences. Thus assisted by divine helps they strive to develop their powers of mind and heart, their natural talents, so that equipped at last with the gifts of nature and of grace of which there is need, they may one day be found worthy ministers of God, equal to discharging duly the noble functions of the sacred ministry.

In order, however, that this prosperous state of affairs may continue more assuredly and make greater advance in the future and that undesirable factors which may arise be warded off this Sacred Congregation has judged it opportune to send to the Local Ordinaries this letter which should be of not a little help to them in expediting the work of selecting and religiously training candidates for Orders.

Moreover, a favorable occasion is at hand: for today completes the twenty-fifth year since this same Sacred Congregation sent to the Most Reverend Local Ordinaries the Instruction “On the testing of candidates before they are promoted to Orders,” December 27, 1930, n. 2819/29 (*AAS* vol. 23, p. 120 ff.). [A parallel Instruction was published by the S. C. for Religious on the testing of religious on December 1, 1931 (*AAS* vol. 24, p. 74 ff.). TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: Both instructions are reported in the *CANON LAW DIGEST*, 1, pp. 463 and 473 respectively.]

A consideration by this Dicastery of the experience during this interval of time proves that the salutary effects for the production of which the Instruction was drawn up, have, with the help of God, been abundantly reaped in the places where its prescriptions have been diligently

carried out. Such action was demanded by canonical discipline of the greatest importance, for it was the protection of this discipline the Instruction sought.

Thus provident care was taken that candidates often were prevented from receiving the priesthood who were found lacking a divine vocation either because, on their own initiative, after maturely considering this difficult piece of business before God and having looked into the doctrine recalled by the Instruction mentioned above, they found they were not divinely called; or because as a result of the inquiries carefully made with the help of the Ordinaries according to the prescriptions of the same apostolic document, they were found by positive proofs to be lacking canonical fitness for Orders (can. 973, § 3).

Just as frequently did it happen that members of Institutes were excluded from the clerical ranks who were being forced to embrace this state as a result of grave fear engendered by outsiders (can. 214), i.e., by their parents or relatives and sometimes by their Moderators, for reasons certainly far removed from the genuine elements of a divine vocation. And this is expressly what the Instruction was intended to effect in order that the later rise of canonical suits for a declaration of nullity of the obligations of sacred ordination might be prevented.

Another effect of the Instruction was that clerics already ordained to sacred Orders short of the priesthood either spontaneously besought the Holy Father to grant them a dispensation from all the obligations of the Order received and allow them to return to the secular life or, as unworthy priests and against their will, they were *ex officio* reduced to the lay state by this Sacred Congregation as a result of petitions made to it by the Ordinaries.

Wherefore there was a most serious duty to ward off the danger of having advanced to the Order of the sacred priesthood subdeacons and deacons who were unworthy and, having almost completed the course of studies, had advanced to the very threshold of receiving sacred ordination.

It is practically impossible to say how many times gnawing anguish and bitter torment have troubled these pitiable priests who without any divine inspiration have thoughtlessly presumed to have themselves stamped with the sacred priesthood when they had completed the period of training for the sacred ministry. This is clearly brought out by the petitions received here asking for a declaration of nullity of sacred ordination or of the obligations attached to it. But where such a declaration was not obtained either because a canonical cause of nullity was not had or where the cause introduced in the case was not juridically proved, they are – sad to say – forced

to pass their whole life in their unhappy state, content for the most part with simple laicization, i.e., with the obligation of sacred celibacy remaining intact. Moreover, they do not refrain from introducing an almost infinite number of pleas that they be freed also from this burden.

The efforts made by these priests to break down the law illegally must turn out ineffectual so that this discipline may continue in its vigor whole and inviolate. Pity in such cases must be set aside. This law has come down unimpaired to our times from a venerable and very ancient tradition and is found in the Code of Canon Law. Besides, the common good, for the safeguarding of which this law was passed, must prevail over any private convenience. Otherwise, attempts drawn out precisely for the very purpose of weakening the discipline would put an end to it and bring on consequences which with the lapse of time would be of such extent that, perhaps, no one at the present day can measure them. Reports reaching here bring out more than once that in certain places and during certain abnormal circumstances of time, e.g., during the last war, the admonitions and precepts of the Instruction referred to above either have been completely blotted out of memory or have not been adequately observed by all concerned. The resultant effects have flowed in here in abundance.

I. In order that Ordinaries may in the future exercise vigilance more carefully and effectively in examining the divine vocation of students and the fitness of candidates for Orders, this Sacred Congregation, having consulted the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities, made it its business to look into the principal grounds which priests generally bring forward to the Sacred Apostolic Dicastries when seeking nullity of sacred ordination or of the attached obligations.

a) More than once they show ignorance of the Instruction referred to above on the testing of candidates. As a result, they assert that they went on to sacred Orders without having duly looked into its prescriptions and without having sufficiently weighed the business of their vocation.

b) Some contend that coming from a poor family they were sent by their parents or by their parish priest to the seminary or religious college at an early age; they had a very vague notion of the ecclesiastical vocation; they advanced to Major Orders so as to accommodate themselves in a bewildered fashion to the state in which they found themselves. And so it turned out that, not having acquired a proper training for the life in the time available, at the actual time of ordination they hardly had a sufficient realization of the duties which the priestly state imposes and of the dangers connected with the exercise of the sacred ministry.

c) Others affirm that they had no tendency to embrace the clerical state and that they lacked special devotion to God and interest in things sacred. Nevertheless, they were urged on to take sacred Orders by their Moderators who said that divine help would not be wanting to them later on for the proper discharge of their priestly duties.

d) Some there were who recalled undue influence by parents or close relatives: importunate and repeated entreaties, exhortations, and sometimes even serious threats. They were urged to enroll in the ranks of the clergy because of the temporal advantages which would accrue to them and their relatives and because they would attain a more exalted station and distinguished name in civil society. And thus was broken down their reluctance to enter a state to which they were very greatly averse.

e) Others disclosed they were diffident, disturbed, hesitant, scrupulous, altogether incapable of making any kind of resolution of any importance. They were driven on to sacred Orders only by the prolonged counsels and persuasions of their Moderators. These Moderators did not fear to tell them that if they returned to the world, they would be abandoned by everybody and be left without a means of respectable livelihood since they would be without any skill or profession after having spent quite a long training period of studies in an institution. There were also some who declared they were led on to Orders by the danger of losing eternal salvation and of incurring the pains of hell if they said farewell to the clerical state. These pains their Moderators painted for them in rather glowing colors.

f) But by far the greater source of complaint is brought out by priests who contend that they have suffered psychic illnesses in the matter of sex, calling them psychasthenia, neurosis, or psychosis. They depict themselves as having an unconquerable and, as it were, a constitutionally bodily proneness toward sensual cravings. These cravings, they say, really torment them with their heat and render them unable to preserve chastity which they declare they have violated at times right up to the last moment before receiving sacred ordination. They repeatedly say that they sincerely and candidly confessed to their spiritual directors their fierce inclination to allurements and their lamentable falls. And yet, despite that, they were not turned aside from receiving sacred Orders. They claim that recourse to ordinary and sometimes to even extraordinary spiritual remedies (e.g., frequent confession and Communion, rather long drawn out penances and abstinences, and even at times the use of hairshirts and corporal mortifications) have not been able to restrain the vehement stimulations of their base passion. Some of these affirm that they have been burdened with anxieties of soul on the question of

vocation, especially because of disclosed intimate difficulties in moral matters and sometimes because of the depraved habit of masturbation already contracted in youth and not corrected during the time of studies and conjoined with almost daily lapses. Nevertheless, they were advised to continue on further, even at times through the use of importunate beseechings and exhortations by Moderators who acted like sponsors foolishly expecting a happy outcome to such ordinations.

Relying on these and similar reasons, these priests endeavor to turn the fault of their ordination back on the Moderators of the Institutions as though they had admitted or driven them on to the priesthood when they lacked the required qualities. Going on from there, they boldly demand that, as a correction of the error made by their directors, ecclesiastical authority send them back to the world free of all the burdens of sacred ordination. On the other hand, frequently it cannot be denied that these charges made by the priests during the trials have only a shadowy appearance of truth, for often the only proof is the statement made by the plaintiff alone, a very interested party, and not by witnesses or documents proved in court.

From all this, however, it does not follow, as we must honestly admit and as is proved from the court actions, that the students bound over to the clerical ranks have always been armed with a true vocation and have enjoyed full liberty of choice and have been free of pathological and psychic defects.

Wherefore, in order to guard as far as possible against any species of complaint whatever, this Sacred Dicastery wishes by this letter to warn the most excellent Local Ordinaries that they should more searchingly and carefully examine candidates for Orders as to the possession or lack of canonical fitness.

II. In order that the Local Ordinaries may be able to proceed to a better handling of this business which is filled with dangers, they are asked to keep in view the following points:

1. The exact and diligent observance of the above-mentioned Instruction on the part of those who, under their prudent control, administer seminaries.
2. *Each year* the dispositive part of this same Instruction which concerns seminary students is to be read to them as is prescribed *near the end* of it so that they will be without excuse as to ignorance of it and will correctly learn the norms therein set down.

In addition, those in their course of theology who are approaching sacred ordination should be given lectures on this Instruction, especially by the professors of moral theology when explaining the treatise *On Orders*. An accounting of it should be had in the examinations to be undergone by them regarding the reception of the individual Orders (can. 996, § 1; 997). Moreover, this must be urged with greater insistency when it is a matter of receiving Major Orders. At that time the candidates should weigh more seriously the heavy burdens attached to them, especially what concerns sacred celibacy, as is provided for in the sworn *Declaration* which is added to the appendix (Form I) of the Instruction. In the retreats before sacred Orders the retreat-masters should speak at length on this subject. Spiritual directors in discharging their office of giving the ordinary short sermons to the seminarians should frequently mention and explain the canonical discipline set down in the Instruction.

3. In the ordinary *Report* on the state of the diocese they are obliged to inform the Apostolic See about the faithful fulfillment of the prescriptions of the Instruction (as is provided for *near the end* of it). The same is to be said of this apostolic letter.

4. Since it is the duty of the bishops to pass final judgment on the priestly vocation of their candidates, they should the more earnestly examine it together with the canonical fitness of the candidates for Orders (cit. can. 973, § 3; and can. 974, § 1, 2°). The examination of the vocation should be carried out according to the norms given by approved authors of moral, ascetical and mystical theology. In addition, with the observance of due caution consideration should be given to the conclusions drawn in this matter which are arrived at by present day scientific studies in psychiatry and biology provided they are completely free of foul materialism.

Let them call to mind and foster in their students the supernatural motives of a vocation and reject the human considerations which often inspire some of them and their parents, e.g., benefits, conveniences, honors, greater influence among the people, etc.

The canonical fitness of the candidate must be supported by *positive proofs* (can. 973, § 3). Evidence of it must be had from all the requisites and qualities which come under the title of gifts of nature and of grace, among which stands out the *virtue of chastity*.

The most excellent Ordinaries should consider carefully in their hearts and minds the truly outstanding excellence of priestly chastity and ecclesiastical celibacy as well as the means better suited to protecting it. They should frequently inculcate in their seminarians what Pope Pius XII, happily reigning, clearly describes in his encyclical *Sacra Virginitas* of March 25, 1954

(*AAS* vol. 46, pp. 161-191) and in his apostolic exhortation *Menti Nostrae* of September 23, 1950 (*AAS* vol. 42, pp. 657-702).

5. To remove every kind of influence unduly exerted by any body on the candidate, e.g., fear, threats, importunate beseeching, and the like, whereby the one thus influenced might be urged on to Orders though having no vocation or being unwilling all that is found set down in § 1, n. 4 of the Instruction should be observed. Canon 971 should be looked to as well as consideration given to the penalty against those who in any way whatever force anyone to receive Orders (can. 2352).

Since it often happens that clerics thus forced hide from their superiors and fellow-students the fear inflicted on them lest they incur the weight of serious harm to themselves, Moderators should not fail to admonish the young men in a fatherly way that if perchance anyone is unwilling and feels he is being driven on to Orders by fear inflicted upon him, he should with candor and confidence manifest this state of affairs to his superior or parish priest or to some person close to him. Moderators, moreover, should show themselves prepared to give him help so he can come forth unharmed from such a crisis by opening another way, if possible, to obtaining conveniently a respectable livelihood in the world so that he may be saved from the persons inflicting the fear (cf. Instruction, n. 9).

6. When a student declares to the superior that, on the advice of his confessor or spiritual director, he is not suited for the priesthood, the superior should accede to his declaration without further inquiry and, if the student is a subdeacon or deacon, negotiate with the Apostolic See to obtain his reduction to the lay state.

7. When there is question of students who are wavering, doubtful, and disturbed so that they are unable to decide whether to receive or to reject Orders, their Moderators are in truth obliged to divert them from entering the priesthood if they know they are unworthy. Contrariwise, if they believe them worthy, they are to exhort and recommend that they allow themselves to be ordained. Nevertheless, let them refrain from urging ordination and leave the choice of decision to their free will, omitting undue influence as well as recourse to threats of spiritual harm (e.g., the pains of hell) to be incurred if they withdraw from ordination.

8. With regard to proof of the virtue of chastity in seminarians, this should be held as a *general principle*: a student is well able to stand out chaste and pure if he is physically and psychologically normal, and, as a result, is of such character as to be able to respond to the

divine grace of vocation with full vigor in both the physical and psychic orders. To put it briefly: it is very necessary for the candidate for Orders to have soundness of both soul and body.

9. If, then, it is discovered that a student has a habit of masturbation and has been morally corrupt since youth, especially by reason of disgraceful relations had with adults or girls, if he has not amended his ways and has not given consistent and lasting proof of his amendment, i.e., tested chastity, in proportion, that is, to the gravity and duration of the base habit contracted, which in every case is not to be less than at least a year, he must be dismissed from the clerical ranks.

10. Very special attention is needed by the student who possibly suffers from sexual psychopathy or hyperesthesia, that is, who must be numbered among those whom psychiatrists classify as neurotics, scrupulous, abulic, hysterical, and, in general, those who are affected by abnormal physiological or psychological defects in matters of sex or by some mental disease (schizophrenia, paranoia, etc.). If he has shown symptoms of a diseased or unbalanced constitution, the Moderators of the Institute should keep careful watch over him and subject him to corporal examination by a doctor who is a real expert in psychiatry, known for his skill, morality and practice of religion, advanced in years, free of the tenets of materialism. The doctor, after prolonged examination, should decide whether, having examined the psychic and physical condition of the student, he is fit to carry with honor to the clerical state the burdens of sacred ordination, especially celibacy. And if he finds him physically and psychically so disposed as to be considered not qualified for Orders, his other qualities, even though outstanding, must be set aside and he must be counseled in a fatherly but firm manner that he should withdraw from embracing the priesthood.

11. To be held back from the priesthood are those who are by nature subject to quite strong propensities to emotion and who exhibit the lamentable traits of parents given over to vice. Attention must be paid to what the Supreme Pontiff Pius XI, of happy memory, declared in his encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* of December 20, 1935 (*AAS* vol. 28, p. 5 ff): “those who show they have a special tendency toward sensuality . . . all these were not born and are not fit for this sacred office.” Therefore, youths of slight constitution with weak bodies, especially those deficient in their nervous system, prone to sexual degeneracy, and still more those laboring from stubborn psychic melancholia and dread or epilepsy, with so-called fixed ideas, or from homosexuality and those suspected of suffering any mental lesion should be held off from receiving the priesthood.

12. The chastity problem should *ordinarily* be resolved at least during the year preceding theology. The student must have already acquired *habitual chastity* (*proof of chastity shown by testing*, which demands about a year's proof). If after repeated testing doubt still remains regarding the student's vocation, he must be rejected from the priesthood (cf. encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, III).

13. As to how spiritual directors and the ordinary and extraordinary confessors of candidates for Orders should conduct themselves, confer what has been wisely set forth in the encyclical of Pius XI referred to above and the special norms which may have been set down for this matter in some places by the pastors of souls, each for his own diocese.

14. For the more careful training of candidates for Orders, especially sacred Orders, care should be taken that sacred ordinations be had at the time more fit for them. Thus the *summer season* is thought to be a less fit time for carrying out the proper examination in the sacred exercises preceding Orders. Similarly, it seems very appropriate to exclude the time immediately following and preceding the end of the scholastic year. At this time, as a rule, the students, tired by work and preoccupied in mind because of the examinations recently taken in sacred studies or because of those soon to be taken, lack the required conditions for being properly able to ponder the very serious business of their ordination.

Further, Ordinaries should refrain from too readily seeking apostolic indulgences to hold sacred ordinations *outside the times set down in the law* (can. 1006). For at the times set down in the canon, in accord with the prescriptions of the liturgy, the whole Christian populace and the priests publicly raise to God at Mass suppliant prayers that the merciful God may send worthy ministers to His Church. Moreover, to those same times the Code of Canon Law has added the law of fast and abstinence (can. 1252) so that the supplications mentioned may have greater efficacy.

15. As to what concerns the liceity of sacred ordination the provisions in canon 974, § 1 should be kept in view. With reference to irregularities and impediments which forbid students from receiving Orders, confer canons 975, 983 and the following.

Now to consider more closely the nonage of candidates: bishops should not immoderately request a dispensation for it nor should they show themselves inclined to dispense from the interstices set down in the law (can. 978) for sacred ordinations.

16. Neither should secular subdeacons and deacons who have been seriously delinquent, especially in moral matters, in their own diocese be allowed to go on probation in another diocese or in a religious congregation. Rather, if they are believed to be clearly unworthy of the priesthood, a dispensation should be sought from the Apostolic See and they must be returned to the world.

17. At a sufficiently early time provision should be made that everything concerning sacred ordinations be on hand. A sufficient amount of time must intervene for this purpose so that in the interval all the documents may be sought out; necessary dispensations petitioned and obtained. Otherwise, it will happen that at the very threshold of ordination *telegrams* will have to be used to ask for indults of dispensation from the Apostolic See or to propose for solution questions regarding candidates for Orders. It is certainly evident that this way of doing things manifests a lack of consideration and negligence in the discharge of this serious duty.

18. When this Sacred Congregation is petitioned for indults of laicization for subdeacons or deacons, and also for priests, although for these last the obligation to observe sacred celibacy remains, the *acts of the investigation* carried out before sacred ordination according to the norm of the Instruction mentioned above and the present letter *must always accompany* the petition. Moreover, this petition must be written by the petitioner and signed with his name and surname. But if the Ordinary sends in a petition to have a cleric in sacred Orders laicized *ex officio* because of admitted shameful or scandalous conduct and there is no hope of amendment and if such a cleric refuses to draw up and sign the petition as above indicated, the Ordinary should not fail to point out this fact.

19. In order to forestall later complaints it should be noted well that the unyielding practice of this Sacred Congregation is never to readmit to the clerical ranks clerics in major Orders after they have been laicized. Moreover, express provision for this is made by adding to the apostolic indult this special clause: "*without hope of readmission to his former state.*" As a result, when they voluntarily request such an indult, this should be deeply impressed upon their mind before asking for it, namely, that such clerics should weigh seriously and well all the consequences of laicization so that when it has been asked for and granted it may not happen that their condition turn out worse than it had previously been and that they regret their new status from which they will be unable to withdraw because it will be useless to interpose appeals.

20. This letter together with the Instruction should be thoughtfully and seriously pondered by all priests and in ecclesiastical assemblies. In addition, a conference on it should be given in retreats to the clergy. Moderators and superiors should recall that on their heads rests the outcome of the examination to be made of candidates to Orders. To them is addressed the exhortation of Pius XI: “Let those who guide the souls of young men reflect . . . how great a responsibility they assume before God, before the Church, and before the young men themselves if they do not take every means at their disposal to avoid mistakes in this matter” (*Encyc. Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, III).

By means of these norms arranged and harmonized with the prescriptions of the often-referred to Instruction, this Sacred Dicastery believes that, with the help of God, considerable help is given for carrying out the difficult task of investigating canonical fitness of candidates for Orders. The purpose is that the unworthy may in due time, even at the last moment, be absolutely held off from joining the sacred ranks lest dishonor and disgrace touch the Church of God, and that the worthy may by all means be enrolled as ministers in the service of God, gather rich fruits of holiness, and effectively promote and procure the good of souls, the glory of the Church and the Greater honor of God.

Your Excellency should not forget to notify this Sacred Congregation in writing of the receipt of this letter.

Begging every grace of God and with all due respect to Your Excellency, I remain
(seal)

Devotedly yours in the Lord,
† B. Cardinal Aloysius Masella
Bishop of Palestrina, Prefect
F. Bracci, Secretary

(Private); S. C, Sacr., Circular Letter, Prot. N. 5374/55, 27 Dec, 1955; from photostatic copy of original; copies were distributed to superiors of all seminaries in his territory by the Most Reverend Archbishop of Indianapolis. »

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., and Fr. James I. O’Connor, S.J., A.M., S.T.L., J.C.D., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume IV, pp. 102-103:
« Active Participation in Politics Forbidden to Priests in Hungary (S. C. Conc., 16 July, 1957) AAS 49—637.

A Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Council:

Since active participation in politics is not appropriate for ecclesiastes, whose work is entirely directed to the spiritual good of souls, the Church has permitted it only in altogether peculiar circumstances and under very definite conditions, or has expressly forbidden it even under pain of suitable penalties, when some harm to the faithful was to be feared from it.

The conditions in Hungary today are such that it is altogether desirable that in that country ecclesiastics should abstain completely from any political activity.

Wherefore this S. C. of the Council, by special mandate of His Holiness Pius XII, decrees the following:

Priests both secular and religious in Hungary are forbidden to seek or to accept the office of Deputy or any other office whatever in the Parliament.

Priests either secular or religious, who already hold any office in the said Parliament, are ordered to give it up within a month from the publication of this Decree, and are also forbidden to attend the sessions of the Parliament or to perform any service or engage in any activities connected with the office which they have given up.

If any one – which God forbid – behaves in a manner contrary to these regulations, he will incur *ipso facto* an excommunication specially reserved to the Holy See.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding, even though they be worthy of special mention.

Given at Rome, the 16th of July, 1957.

AAS 49—637; S. C. Conc., 16 July, 1957. »

Pope Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, 31 May, 1956, AAS 48—354:

« Now, when this sanctification of the soul has been provided for, the intellectual and pastoral training of the religious cleric must be attended to most carefully, and on this subject, in view of the importance of the matter and the responsibility of Our supreme office, We wish to explain and recommend the principles at somewhat greater length.

How great is the need for these religious of a solid and altogether finished intellectual training and formation, is clear especially from their three-fold dignity in the Church of God, religious, sacerdotal, and apostolic.

Religious men, whose chief duty it is to seek God alone, to be united to Him in contemplation and to give the divine truths to others, must know that they cannot fulfill this most sacred duty well and fruitfully nor be raised to a sublime union with Christ if they lack that copious and deep knowledge of God and His mysteries which is drawn from sacred doctrines and must ever be perfected.[26]

The dignity of a priest, which makes him an ambassador of the Lord of all knowledge[27] and designates him as the *salt of the earth* and the *light of the world*,[28] demands a full and solid training especially in ecclesiastical subjects, such a formation as can nourish and sustain his spiritual life and preserve him from all error and the vagaries of novelty; one which will make him a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God,[29] and a perfect man of God, *instructed for every good work*. [30]

Finally, the apostolic office which members of the states of perfection perform, each according to his vocation – by sacred sermons to the people, the Christian education of children and young people, the administration of the sacraments, especially that of confession, mission work among infidels, the spiritual direction of souls, or finally by the mere contacts of daily life with the people – can never produce abundant and permanent results unless they themselves are thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of sacred doctrine, and cultivate it by uninterrupted study.

In order to attain this solid and finished intellectual culture and formation concomitantly with the natural development of the young men and the arrangement of their studies, religious Superiors must first of all use every means to see to it that in the knowledge of literature and doctrine, religious students “be in no way inferior to young men of the laity who are studying the same subjects. For if this is securely provided for, it will be assured that the students receive a thorough mental training, and that they will be the more available for service each in his own time,”[31] and also that they will be prepared and equipped to go on to higher ecclesiastical studies.

In philosophical and theological courses, which are to be taught only by qualified and well-chosen professors, all the prescriptions of the sacred Canons and those made by Our

Predecessors and Ourselves must be most faithfully observed, regarding especially the reverence which is due to the *Magisterium* of the Church and which on all occasions must be professed and instilled into the minds and hearts of the students; regarding the prudence and caution which must always accompany the careful and highly praiseworthy investigation of new questions which arise from time to time; and regarding the system, doctrine, and principles of the Angelic Doctor, which are to be faithfully held and are decidedly to be followed in the teaching of philosophy and theology to students.[32]

Following the guidance and authority of Aquinas, theology is to be taught according to a method which is both positive and scholastic, that is, in such a way that in the light of the authentic *Magisterium* the sources of Divine Revelation are very thoroughly examined, making use of all the appropriate aids to that study, and that the treasures of truth drawn therefrom be clearly explained and effectively defended. For, since the deposit of Revelation is entrusted for authentic interpretation to the *Magisterium* of the Church alone, it must be most faithfully explained according to the sense and mind of the Church herself, and not according to mere human reason and private judgment. Let professors of Christian philosophy and theology, therefore, take notice that they perform their function not in their own right and name but in the name and by the authority of the supreme *Magisterium*, and hence subject to its vigilance and control, having received from it, as it were, a canonical commission. Consequently, without restriction of freedom of opinion in those matters which are still open to discussion, “they must remember that they have received the authority to teach, not that they may communicate their own opinions to their students, but in order to teach them the established doctrines of the Church.”[33]

Moreover, both masters and pupils should always remember that ecclesiastical studies are designed, not merely for intellectual training, but for a complete and thorough religious, or sacerdotal and apostolic formation; and hence they must be directed not merely to the successful passing of examinations, but to giving the students a stamp of character which shall never be effaced and from which, when need arises, they may ever draw light and strength for themselves and others.[34]

To this end, intellectual instruction must first of all be intimately united to a love of prayer and the contemplation of heavenly truth; it must also be complete, not omitting any of the prescribed subjects, coherent and so well arranged in its entirety that all the courses of study coalesce in one single well rounded system. It must also be very wisely adapted to refute the errors and meet the needs of our time; it must take account of the recent discoveries of

scholarship and at the same time be entirely in accord with venerable tradition; finally, it must be effectively designed for the fruitful performance of every kind of pastoral ministry, so that the future priests with this training may be ready and well prepared to present and defend sound doctrine in sermons and catechetical instructions to both learned and unlearned audiences, to administer the sacraments properly, to promote vigorously the good of souls and help every one by word and work.

Though all that We have said about the spiritual and intellectual formation of students is most conducive and altogether necessary to the making of truly apostolic men, it being evident that if a priest lacks holiness and learning he lacks everything; yet it is Our solemn duty to add here that, in addition to holiness and learning, if the priest is to fulfill his apostolic ministry properly, he must have a most careful and quite perfect pastoral preparation such as to awaken and develop a genuine skill and dexterity in the due performance of the manifold works of the Christian apostolate.

For if the practice of any craft requires some previous preparation, theoretical, technical, and practical, and this latter tested by a long apprenticeship, who can deny that a similar, nay much more careful and profound previous preparation, is needed for that profession which is truly called the art of arts?

[Notes:

26. Cf. Pius XI, Ap. Letter, *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, 19 March, 1924; *AAS*, Vol. 16, pp. 137-138 (*Enchiridion*, n. 348, pp. 405-404), Cf. CANON LAW DIGEST, 1, pp. 265, 302, 312, 313, 661, 670.

27. Cf. 1 Kings 2:3.

28. Cf. Mt. 5:13-14.

29. Cf. 1 Cor. 4:1-2.

30. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:17.

31. Pius XII, Ap. Exhort., *Menti Nostrae*, 23 Sept., 1950; *AAS*, Vol. 42, p. 687.

32. Pius XII, Encyclical, *Humani generis*, 12 Aug., 1950; *AAS*, Vol. 42, pp. 573, 577-578; canon 1366.

33. St. Pius X, *Motu proprio, Doctoris Angelici*, 29 June, 1914; *AAS*, Vol. p. 338 (*Enchiridion*, n. 284, p. 336).

34. Cf. Pius XII, Speech to Clerical Students, 24 June, 1939; *AAS*, Vol. 31, p. 246 (*Enchiridion*, n. 373, p. 531); English text, CANON LAW DIGEST, 2, p. 427.] » ~ Fr. T. Lincoln

Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., and Fr. James I. O'Connor, S.J., A.M., S.T.L., J.C.D., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume IV, pp. 177-180.

Fr. T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J., S.T.D., LL.B., and Fr. James I. O'Connor, S.J., A.M., S.T.L., J.C.D., *The Canon Law Digest*, Volume IV, pp. 206-

« Radio and Television: Norms for Religious (S. C. Rel 6 Aug., 1957) Private.

A Letter of the S. C. of Religious “to the Superiors General of the Institutes of Perfection Regarding the Use of Radio and Television” is as follows:

As early as the first of January, 1954, [AAS 46—18] the date on which the transmission of television in Italy was inaugurated, the Holy Father in an important exhortation on television, communicated to the Most Reverend Ordinaries of places his anxiety over the effects which this new and powerful means of diffusing news, facts, and exhibitions from all parts of the world might have on the moral and spiritual life of the people.

This marvelous product of modern science, which within a short time has been made practically available to every one, is quite frequently to be found also in religious houses; and as we know, even in Italy where good intentions, promises, and the good will of a number of persons might have encouraged the hope that the programs would be kept within the bounds of decency and morality, these limits have not always been observed.

The Supreme Pontiff has therefore felt a still greater concern regarding the use of this instrument at once precious and dangerous, especially in Institutes of Christian perfection.

In the religious life there is question of safeguarding the discipline and holiness of that life, which is imperiled not only by things that are evidently wrong but also by the infiltration of worldliness, which destroys the relish for the things of the spirit and diminishes, often insensibly, that desire of perfection which must always remain alive in a religious, dedicated to it as he is by his very profession.

In the aftermath of the Congress of the States of Perfection which was held at the close of the year 1950, this Sacred Congregation has taken a lively interest in the regulation of these modern inventions, the cinema, radio, and television, in their various aspects in relation to the religious life, its discipline, and its apostolate.

Especially as regards radio and television, after having drawn profit from the results of the Congress itself, it has asked for and collected the opinions of religious Superiors and of other persons from various nations and of diverse temperaments, qualified by solid learning, religious piety, and experience in the spiritual life, in order to prepare and send out an Instruction establishing some general norms from which the Superiors of the various religious Institutes might derive a more detailed and specific regulation of this matter on the basis of their particular spirit, the form of their discipline, and their internal and external aims.

Evidently, considering the good and the evil, the usefulness as well as the dangers of television, this Sacred Congregation does not see any necessity for its indiscriminate suppression in all religious Institutes; nor does it mean to approve its full and absolute admission or toleration. The former course would run the risk of alienating too completely from social life certain religious Institutes which have to live in the midst of the world and deploy a social and religious activity there; the latter would plunge the religious back into the world which he has abandoned, to be gradually tainted with that worldly spirit which is incompatible with the religious ideal.

The Church does not thereby mean to reject whatever science and progress provide for humanity, if it can be directed to a good purpose; but she cannot and does not diverge from the principle "*salus animarum suprema lex*"; to do so would be to fail in her mission. In regard to religious – that select group in the Church – she seeks to eliminate not only serious and obvious dangers but also whatever may impede or retard the progress toward perfection which is the very purpose of religious life.

With regard to radio and television some needed distinctions have to be made. The requirements of the contemplative life are different from those of the active life; in the active life itself two considerations occur: what may be allowed by way of proper relaxation and amusement, and what is demanded by the needs of the apostolate; and even in the apostolate, one question is what may be allowed for one's own instruction and experience, another, what the religious themselves can give to the faithful whom they influence and assist.

On the basis of these considerations this Sacred Congregation has thought it well to establish some fundamental norms and also to invite the Superiors of the various Institutes, together with their respective Councils, to control this matter by somewhat more concrete regulations in keeping with their own spirit and traditions, so that a thing which can be an effective aid to

the apostolate may not degenerate into a cause of spiritual ruin for religious, or worse still, of a general relaxation of religious discipline.

After having considered everything this Sacred Congregation establishes the following norms and presents them to Superiors for exact observance, “*graviter onerata eorum conscientia.*”

1. There is no sufficient reason to justify introducing television apparatus in communities of contemplative life, either of men or of women. A radio apparatus can be tolerated for the sole purpose of enabling the religious to hear the words of the Pope when he speaks to the whole world and to receive his blessing, or on the occasion of some exceptional celebration of a religious character.

2. In Institutes of active life:

a) Never can individual radios, and much less individual television sets, be permitted, to be used freely and without the control of the Superior.

b) The radio and television apparatus must always be located exclusively in some community hall, in an open place, under the control of the Superior or of some one delegated by him.

c) Superiors must regulate the time given to television or to listening to the radio so that there be no interference with the occupations and duties of each one's state or office, the apostolate, practices of piety, exercises of the common life, and hours of rest, according to the community's daily order.

d) Superiors should forbid showings or broadcasts which because of their moral tone or worldliness are not suitable for religious. Aside from the daily news and transmissions of an educational or religious character, all the rest should or at least may be considered as of that type in relation to the religious life, and hence to be excluded if proposed only for the recreation of the religious.

e) If reasons of the apostolate clearly require, in the case of certain individual religious and in concrete cases, that some reasonable exceptions be made, the decision as to these must always be reserved to the Superior, who “*graviter onerata conscientia,*” must see to it that the danger be made as remote as possible, by making a careful choice of the religious concerned, who should be persons of solid religious spirit and sound experience of life, and well able to discern not only what might be harmful to the religious themselves but also what might harm those for whom the show is intended.

(Private) , S. C. Rel., 6 Aug, 1957 (N. 01742/53); translated from the original Italian. »