

Providence in pouring in upon us a vast immigration of Catholics from Europe, and from the *personal* zeal of most of our bishops and priests, and that it has in later years been retarded for want of a *settled system of law* in ecclesiastical matters, that may secure to every one who has taken the irrevocable vows of the priesthood, a *fixed standing in his Order*, so long as he observes the proprieties of his position. This, experience in this region has shown us, cannot be obtained, so long as the *standing* and the *honor* of a priest is to be at the nod of the personal judgment of his bishop.

“Those who have a vocation to the religious state in vowing a blind obedience, will seek its compensations in the spiritual advantages secured to religious orders and congregations, by *rules approved at Rome*, to which rules they can always appeal for their rights, as defined by their religious vows.

“In the Church of God there is another condition of the priesthood. It need not, should not, be less holy. But it is governed by other conditions. It is *necessary* to the perfection of the Church on earth, as Cherubim as well as Seraphim redound to the glory of heaven. This other order of the priesthood is what is called secular or parochial. Men are as clearly called to this kind of life as they are to life in religious communities. But those thus called are not disposed to a *blind* obedience. In order to do *their* work in the Church, they need to be men of determined will, firm for the *right*, as they understand it, and ready to submit to *authority—only* where sanctioned by a public and mutually understood *law*. The history of the Church shines with examples of such, who have become saints, and are worshipped on our altars.

“But the *normal* condition of this order is to have personal freedom of action, limited only by a *law regularly established*, and, on this account called *Canon Law*. The absence of this *regular* or *Canon Law* has been the occasion of many failures, in the persons of priests who, more fortunately placed, might have shone as stars forever.

“It is therefore that so many of the honored and grave members of the priesthood, men whose heads have grown white in the priesthood, without any note of censure, urge the establishment of a regu-

lar or Canon Law for these regions of North America. They have seen priests discouraged and abandoning noble efforts for want of it. They have seen how few young Catholics of wealth and position in society are willing to become priests under the present regime. They have seen that those, of all conditions, who are truly called to the priesthood, and have had the grace to correspond, do so with the entire self-sacrifice of postulants for religious orders—and, afterwards, with the obligations remaining, are denied the consolations belonging to the religious, not to the parochial priesthood.

“It is a class of priests, with no note of censure ever passed upon their personal conduct, who are more numerous than the entire body of bishops; who have built each at least as many churches and school houses; heard at least as many confessions; done at least as much heroic missionary labor in various ways; and very possibly, spent as much time, man for man, in the reading of solid theology as our venerated bishops have; who have urged us to the step we have taken, and that, as a layman, we could never have dared, had these not convinced us that our own previous judgment of twenty years of *silent* observation was correct—that the Catholic Church in America *requires* as the condition of its *permanent* success, that the *law* of the Roman Catholic Church be *established here*.

“Great changes may be made in regard to *discipline* during the sittings of the Council of the Vatican. What the priesthood of America asks is, that, for many of our older and better established dioceses, and for others, as soon as they come to a certain status, the American *rule of dispensations* (!) may be stopped!

“The especial points in which *relief* is asked by the zealous priesthood of America are the following, which have heretofore been indicated:

“1st. That a given term of years be named, after which one blameless in his official and personal reputation, shall be considered irremovable from his pastoral position, except for *cause*. ‘Jus,’ one of the most moderate of men in his demands, proposed, or rather consented, to placing it at *seven* years. Others say this is too long. Some have told us that this is the *average* of the life of a hard-working-church-and-