

APOSTOLIC LETTER.

To the Churches of the Orient.

Leo, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God.

The dignity of the Eastern Churches, shown forth by ancient and distinguished monuments, is in great veneration and glory through the whole Christian world. For the origin of man's redemption, according to the most merciful plan of God, having taken place among them, they have quickly hastened on to such increase as to attain the praise of apostleship and martyrdom, of doctrine and holiness, in the first degree, and have brought for it the earliest joys of most useful fruit. And from them the simplest and most beneficial power has flowed widely and wonderfully to other peoples, who the most blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, striking down the multifarious depravity of error and of vice, brought, under heavenly guidance, the light of God's truth, the good tidings of peace, and the "liberty with which Christ has made us free," into that city which was the mistress of nations. But the Roman Church, the head of all Churches, has from Apostolic memory been accustomed to show the greatest honor and charity to the Churches of the East, and to mutually rejoice in their faithful obedience. And she, through varied and bitter trials, has never ceased to provide for and benefit them, to lift them from their perils, to bind them to her when they were friendly, to recall them when they fell away. Nor was it the last office of her vigilance to guard perpetually and defend in their entirety those particular customs and methods of worship of each Eastern people which, in accordance with her authority and wisdom, she declared lawful: in proof whereof are the many acts which our predecessors—pre-eminently Pius IX., of happy memory—either themselves by their own decrees, or by the Sacred Council for the spreading of the Christian name, considered to be most prudent.

We, also, moved and led on by not less zeal, at the very beginning of our Pontificate turned our eyes in love on the Christian nations of the East. Indeed, we hastened to show our anxiety for the alleviation of their necessities, and, since then, we have seized other opportunities of showing them our hearty goodwill. But assuredly nothing was, or is, more in accordance with antiquity and piety, than so to excite in hearts bound to the Holy See, the warmth and fruitfulness of the faith, that they may mount to the excellence and praiseworthiness of their ancestors, by the renewal of their example.

We have already been able to give certain help to these churches. We have founded a college in this city itself for the education of the Armenian and Maronite clergy; and, also at Philippopolis and Adrianopolis for the Bulgarians, we have decreed to found at Athens a college to be called the Leonine; also, we gave every favor to the Seminary of St. Anne, which has begun at Jerusalem to educate the Melchite clergy. We are also engaged in increasing the number of Syrians among the students of the Urbanian College, and in restoring the Athanasian College of the Greeks to its original purposes. This Gregory XIII., a municipal benefactor, wisely longed for. Most distinguished men have there been trained. Many other things also of a similar nature we now most vehemently wish to attempt and to effect, since, God inspiring us, we have adopted a plan, long thought on, of calling by special letter princes and peoples to the happiness of unity and Divine Faith.

Now, among the Christian nations so lamentably torn from us we hasten to call, to exhort, to beseech, the Orientals, first of all, with the greatest Apostolic and paternal charity. It

has happened to us, fortunately, to feel more and more foster the hope we entertained, and it is certain that so salutary a work has special claims upon us, so that we may thoroughly fulfill the expectations men may form of the foresight of the Apostolic See, as well by removing all cause of ill-feeling or suspicion, as by applying the best remedies for reconciliation. We think the fittest course to take is to apply our mind and our care to safeguard the discipline peculiar to the Oriental Churches, as we have ever done.

Indeed, we have always worked on this plan in the Clerical Institute founded for Eastern peoples, and we shall follow the same plan in those to be founded, viz.: that the students should worship in, and observe with the greatest veneration, their own rites, and should learn and practice them. Indeed, there is more importance than may be thought in the preservation of Eastern rites. For that august antiquity by which the various classes of those rites are ennobled is a distinguished ornament to the whole Church and a proof of the divine unity of the Catholic faith. For thence, in truth, while their Apostolic origin shows more clearly in the churches of the East, there appears simultaneously and shines forth their closest unity with the very beginning. Nor perhaps is there anything more admirable to illustrate the note of Catholicity in God's Church than the singular evidence which is shown it by the different ceremonial forms and the noble tongues of antiquity, made more noble from the use of them by the Apostles and the Fathers; as if almost in imitation of what occurred to Christ, the Divine Author of the Church, at His birth, when the Wise Men from different quarters of the East came "to adore Him" (Matt. ii., 1, 2). And here it is in point to remark that the sacred rites, although in themselves not instituted to prove the truth of the Catholic doctrines, do nevertheless show them forth in a lively manner and splendidly portray them.

Wherefore the true Church of Christ, as she greatly desires to preserve inviolate those things which, as being divine, are unchangeable; so, in using their forms, she has sometimes allowed or conceded novelty where it would be in accord with due veneration to antiquity. In this way there appears the power of her vitality, which grows not old, and she shines out more magnificently as Christ's Spouse, whom the wisdom of the Holy Fathers saw shadowed forth in the words of David: "The Queen stood on thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety . . . in golden borders, clothed round with varieties." (P. xiv. 9, 14.)

Therefore, since this diversity of Oriental liturgy, proved by facts, beside its other worth, is turned into much honor and use to the Church, surely it is no less a part of our duty that care should be taken lest damage through imprudence should arise from those ministers of the Gospel whom the charity of Christ leads out of the West to the Eastern nations. Valid, indeed, remain those things which on this matter Benedict XIV., our illustrious predecessor, wisely and with forethought, decreed by the constitution *Damandatum* in the form of a letter given on the 24th day of December, 1743, to the Antiochene Patriarch of the Melchite Greeks and to all the Bishops of that Rite, subject to the great Patriarch. But as a long space of time has elapsed, and conditions of things in those places have been changed, and the Latin missionaries and institutes have been multiplied there, it has come to pass that the peculiar care of the Apostolic See is required; and, that this will be opportune, we ourselves, in these latter years have learnt by many signs, and we are confirmed in this by the most

just desires of our Venerable Brethren, Patriarchs in the East, whose communications have come to us, time and again. But in order that the interests of the whole of this matter might be more openly displayed, and more fitting methods of dealing with it, might be secured, we decided to summon the said patriarchs lately to our city, to entertain discussion with them. Along with several of our beloved sons, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, we held frequent deliberations. Now having fully pondered upon all those things which we mutually proposed and discussed, we determined to uphold and amplify such regulations of the Benedictine Constitution as might be profitable to the altered circumstances of the peoples. In securing this, we took this principle from the said Constitution, namely, that the Latin priests should be sent by the Apostolic See into those regions for this intention only, that they might be a help and assistance to the Patriarchs and Bishops; carefully guarding lest in the use of faculties granted to them they should act in prejudice of the jurisdiction of the said patriarchs and bishops and decrease the number of their subjects (Const. "*Damandatum*," N. 18). From which it is clear by what laws the duties of these Latin priests relative to the Eastern Hierarchy should be governed.

Therefore it seemed good to us in the Lord, relying as we do on the authority of the Apostles, to prescribe and sanction the following regulations, declaring by these our presents our wish to resolve that the said Benedictine decrees, which were originally given concerning the Melchite Greeks, shall regard all the faithfully universal of every Oriental rite.

Over and above particular precautions and regulations *ex parte*, we are particularly anxious, as we touched upon before that, in the most favorable spots in the East, seminaries, colleges and institutions of all kinds should be founded for the especial purpose of instructing the native youth in their ancestral rite for their own advantage. We have concluded zealously to enter upon this design, in which we can scarcely say how great hope there is of advantage to religion, and to help it on to the utmost of our power, hoping, too, for instance from the Catholics at large. The advantage of native priests, who will labor under more favorable circumstances and whose ministrations will be more willingly received and bear more fruit than if they were foreigners, has been set forth more at length by us in the Encyclical letters which we issued last year on founding clerical colleges in the East Indies. So, assuredly, having once arranged for the religious education of their youth, honor will accrue to the Orientals in their Theological and Biblical studies; there will increase a knowledge of the ancient tongues, equally with a greater ability in the modern; the wealth of doctrine and literature in which their Fathers and writers are so rich, to the common good, will more largely abound, with that wished for result, that the doctrine of the Catholic priesthood rising forth, and the praise of unsullied example shining bright, their separated brethren will more eagerly beg the embraces of that Holy Mother. And then, indeed, if the ranks of the clergy shall associate mind, zeal and acts with a truly fraternal charity, surely with the favor and under the leading of God, that most happy day will dawn, when all, meeting in the "unit of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God," in fulness and perfection, "the whole body, compacted and fitly joined together by whatever joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity." (Eph. iv. 13, 16.) For that Church alone can boast to be the

true Church of Christ, in which most perfectly unite "one body and one spirit" (Eph. iv. 4.) These things, one and all, which have been decreed by us, will doubtless be received by our venerable brethren, the Catholic Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops of every Oriental See, not only in accordance with that love in which they excel towards the Apostolic Chair, and towards us, but also in accordance with their solicitude for their churches; and they will zealously strive that the observance of them shall be fully secured from those concerned. But the fulness of the fruits which we may augur and justifiably expect therefrom, will especially arise through the energy of those who represent our Person in the Christian East.

We wish especially to impress upon the Apostolic Delegates that they should revere, with fitting honor, the traditions of those people handed down to them from their forefathers; that they should anxiously respect the authority of the Patriarch, with that becoming reverence which they show now, and in the interchange of offices with them, they should fulfill the counsel of the Apostle, "in honor preventing one another;" (Rom. xii., 10). Let them display to Bishops, clergy and people a spirit of zeal and good will, bearing themselves exactly the same spirit which was borne by John the Apostle when he gave the Apocalypse "to the Seven Churches which are in Asia," under the salutation "Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come." (Apoc. i., 4.) In every action let them show themselves as men who really are considered worthy messengers and conciliators of holy unity between the Oriental Churches and that of Rome, which is the centre of unity and charity. Let similar sentiments and similar actions at our exhortation and command, distinguish the Latin priests, who, in those same regions, perform noble labors for the eternal salvation of souls. To whom if they labor religiously, in obedience to the Roman Pontiff, then indeed, will God give ample increase.

Therefore, whatsoever things in these letters we decree, declare and command, we wish and order to be inviolably kept by all concerned, and upon no cause, however privileged, upon no pretence, upon no presumption, must they be branded, called into controversy, or infringed. But they shall have their full and entire effect, without regard to the Apostolic Constitutions, issued, whether in general or provincial councils, or to statutes, customs, or prescriptions, confirmed by Apostolic or other decisions. All which, equally as if they were word for word set down in this letter, in so far as they affect aught aforementioned we particularly, and expressly derogate and will to be derogated; all things to the contrary notwithstanding. And we will that copies of this letter printed and subscribed under the hand of a notary, and fortified with the seal of one constituted in ecclesiastical dignity, the same faith should be given, as it would be given to this identical letter, were shown.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of Our Lord's Incarnation 1894, on the 20th of November, the seventeenth year of our Pontificate.

+ A. CARD. BIANCHI, Pro-Datarius.

+ C. CARD. DE. ROVEREO.

The Catholic Almanac for Ontario is now to be had from the Office of the Catholic Register, mailed on receipt of price, 25 cents.

There is danger in neglecting a cold. Many who have died of consumption dated their troubles from exposure, followed by a cold which settled on their lungs, and in a short time they were beyond the skill of the best physician. Had they used Bickie's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, before it was too late, their lives would have been spared. This medicine has no equal for curing cough, colds and all affections of the throat and lungs.