

vine mercy your incessant prayers and expiatory sacrifices.

But no one appreciates the exceptional merits of religious orders with greater justice than We Ourselves who, from this Apostolic See are watching over the needs of the universal Church.

Already, in Our acts, we have made particular mention of all this. Let it suffice now, to call attention to that splendid ardor with which these religious bodies follow, not only the directions, but the least expression of wish of the Vicar of Jesus Christ; undertaking every work which may contribute to the advantage of the Church and society whenever He indicates it; hurrying to the most inhospitable shores; braving every suffering and accepting death itself, as many have done in the most glorious manner in the recent upheavals of the empire of China.

If, among the dearest remembrances of our long pontificate, We count the fact that by Our authority We have raised a great number of the servants of God to the honors of the altar, those remembrances are all the more dear to Us because the majority of those saints belong to religious orders, either as founders or as simple religious.

We, moreover, wish to recall for your consolation, that among people of the world, distinguished by their position, and by their knowledge of what society needs there have not been lacking many honorable and upright men who have come forward to praise your works to defend your inviolable right as citizens, and your still more inviolable liberty as Catholics. Surely, one must be blinded by passion not to see that it is unwise and dishonorable to crush those who, hoping for nothing and asking for nothing, give themselves up entirely to the service of their fellow-men. Let it be considered with what zeal these religious apply themselves to develop among the children of the people which, without them, would perish

those germs of natural goodness and leave these little ones to grow up a danger to themselves and to others. These religious have, with the help of grace, cultivate pa- from destruction and have succeeded in bringing them to maturity. Under their influence they developed a splendid fruitage of intelligent love for truth, of honesty, a sense of duty, of strength, of character and of generosity in sacrifice. And all this for the order and prosper- what is there better calculated than ity of the State? Nevertheless dear Sons, since the hatred of the world pursue you so far as to pretend that it is a useful and praiseworthy work to trample underfoot in your persons the most sacred rights and to God, adore with a trusting hu- that in so doing, a service is done mility the designs of the Almighty in permitting this. If, at times, He suffers right to succumb to violence He does so only for the purpose of some greater good; but remember that He often comes to Our rescue in unforeseen ways when We suffer for Him and trust in Him.

If He places obstacles and obstructions in the path of those whose state is that of Christian perfection, it is in order to test and fortify their virtue, and it is, more particularly, to strengthen and re-invigorate their souls which might else have grown feeble in protracted peace.

Endeavor, therefore, to correspond to those paternal designs of Almighty God. Give yourselves up with redoubled ardor to a life of prayer and faith and holy works; make regular discipline reign among you; let a brotherly union of hearts prevail among you, with humble and eager obedience, austerity and detachment and a pious ardor for the glory of God. Let your thoughts be always high, your resolutions generous and your zeal indefatigable for the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom. Since by the misfortune of the times, you find yourselves either already