

Father, in virtue of his Apostolical authority as teacher, on April 24 and July 18 of this year, with the consent of the holy Council, solemnly published several decrees relating to the true doctrine about faith, the Church, and its supreme head.

“By this means, then, the infallible teaching authority of the Church has decreed, and the Holy Ghost by the vicar of Christ and the Episcopate united with him has spoken: and therefore all, whether Bishops, priests or laymen, are bound to receive their degrees as divinely revealed truths, and with joyful hearts lay hold of them, and confess the same, if they wish to be and remain true members of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. When, then, beloved in the Lord, objections are raised, and you hear it maintained that the Vatican Council is no true General Council, and that its decisions are of no authority, do not allow yourselves to be led astray thereby, so as to falter in your devotion to the Church and in your belief and acceptance of its decrees; for such objections are wholly unfounded.

“Bound together in the unity of faith and love with the Pope, have the assembled Bishops, both those who in Christian lands administer well-established sees, and also those who are called to extend the Kingdom of God among the heathen in apostolic poverty, Bishops, whether they tend a larger or a smaller flock—these, as legitimate successors of the Apostles, have all with the same right taken part in the Council, and maturely considered everything.

“As long as the discussions lasted, the Bishops, as their consciences demanded, and as became their office, expressed their views plainly and openly, and with all necessary freedom; and, as was only to be expected in an assembly of nearly 800 Fathers, many differences of opinion were manifested. These differences of opinion can in no way affect the authority of the decrees themselves; should even we not take into consideration the fact, that almost