

Pastoral Letter of His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface, Proclaiming the Jubilee.

Alexander Antoninus Tache, by the Grace of God, and appointment of the Holy See, Archbishop of St. Boniface, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, etc., etc.

To the clergy secular and regular, religious communities, and beloved laity of our diocese, health and benediction in Our Lord.

The Sovereign Pontiff in the accomplishment of His sacred duties, has just given a new proof of the profound wisdom imparted by the divine assistance which guides and enlightens Him.

In His Encyclical Letter "Immortale Dei", dated 1st November, 1885, the Vicar of Christ reminds mankind of the sacred basis on which Society rests and "how much it is to the interest of the civil power to come nearer to Truth and to the Christian model."

In order to set forth His views in their full light, as well as to secure for us the graces necessary to the fulfilment of the duties which He recalls to our minds with so much clearness and wisdom, the Key Bearer of the Kingdom of Heaven once more opens the "Treasury of heavenly gifts which He is empowered to dispense." He decrees that in 1886 there be celebrated extraordinarily a sacred year, and this is what is promulgated throughout the whole Christian world by His Encyclical Letter "Quod auctoritate Apostolica", dated 22nd December last.

The voice of the Universal Pontiff affirms that, to bring about a closer union of the Commonwealth with Truth, it is important "to urge men on to the exercise of Christian virtue, for the State is what the morals of the people make it to be."

It is necessary that the minds of men, who constitute and govern society, should be rightly impressed and that they should act according to Christian rule, as well in public as in private, if they wish the Civil body to be Christian, for necessarily the State is formed "in the stamp and image of their opinions and morals."

The Visible Head of the Church warns us that in our days "many dangers impend on every side. The noble virtues of our forefathers have in great part disappeared from amongst us. Opinion runs wild and strays beyond due bounds farther and farther day by day. Even among the right-minded, many are deterred by a certain unworthy shamefacedness, from openly declaring their sentiments. Much more are they loathe to act loyally up to them."

What then is there to wonder at on seeing society forget its divine origin and its noble end? Is there any cause for astonishment when men who banish God from their minds, from their hearts, from their intercourse with their neighbor, also endeavor to banish the same God from the government of nations? This explains the well known axiom: "With what little wisdom is the world governed!"

The repudiation of Christian influence, the withdrawal from the society "par excellence", founded by the Divine Restorer, leaves ample scope for other influences, and, alas! "how many deceitful associations make numerous victims."

The Head and Chief of the Episcopate, following the example of His Predecessors, has denounced such nefarious associations. His Encyclical Letter "Humanae Genus", 20th April, 1884, warns the Christian world against the criminal workings and the seduction of secret societies. The Apostolic Document was received as might be expected among the enemies of the Faith. Unhappily, among the children of the Church, some too easily felt secure against the imminence of the dangers pointed out by the Common Father of the faithful. Under the pretence of a delusive peace, sufficient attention was not given to the energetic protests coming from Guardian of the Vine of the Lord. Once more the voice of the One to whom the Saviour said "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," is raised to remind us all that "these baneful associations of men, artful and expert in crime, seek to impose upon the multitude, and to withdraw as many as they can from God."

Be therefore on your guard, Dearly Beloved Brethren, against such societies. Their adepts come from every quarter; they would fain entrap you in their snares it is so difficult to escape. They aim at seducing you in order to increase the number, already too great, of their unhappy victims.

Amidst these overwhelming evils, the Physician of souls seeks a remedy in the treasures at His disposal and proclaims "The Sacred Jubilee" to all those who, having their salvation at heart, feel the necessity of raising their minds above the things of earth to make them soar towards those of heaven.

We are fully assured that this holy Jubilee will benefit, not only individuals, but also society at large; for public morals cannot fail to receive a favorable impulse from the progress of individuals towards the sanctification of their own souls.

In the strength of this conviction the Prince of Bishops calls on all His Brethren of the Episcopate "duly and diligently to prepare the people to gather the fruits intended for them." The True Pastor also makes an appeal to the charity and wisdom of the Bishops, to appoint chosen priests to instruct the faithful during the Jubilee. On this point, Dearly Beloved Brethren, we are painfully impressed. Whilst returning thanks to the Author of all good, for the consolation afforded us by the zeal of the pastors entrusted with the salvation of your souls. We can not be unmindful of the fact that we have not a single priest upon whom we can impose the additional and special service enjoined by the Pas-

tor of Pastors. Help us, Dearly Beloved Brethren, to secure this imperious assistance. Let our joint supplication during the period of the Jubilee, obtain for us to afford to all the people under Our jurisdiction, not only the means indispensable to the salvation of their souls, but, moreover, permit us to add thereto the special assistance desired for these days of extraordinary favors.

God speaking through Leo, referring to the Jubilee, makes mention in the first place of penance, because the habit of self-indulgence is so prevalent in the present age, that it has a pernicious effect on the multitude. Not only is enjoyment eagerly sought for but moreover according to the Book of Wisdom, Ch. iv, ver. 12 "the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind." Self-restraint is exercised only where there is question of pleasing the world but in no way to please God. Nevertheless the law of nature as well as the law of the Gospel agree, that self-restraint and the subjection of the passions is a duty imposed upon every one.

The Apostle of the nations who had been raised to the third Heavens, felt the necessity of the salutary practice of penance to calm the dread of his reprobation. "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps . . . I should become a cast-away." Cor. chap. ix, ver. 27.

After this what should so many faint hearted Christians think of themselves, so strongly bent towards earth that they carefully avoid whatever tends to suffering or privation.

Let us consider the models of self-denial furnished in the lives of the true servants of the Lord, and in obedience to the advice of the servant of God, let us heed more especially the examples of mortifications left by St. Francis of Assisi. Let us appreciate the precious advantages offered to those who seek the safeguards of the laws pertaining to the Order founded by the Patriarch whose aim it was to reflect the image of Jesus Christ, as well by his innocence as by the austerities of his life, practised to such a degree "that he had the image of Jesus Christ Crucified impressed in visible marks divinely stamped upon him."

The Pope also directs that we should pray, and there is every reason to do so. What else is prayer than the elevation of our hearts and souls to God? What better or nobler use can we make of the faculties of our mind than to raise them towards the Supreme Intelligence? How can we more safely guard our hearts than by attaching them to the Divine Being by Whom they were formed, and in Whom alone they can find the contentment they crave for? This age is not an age of prayer, consequently, temporal concerns captivate universal attention, to the detriment of heavenly interests.

Let this year of Jubilee be for us a year of prayer and as a result a year abounding in heavenly favors; a year of special graces which will bring about the amendment of individuals and the security of society, by the sanctification of the Holy Name of God; a year of graces which shall ennoble both individuals and society, by the advancement of the Kingdom of God; a year of graces, which shall enlighten and strengthen our will, and that of all men, to such a degree that the will of our Heavenly Father may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Dearly Beloved Brethren, increase your devotion to the Holy Rosary, following the impulse proceeding from the Head of the Church, Chief among the Servants of Mary. He assures us, and we all have experience "that it is a part, and a most beautiful form of that spirit of prayer" which He prescribes as a remedy for all our evils.

The Representative of the God of Charity on earth, exhorts us to peace and concord. He wishes the spirit of discord to cease among the children of the Heavenly Father. He desires that the Bishops "who are the guardians of ecclesiastical discipline and of mutual charity; use their utmost endeavors to prevent such discords as "break or at least relax the bonds of charity."

Dearly Beloved Brethren, we have too plentifully tasted the bitter fruits of strife, which has brought dire calamities to our land, for it to be necessary to insist on the obligation imposed on all Christians, to live in peace and harmony. Children of the same Father, who created us in His image and likeness; redeemed by the Blood of a common Saviour, whose Heart, the real focus of love, is open to all, and whence dart the rays of divine charity which animate His true disciples, let us love one another. Far be it from us to suffer the spirit of hatred to establish its empire amongst us. Let mutual respect in our acts, words, and writings, characterize the devoted sons of the Church. Let the spirit of charity reign in our midst with such sway, that it may be said of us as of the primitive Christians: "See how they love one another."

The Divine Victim of love, the God of charity, "at the very approaching moment of His last torments, demanded of His Father, that those who believe in Him should love one another. "That they may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us." St. John chap. xvii. ver. 21.

Jesus, the God of charity and of mercy, before leaving the earth established His Vice-Gerent, first in the person of Peter and moreover until the "consummation of ages" in the persons of the successors of Peter to all or whom He said: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" St. Matthew ch. xvi. ver. 19.

Leo XIII, Vicar of Christ, in virtue of the powers attached to His Sovereign Pontificate, grants and promulgates, in

form of a Universal Jubilee, a plenary Indulgence, and remission of all their sins to one and all of the faithful Christians of both sexes, on the conditions laid down, and which we are commanded and empowered to make known to you.

Therefore, after imploring divine assistance We have prescribed and ordained, and do hereby prescribe and ordain as follows: 1st, The Encyclical Letter of our Holy Father the Pope, dated the 22d December last, is to be read in all the parish churches, or others in which the divine service is publicly performed, and at the chapters of the religious communities.

2nd. At the close of the divine service during which this Pastoral has been read the Jubilee will be proclaimed by the solemn ringing of the church-bells.

3d. In the different parishes and missions there will be given, in connection with the Jubilee, a spiritual retreat or a series of instructions, during three days at least, to prepare the faithful to receive the extraordinary fruits of grace intended for them. The priests entrusted with the care of souls, will confer with Us as to the time of performing the above exercises, the mode of conducting them, and the choice of assistant clergymen.

4th. All the priests of the diocese are approved to hear confessions. In accordance with the faculties granted by the Sovereign Pontiff, the faithful have the right to choose a confessor, and all confessors are vested with the same powers and submitted to the same restrictions, as those mentioned in the Apostolic Letter of February 15th, 1879.

5th. All the priests of the diocese, appointed during the 1885, as ordinary or extraordinary confessors of nuns, are approved for the same, during the Jubilee, and the Sisters as well as their novices, are at liberty to choose a confessor among them.

6th. The reception of the Holy Eucharist enjoined for the indulgence of the Jubilee, must be other than the Easter Communion. Confessors have the power of dispensing as to Communion in case of children not yet admitted to first Communion or other persons who cannot possibly receive it.

7th. The visits prescribed will be made six times by the faithful to the church in the parish or mission in which they reside. In cold weather they may be performed in the place where Mass is celebrated, and where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. The six visits can be made on the same day or on different days. Among the prayers offered for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff, We recommend the recitation of five decades of the Rosary during each of the six visits.

8th. Two fast days are prescribed for the Jubilee. This is a strict fast to be observed on days other than ordinary fast days commanded by the Church, but days of abstinence may be selected for that purpose. In all cases the fasts for the Jubilee, exact strict abstinence, which forbids the use of grease milk, butter, cheese, or eggs. Nevertheless, in exceptional cases, and in virtue of the declaration made known to Us by the Sacred Penitentiary, dated January 15th, 1886. We authorize confessors to permit the use of milk, butter, cheese and eggs, when circumstances render it too difficult to procure food for strict abstinence.

9th. Alms are also one of the conditions of the Jubilee, and we direct that they be given to the clergy, parish priest or missionary, who will confer with Us as to the use to which they should be applied.

10th. The precept of annual confession and the obligation to approach the tribunal of penance to obtain the indulgence of the Jubilee, cannot be satisfied by one and the same confession.

11th. The indulgence of the Jubilee can be gained twice or several times during the year, by repeating twice or several times the conditions prescribed to that effect; but the benefit of the additional favors such as absolution from censures reserved cases, commutations or dispensations can be afforded only once.

12th. The indulgence of the Jubilee can be gained by complying with the conditions in different dioceses, provided the prescriptions of the ordinaries of the places are accomplished, within the limits of their jurisdiction.

13th. Confessors cannot use the extraordinary faculties attached to the Jubilee, when penitents refuse to fulfil all that is required to gain the indulgence.

14th. According to the Encyclical Letter, confessors are empowered to commute the prescriptions of the Jubilee into other works of piety, but only in favor of such persons as are unable to accomplish them, for cogent reasons.

Dearly Beloved Brethren, let us follow in the intentions of the Head of the Church and pursue with joy and gratitude the path He directs. May this Jubilee, placed under the patronage of the Holy Virgin of the Rosary, be productive of the fruits of sanctification of which our hearts have need, and may it obtain for society better and more peaceful days.

The present Pastoral Letter shall be read in all the parish churches and others where public service is performed, and at the chapter of religious Communities, on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at St. Boniface, in Our Archiepiscopal Palace, under Our Hand and Seal and the signature of our Secretary, this 2nd day of February 1886, Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.

By Alex. Arch. of St. Boniface, O.M.I. By command of His Grace the Archbishop.

J. McCarthy, O.M.I. Secretary.

"The attention of Holy Scripture", says Cardinal Baronius, "is to teach us how to go to heaven, and now how the heavens go."

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