

her even unto the consummation of the world, We are firm in the confidence that the human race, stricken by so many woes and calamities, will end, thanks to your efforts, by seeking safety and prosperity in submission to the Church and in the infallible ministry of this Apostolic Chair. And now, Venerable Brethren, before closing this Letter, We feel the necessity of communicating to you Our joy at seeing the admirable union and concord which reign amongst you and unite you so thoroughly to this Apostolic See, and We are really persuaded that this perfect unity is not alone an impregnable bulwark against the assaults of our enemies, but also a happy presage of better times for the Church. It gives Us a great encouragement in our weakness, and raises our spirits in a wonderful degree, by assisting Us to sustain with ardour the difficult mission which We have received, and all the fatigues and labours on behalf of the Church of God. Neither can We separate from these reasons for joy and hope that We have manifested to you the declarations of love and obedience which, in the commencement of Our Pontificate, you, Venerable Brethren, have offered to Our humble person, in common with so many priests and faithful, proving this by the letters sent to Us, by the offerings made, the pilgrimages accomplished, and so many other marks of piety that that devotion and charity which you had never ceased to show towards Our most worthy predecessor still remain constant, stable, and firm, and have not been enfeebled by the coming of a successor who so little merits this heritage. At the sight of such splendid testimonies of the Catholic faith We must humbly confess that the Lord is good and merciful, and to you, Venerable Brethren, and all Our dearly-beloved children, from whom We have received them, We express the deep feelings of gratitude which flood Our heart, full of the confidence that in the distress and difficulties of the present time your zeal and affection, as well as those of the faithful, will never be wanting to Us. We have no doubt that these remarkable examples of filial piety and Christian virtue will powerfully touch the heart of the All-merciful God, and will cause Him to cast a merciful eye on His flock, and grant peace and victory to the Church.