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ALLOCATION OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE PIUS NINTH. IN THE SECRET CONSISTORY OF 9TH DECEMBER, 1854.

Venerable Brethren—It is with much consolation that we rejoice in the Lord to see you now, venerable brethren, assembled in great numbers about us—you whom we can truly call our joy and our crown.— You are, indeed, a portion of those who share our labors and our cares, in order to feed that universal flock which the Lord has confided to our weakness—for the preservation and defence of the Catholic Church—for sustaining it with new disciples—who serve and adore with sincere faith the God of justice and of truth. These words of Christ our Lord to the Prince of the Apostles—"Tu aliquando conversus confirma fratres tuos," seem, then, in the present circumstances, to invite us, who, by the divine grace, have been put in his place, notwithstanding our worthlessness, to speak to you, venerable brethren, not to recall to their duty, or demand more fervor of those whom we already know to be inflamed with zeal far exceeding the glory of God, but to the end that, fortified, as by the voice of the blessed Peter himself, who lives and will continue to live in his successors, ye may therein find in some degree a new power to labor for the salvation of the flock entrusted to your care, and the maintenance of the interests of the Church, with courage and fortitude, in the face of all the difficulties of the present time. There could be no hesitation as to whose intercession we should especially invoke with the Heavenly Father of divine light, in order that we might be directed by His grace to profitably address you. You have assembled round us for the purpose of uniting your concurrence to the care and zeal which we have employed for the extension of the glory of the august Mother of God. We have then earnestly supplicated the Most Holy Virgin, whom the Church calls the Seat of Wisdom, to obtain for us a ray of the divine wisdom, to enlighten us to say to you what may best contribute to the preservation and prosperity of the church of God. Now, considering from this chair, which is as the citadel of religion, the lamentable errors which, in these perilous times, are diffused throughout the Catholic world, it appears to us particularly opportune to point them out to you, venerable brethren, to the end that you employ all your powers to combat them—you who are constituted the guardians and sentinels of the house of Israel.

We have to lament the existence of an impious race of unbelievers, who would, were it possible, wish to destroy all religious faith, and with these it is especially necessary to include those members of secret societies, who, united amongst themselves by a criminal compact, neglect no means of overturning and destroying church and state by the violation of every right. It is to these, assuredly, that apply these words of the divine Regenerator:—"You are the children of Satan, and you do the works of your Father." Apart from these men, we must admit that now the perversity of unbelievers generally inspires horror, and that there is in the minds of men a certain tendency to draw closer to religion and faith. Whether the cause of it ought to be attributed to the enormity of the crimes which infidelity has occasioned in the last century, and which cannot be remembered without a shudder—whether the fear of the commotions and revolutions which so lamentably disturb states; and bring misery to nations, or whether through the action of that divine spirit which diffuses its benign influence at pleasure, it is evident that the number of those wretches who boast of and exult in their infidelity, is now diminished;—the approbation due to virtue in life and morals is freely accorded, and a sentiment of admiration arises in men's souls for the Catholic religion, the light of which shines before all eyes like that of the sun.— This is a blessing which cannot be overlooked, venerable brethren, a sort of advance towards truth; but there remain many obstacles which prevent men from attaching themselves entirely to it, or which, at least, retard their progress.

Amongst those who have the direction of public affairs there are many who pretend to favor and profess religion, who lavish their praise upon it, and proclaim it useful and perfectly adapted for human society; but who wish not the less to regulate its discipline, govern its ministers, and intermeddle in the administration of holy things; in a word, they endeavor to confine the church within the limits of the state, to overrule it; it which is, nevertheless, independent; which, according to the divine order, cannot be contained within the bounds of any empire, its privilege being to extend itself to the remotest extremities of the earth, and embrace within its bosom every people and nation, in order to guide them in the way of eternal life. And, lamentable to say, while we thus address you, venerable brethren, a law is

proposed in the Sardinian States which uproots the religious and ecclesiastical institutions; and tramples completely under foot the rights of the church, and abolishes them, as far as it is possible to do so. But we will have to revert at another time, in this place, to this grave subject. Heaven grant that those who oppose the liberty of the Catholic religion may recognize at length how much it contributes to the public good by exacting from every citizen the observation of the duties which it teaches according to the divine doctrine which it has received! Heaven grant that they may be convinced of what St. Felix, our predecessor, wrote formerly to the Emperor Zeno, that "nothing is more profitable to princes than to leave the church the free action of its laws, for it is advantageous to them, when it concerns itself with the things of God, to apply themselves to submit the royal will to the priests of Christ, instead of seeking to bow them beneath that will."

There are also, venerable brethren, men distinguished by their science who admit that religion is the greatest of the benefits which God has bestowed on man, but who have, nevertheless, so high an opinion of human reason, which they exalt so much that they have the folly to raise it to the level of religion itself; according to the vain opinion of these men the theological science should be treated in the same manner as the philosophical. They forget that the former rests on the dogmas of faith, which are of a character the most fixed and certain, whilst the latter are elucidated and explained by human reason only, than which nothing can be more uncertain, as it changes according to the diversity of intellect, and is subject to innumerable errors and illusions. Thus, the authority of the church, once rejected, the field of controversy is thrown open to the most difficult and abstract questions, and human reason, too confident in its unstable powers, falls into the most absurd errors, which it is here impossible and useless to enumerate; you know them but too well, and you have seen how fatal they have been to the interests of religion and society. Therefore it is necessary to show to those men who exalt beyond measure the powers of human reason that they place themselves in direct opposition to these words, so true, of the Doctor of the Gentiles:—"If any one believes himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceives himself." It is necessary to show them how arrogant it is to scrutinize the mysteries which God in His bounty has designed to reveal to us, and to pretend to penetrate and comprehend them by this human intellect, so feeble and unsound, and the powers of which they so far transcend, and which we should, according to the words of the same apostle, hold captive in obedience to faith.

These partisans, or rather these worshippers of human reason, who take it in some sort for an infallible mistress, who promise themselves to find under its auspices all kinds of happiness, have doubtless forgotten what grave and terrible injury human nature has received in the fall of our first parents—injury which has clouded its intellect and inclined its will to evil. Such is the cause in consequence of which the most celebrated philosophers of antiquity, all writing admirably on a variety of subjects, have sullied their precepts with the gravest errors; hence also that continual combat which we experience in ourselves, and which caused the apostle to say:—"I feel a law in my members which rebels against the law of my spirit." It is then evident that by original sin, inherited by all the children of Adam, the light of reason is diminished, and that the human race has miserably fallen from the ancient state of justice and innocence; this being the case, who can believe human reason to be sufficient for the attainment of truth?— In the midst of so many perils, and with such great infirmity of our powers, who can deny the necessity to salvation, in order not to waver and fall, of the succors of Divine religion and of heavenly grace?— These succors God, in His bounty, abundantly gives to those who seek them humbly by prayer; for it is written—"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Wherefore, in reference to His Heavenly Father Christ our Lord asserts that the sublime mysteries of truth are not made known to the wise and learned of this world who pride themselves on their talents and science, and refuse to render homage to divine faith, but that they are revealed to humble and simple men who put their trust and confidence in its oracles. It is necessary that you should instil these salutary precepts in the minds of those who exaggerate the power of human reason to such an extent as to dare thereby to scrutinize and explain the heavenly mysteries—an attempt the absurdity and folly of which nothing can surpass. Exert yourselves to withdraw them from so great a perversity of understanding; by making them comprehend that the authority of Divine faith is the noblest gift which the providence of God has bestowed upon man—that it is a torch in darkness, and the guide which pro-

teets us through life; finally, that it is absolutely necessary for salvation, for "without faith it is impossible to please God, and he who believes not shall be condemned."

We have learned with grief that another error not less fatal has arisen in certain quarters of the Catholic world, and possessed itself of the minds of many Catholics. Induced to hope for the eternal salvation of those who are not included in the true church of Christ, they cease not to ask earnestly what will be after death the fate and condition of those who do not belong to the Catholic faith. Seduced by vain reasoning, they make to these questions replies in conformity with that perverse doctrine. Far be it from us, venerable brethren, to pretend to set bounds to the Divine mercy, which is infinite! Far be it from us to seek to scrutinize the mysterious counsels and judgments of God—abyss into which human thought cannot penetrate! But it is the duty of our apostolic charge to awaken your solicitude and episcopal vigilance to make every possible effort to remove from the minds of men an opinion as impious as fatal, according to which the way to eternal salvation may be found in every religion. Employ all the resources of your ability and knowledge to prove to those committed to your care that the dogmas of the Catholic faith are in nothing contrary to divine justice and mercy. Faith commands us to hold that out of the Apostolic Roman Church no one can be saved—that it is the only ark of salvation, and that whoever will not have entered therein will perish in the waters of the deluge. On the other hand, it is equally necessary to hold as certain that ignorance of the true religion, if this ignorance be invincible, is not a fault in the eyes of God. But who will dare to arrogate to himself the right of defining the limits of such ignorance, considering the various conditions of peoples, countries, and minds, and the infinite multiplicity of human affairs? When delivered from the prison of the body we shall behold God as He is, we shall perfectly comprehend by what admirable and indissoluble ties the divine mercy and justice are united; but whilst we are on earth burthened with the weight of this mortal body, which encumbers the soul; let us hold firmly what we are taught by the Catholic doctrine—that there is but one God, one faith, and one baptism; to seek to penetrate farther is not permitted. Moreover, let us, as charity demands, pour out incessant prayers in order that on all sides the nations turn to Christ, and let us labor as much as possible for the common salvation of mankind. The arm of the Lord is not shortened, and the gifts of heavenly grace will never fail to those who sincerely desire and ask the aid of this light. These truths should be deeply engraven on the minds of the faithful, to the end that they do not permit themselves to be corrupted by false doctrines of which the object is the propagation of indifference in religious matters, an indifference which we see increasing and extending on all sides, to the ruin of souls. Oppose with vigor and fortitude, venerable brethren, the principal errors by which the church is assailed in our days, and which we have just exposed; in order to combat and destroy them, it is necessary that you should have ecclesiastics who would aid you in this labor. We greatly rejoice to see the Catholic clergy neglect nothing, nor shrink before any fatigue in the zealous discharge of their duty. Neither the length nor the danger of the journeys, nor the fear of the hardships inseparable from them, can prevent them from traversing continents and seas to go to the most distant regions to procure for the barbarous nations who inhabit them the benefits of civilization and the Christian law.— It is also a source of happiness to us that the clergy, during the dreadful calamity which has ravaged so many localities and great cities, have fulfilled all the duties of charity with so much devotion, and to the extent of regarding it as an honor and glory to sacrifice their lives for the salvation of their neighbor. This conduct will make it still more manifest that, in the Catholic Church, the only true one, is always found that divine fire of charity which Christ came to enkindle upon earth to burn unceasingly. We have seen religious women rival the clergy in their attention to the sick, fearless of the death which many of them suffered heroically. At sight of such devotion those even who are separated from the Catholic faith have been struck with astonishment, and could not refuse the tribute of their admiration.

We have then good cause to rejoice, venerable brethren; that, on the other side, our soul is penetrated with grief on reflecting that in certain places members of the clergy are to be found who do not in all things conduct themselves as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Hence it follows that the bread of the Divine Word is wanting to Christians in those places, that they receive not the sustenance necessary for eternal life, and that they lose the use of the sacrament, those

powerful sources for obtaining and procuring the grace of God. These priests should be admonished, venerable brethren, and earnestly urged to fulfill with care, regularly and faithfully, the duties of the sacred ministry. It is necessary to represent to them all the gravity of the fault of which they have been guilty—they who, at this time, when the harvest is so abundant, refuse to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. They ought to be exhorted to explain frequently to the faithful the power of the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar to appease the anger of God, and avert the chastisement which the crimes of men deserve; to remind them how important it consequently is to assist religiously at the sacrifice of the mass, so as to partake abundantly of the salutary fruits which it produces. Assuredly the faithful in those places would be more fervent in acts of piety if they received from the clergy a more zealous impulse and greater spiritual succors. Hence, you see, venerable brethren, how much the seminaries, the government of which belongs to the bishops alone, and not to the civil power, are now necessary in order to secure worthy ministers of Christ. Take great care to instruct in piety and doctrine the youth, the hope of religion, assembled in those establishments, to the end that, provided with this two-edged sword, they may one day become good soldiers to fight the battles of the Lord. Whether for the theological, or even for the philosophical sciences, put not into their hands any but the most orthodox authors, lest they in any way become imbued with opinions incompatible with the Catholic doctrine.

In this way, venerable brethren, you will provide for the advantage and increase of the church. But in order that our efforts may have happy results, concord and union of souls is, above all, necessary.— Away, then, with dissensions; they break the bonds of charity, and the perfidious enemy of our race fails not to foment them, well-knowing how powerfully they aid him to effect evil. Let us recall to mind the defenders of the Catholic faith in olden times; they triumphed over the most obstinate heresies because they descended into the arena full of courage and confidence, united as they were among themselves, and with the Apostolic See as soldiers with their chief.

Such are, venerable brethren, the matters we feel bound to communicate to you in our care and solicitude to fulfill the duties of the apostolic ministry, which the divine clemency and bounty have imposed on our weakness. But we feel ourselves invigorated and encouraged by the hope of the heavenly succor, and the ardent zeal for religion and piety, of which you have given so many proofs, is a support on which we confidently rely in such great and numerous difficulties. God will protect His Church, and will favor our mutual aspirations, especially if we obtain the intercession and prayers of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, whom we have with the aid of the Holy Ghost, and to our great joy, proclaimed exempt from the stain of original sin, in your presence and in the midst of your applause. Certainly it is a glorious privilege, and admirably appropriate to the mother of God, to be preserved safe and pure, in the universal disaster of our race. The greatness of this privilege will powerfully contribute to repute those who pretend that human nature has not been injured in consequence of original sin, and who exaggerate the power of reason in order to deny or diminish the benefit of revealed religion.— Finally, we beseech the Blessed Virgin, who has conquered and destroyed all heresies, that the pernicious error of rationalism be also effaced and totally uprooted, which, in our unhappy epoch, torments not only civil society, but still so deeply afflicts the church.

We have now, venerable brethren, to express with what consolation we have seen you come with such zeal and cheerfulness from distant countries to this Apostolic See, the bulwark of faith, ordinance of truth, and support of Catholic unity, and to wish you with the utmost fervor and affection, before your return to your sees, all happiness, joy, and salutation. May God, the arbiter of all things, and author of all good, bestow on you the spirit of wisdom and understanding, to the end that you may preserve your flocks from the snares laid on all sides for their ruin; and may that good and propitious God confirm with His all-powerful hand what you have already undertaken, or may hereafter undertake, for the advantage of your churches; may He give to the faithful confided to your care such a spirit that they may never seek to separate from the side of the pastor, but that they may hearken to his voice and obey him in all things. May the Most Holy Virgin, Immaculate in her Conception, assist you; may she give you true counsel in your doubts, support in your troubles, and succor in your adversities. Finally, raising our hands to Heaven, we bless you and your flocks from the bottom of our hearts: "May the