

VII.

PASTORAL OF THE GERMAN BISHOPS ASSEMBLED AT
FULDA.

"The undersigned Bishops to the reverend clergy and faithful, greeting, and peace in the Lord.

"Having returned to our respective Dioceses from the Holy Œcumenical Council of the Vatican, we, in union with other German Bishops who were prevented attending the Council, consider it our duty as your chief pastors to address to you, dearly beloved in the Lord, a few words of instruction and exhortation. The occasion and reason for our doing so, and that unitedly and solemnly, is found in the fact that many erroneous ideas have for several months been disseminated, and still, without any authority, are striving in many places to gain acceptance.

"In order, then, to maintain the divine truths which Christ our Lord hath taught mankind in their entire purity, and to secure them from all change and distortion, He has established in His Holy Church the office of infallible teaching, and has promised and also given to it His protection and the assistance of the Holy Ghost for all times. On this office of infallible teaching of the Church reposes entire the security and joy of our faith.

"As often as in the course of time misunderstandings of or oppositions to, individual points of teaching have sprung up, this office of infallible teaching has in various ways, at one time in greater Councils, at another without them, both exposed and foiled the errors, and declared and established the truth. This has been done in the most solemn manner by the General Councils, that is, by those great assemblies in which the Head and the members of the one teaching body of the Church combined for the deciding of the doubts and controversies in matters of faith which then prevailed.