

The Catholic Weekly Review.

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA

Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris, Cæsari; et quæ sunt Dei, Deo.—Matt 22: 21.

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LEO. XIII., P.P.

TO OUR VENERABLE BRETHREN THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS, AND OTHER ORDINARIES IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE.

VENERABLE BRETHREN, HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEEDICTION.

On every occasion that presents itself of reviving and promoting devotion to the great Mother of God, We most heartily rejoice as at a thing not only most excellent in itself and productive of the greatest blessings, but also because it is one of the strongest and sweetest affections of Our own heart. Imbibed, so to say, with Our mother's milk, this devotion to the Blessed Virgin has been ever increasing within Us and gaining strength with Our advance in years; it has been given Us to know better and better how worthy she is of being loved and honoured, since God, from the first so much loved her, and with so great a predilection as to raise her above all other creatures, and, by enriching her with the most signal favours to make her His own mother.

The numerous and striking proofs of generous kindness with which she has favoured Us, and which We cannot recall without tears of lively gratitude, serve as an ever new stimulus to Our devotion.

Amongst the many and various and difficult circumstances of Our life We always had recourse with her; We always kept Our eyes affectionately turned towards her, and pouring into her bosom Our hopes and fears, Our joys and sorrows, We earnestly begged that she would deign to assist Us as a mother ever full of pity, and obtain for Us the precious grace of corresponding by an all-filial love.

When raised by the inscrutable designs of God's Providence to the Chair of the Blessed Apostle, Peter—that is to say, chosen to be the representative of Jesus Christ Himself, in His Church on earth—overpowered by the greatness of the burden, and distrustful of Our own strength, with more intense affection than ever, We sought the Divine aid through the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin. And it delights Our heart to confess that, as at all other times, so now more especially in the exercise of the Supreme Apostolic Office, never have We invoked the Blessed Virgin without receiving the grant of Our own petitions, or, at least, sweet consolation.

Therefore, this same hope urges Us now to beg more earnestly, through her intercession, for still greater favours for

THE WELFARE OF THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN FAMILY,

and for the greater glory of the Church. It is, then, just and opportune, Venerable Brethren, that, renewing Our exhortations through you, We should incite all our Children to observe the coming October, dedicated to our august Lady and Queen of the Holy Rosary, with redoubled fervour, equal to the demands of Our ever-increasing necessities.

The many and various methods of depravity by which the wickedness of the age treacherously endeavours to weaken and destroy in human souls the Christian Faith, and with it the observance of the Divine precepts by which that Faith lives and acts, are already too well known; the blast of ignorance, error, and corruption seems to be passing disastrously everywhere, making barren and desolate the field of the Lord. The thought of this is rendered still more painful by the fact that those whose sacred duty it is do not check and punish this audacious wickedness—nay, they even seem to encourage the evil by their indifference and patronage. Hence We have to deplore the existence of public schools from which the Holy Name of God, if not blasphemed, is wholly excluded. We have to deplore the shameless license of the Press publishing everything and raising every sort of cry offensive to Christ and His Church.

We can no less deplore that so many Catholics have fallen into a state of coldness and apathy, which, if not open apostasy, leans towards it, and is likely to terminate in it, since their lives are not in conformity with their faith. To him who considers this perversion and destruction of the most vital interests, it will not be a source of wonder that nations are groaning under

THE CHASTISING HAND OF GOD,

and that they are in a state of consternation through fear of still heavier calamities. To appease, then, the offended Majesty of God, and to apply a suitable remedy to such lamentable evils, there is certainly no better means than fervent and persevering prayer, combined, however, with the practices of a Christian life. Our desires in both respects can be fully realised through devotion to the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin. The wonderful effects of this devotion are clearly to be seen from its very origin, which is so well known, which forms so beautiful a page in history, and which has been related many times by Us. At the very time that the sect of the Albigenses, under a pretended zeal for faith and morals, was making dreadful havoc amongst the Faithful in many lands, the Church waged war against it in its most revolting forms with no other arms than those of the Holy Rosary, whose institution and preaching were entrusted by the Blessed Virgin to the patriarch, St. Dominick.

By this means the Church gained a glorious victory, and, as in that time of trial, so in after times in the same manner it ensured success and provided for the common safety.

Therefore, in the present state of things, which all good Christians deplore, so destructive to religion and so prejudicial to society, we must all, with one mind and one heart, pray, beseeching the holy Mother of God, through the same devotion of the Rosary, that we may also enjoy its powerful effects.

In fact, to turn to Mary is to turn to the Mother of Mercy, so graciously disposed towards us that in every need, particularly in those of our soul, she, without delay, and even anticipating our desires, comes to our aid and pours into our hearts unceasingly the treasures of that grace with which God from the beginning had filled her to the full that she might be worthy to become His Mother. And that is which more than all her many other special prerogatives places the Blessed Virgin so far above all men and angels, and brings her so near to Jesus Christ. It is a great privilege in any saint to have as much grace as suffices for the salvation of many; but if he had as much grace as would suffice for the salvation of all men, this would be the greatest of privileges, and this was realised in

JESUS CHRIST AND IN THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Whenever, then, we salute Mary with the Angelical Salutation, and repeating the same praises, weave them into a precious crown to lay at her feet, our homage is beyond all words acceptable to her; since by that salutation we are constantly recalling her sublime dignity and the redemption of the human race through the incarnation of the Son of God; as also how divinely and indissolubly united she is to her Divine Son in His joys and sorrows, in His humiliations and triumphs, and in the guidance and the sanctification of souls. But it pleased His Divine goodness to make Himself like us, to call Himself the Son of Man, and, therefore, our Brother, in order that His mercy might shine more fully upon us, "It behoved Him in all

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