

THE CASKET.

The Pope's Encyclical to the Clergy and Laity of the United States.

To our venerable brethren, the archbishops and bishops of the United States of North America, Leo XIII. Pope.

Venerable Brethren: Health and apostolic benediction. We have in spirit and in thought the wide expanse of ocean, and although we have at other times addressed you in writing, chiefly when we directed encyclical letters to the bishops of the Catholic world, yet have we now resolved to speak to you separately, trusting that we shall be, God willing, of some assistance to the Catholic cause amongst you. To this we apply ourselves with the utmost zeal and care, because we highly esteem and love exceedingly the young and vigorous American Nation, in which we plainly discern latent forces for the advancement alike of civilization and of Christianity.

Not long ago, when your whole nation, as was fitting, celebrated, with grateful recollection and every manifestation of joy, the completion of the fourth century since the discovery of America, we, too, commemorated, together with you, that most auspicious event, sharing in your rejoicings with equal good will. Nor were we on that occasion content with offering prayers at a distance for your welfare and greatness. It was our wish to be in some manner present with you in your festivities. Hence we cheerfully sent one who should represent our person.

Not without good reason did we take part in your celebration. For when America wasas yet but a newborn babe, uttering in its cradle its first feeble cries, the cause of her redemption, as we have elsewhere embraced Colombia, as we have elsewhere expressly shown, sought as the primary fruit of his voyages and labors (to open a pathway for the Christian faith into new lands and new seas. Keeping this thought constantly in view, his first solicitude, wherever he disembarked, was to plant upon your shore the sacred emblem of the cross. Wherefore, as the ark of Noah, surmounting the overflowing waters, bore the seed of Israel, together with the remnants of the human race, even thus did the bark launched by Columbus upon the ocean carry into regions beyond the seas as well the germ of mighty states as the principles of the Catholic religion.

This is not the place to give a detailed account of what then ensued. Very rapidly did the light of the Gospel shine upon the savage tribes discovered by the Ligurian. For it is sufficiently well known how many of the children of Francis as well as of Dominic and of Loyola were accustomed during the two following centuries to voyage thither for this purpose; how they cared for the colonies brought over from Europe, but primarily and chiefly how they converted the natives from their perdition to Christianity, scattering their labors in many instances with the testimony of their blood. The very names, newly given to so many of your towns and rivers and mountains and lakes, teach and clearly witness how deeply your beginnings were marked with the footsteps of the Catholic Church.

Nor, perchance, did the fact which we now recall take place without some design of Divine Providence. Precisely at the epoch when the American colonies, having with Catholic aid, achieved liberty and independence, coalesced into a constitutional republic, the ecclesiastical hierarchy was alike established amongst you; and at the very time when the popular suffrage placed the great Washington at the helm of the republic the first bishop was set by apostolic authority over the American Church. The well known friendship and familiar intercourse which subsisted between the two men seems to be an evidence that the United States ought to be conjoined in concord and unity with the Catholic Church. And not without cause, for without morality the state cannot endure—a truth which that illustrious citizen of yours whom we have just mentioned, with a keenness of insight worthy of his genius and statesmanship, perceived and proclaimed.

But the best and strongest support of morality is religion. She, by her very nature, guards and defends all the principles on which duties are founded, and setting before us the motives most powerful to influence us, commands us to live virtuously, forbids us to transgress. Now what is the church, other than a legitimate society, founded by the will and ordinance of Jesus Christ for the preservation of morality and the defence of religion? For this reason have we repeatedly endeavored, from the summit of the pontifical dignity, to recall to the church, while directly and immediately aiming at the salvation of souls and the benefit which is to be attained in heaven, is yet seen in the order of temporal things, the fountain of blessings so numerous and so great that they could not have been greater or more numerous had the original purpose of her institution been the pursuit of happiness during the life which is spent on earth.

L. D. C. is a Sure Cure for Dyspepsia.

That your republic is progressive and developing by giant strides is patent to all. So, for even as your cities in the course of one century have made a marvellous increase in wealth and power, so do we behold the church, from scant and slender beginnings, grown with rapidity to be great and exceedingly flourishing. Now, if, on the one hand, the increase of riches and the growth of your cities are justly attributed to the talents and active industry of the American people, on the other hand the prosperous condition of Catholicity must be ascribed, first, in deed, to the virtue, the ability and the prudence of the bishops and clergy, but in no slight measure also to the faith and the generosity of the Catholic laity. Thus, while the different classes exerted their best energies, were you enabled to erect unnumbered religious and useful institutions, sacred edifices, schools for the instruction of youth, colleges for the higher branches, homes for the poor, hospitals for the sick, convents and monasteries, for the relief of the indigent, spiritual interests, which are based upon the exercise of Christian virtues, many of which have been brought to our notice hereby we are animated with hope and filled with joy, namely, that the numbers of the secular and regular clergy are steadily augmenting; that pious societies and confraternities are held in esteem; that the Catholic parochial schools, the Sunday schools for imparting Christian doctrine, the summer schools, are in a flourishing condition; moreover, associations for mutual aid, for the relief of the indigent, for the promotion of temperate living, and all the many evidences of popular piety, the main factor, no doubt, in bringing things into this happy state were the ordinances and decrees of your synods, especially those convened in some recent times, were considered and confirmed by the authority of the Apostolic See. But, more over (a fact which gives pleasure to our knowledge), thanks are due to the equity of the laws which obtain in America and to the customs of the well-ordered republic. For the church among you, supported by the constitution and government of your nation, fettered by no hostile legislation, protected against violence by the common law and the impartiality of the tribunals, is free to live and act without hindrance. Yet, though all this is true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable state of the church; or that it would be universally lawful or expedient to State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced. The conditions, as may be seen enjoying a prosperous growth, by all means to be attributed to the fecundity with which God has endowed His church; in virtue of which, less men or circumstances interfere, she spontaneously expands and propagates her abundant fruits. If, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority.

For our part we have left nothing undone, so far as circumstances permitted, to preserve and more solidly establish among you the Catholic religion. With this intent we have, as you are well aware, first, the advancement of learning, second, a perfecting of methods in the management of church affairs. There already existed, except several distinguished universities. We, however, thought it advisable that there should be one founded by us with all suitable powers, in which Catholic professors might instruct those devoted to the pursuit of learning. The design was to begin with philosophy and theology, adding, as means would allow, the remaining sciences, those particularly which the present age has introduced or perfected. An education cannot be deemed complete which takes no notice of modern sciences. It is obvious that in the existing keen competition and widespread thirst for knowledge Catholics ought to be no followers but leaders. It is necessary, therefore, that they should cultivate every refinement of learning and zealously train their minds to the discovery of the truth and the investigation, so far as it is possible, of the entire domain of nature. This, in every age, has been the desire of the church; upon the enlargement of the boundaries of the sciences has she been wont to bestow all possible labor and energy.

By a letter, therefore, dated the 7th of March, in the year of our Lord 1889, directed to you, venerable brethren, we established at Washington, your capital, as esteemed by a majority of you a very proper seat for the higher studies, a university for the instruction of young men desirous of pursuing advanced courses. In brethren, in this matter to your venerable church, in consistency, we expressed the wish that it if should be regarded as the fixed law of the university to unite erudition and learning with soundness of faith, and to imbue its students not less with religion than with scientific culture.

When the council of Baltimore had concluded its labors the day still remained, so to speak, a proper and becoming crown upon the work. This, we perceived, could scarcely be done in a more fitting manner than through the establishment by the Apostolic See of an American Legation. Accordingly, as you are aware, we have done this. By this action, as we have elsewhere intimated, we have wished, first of all, to certify that, in our judgment and affection, America occupies the same place and rights as other states, be they

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ever so mighty and imperial. In addition to this we had in mind to draw more closely the bonds of duty and friendship which connect you as to many thousands of Catholics in the Apostolic See. In fact, the mass of the Catholics universal has salutary our action was destined to be. They saw, moreover, that it accorded with the usage and policy of the Apostolic See. For it had been from the earliest antiquity the custom of the Roman pontiffs, in the exercise of their divinely bestowed gift of primacy in the administration of the church of Christ, to send forth legates to Christian nations and peoples. And did this not by an adventurous Pontiff, upon whom Christ has conferred ordinary and immediate jurisdiction, as well over all and singular pastors and faithful, since he cannot personally visit the different regions and thus exercise a pastorate over the flock intrusted to him, find it necessary from time to time, in the discharge of the duty intrusted upon him, to dispatch legates into different parts of the world, according as the need arises, who, supplying his place, may correct errors, make the rough ways plain and administer to the people confined to their care increased means of salvation.

But how unjust headless would be the suspicion, should it anywhere arise, that the powers conferred on the legates are an obstacle to the authority of the bishops. Sacred to us, more than to any Holy Ghost has placed as bishops to rule the Church of God. That these rights should remain intact in every nation in every part of the globe, we both desire and ought to desire, more so since the dignity of the individual bishops is by nature so intertwined with the dignity of the Roman Pontiff, that any measure that benefits the honor is the honor of the universal church. My honor is the unimpaird vigor of my brethren. Then am I truly honored when to each one due honor is not denied. Therefore, since it is the office and function of an apostolic legate, with whatever powers he is vested, to execute the mandates and interpret the will of the Pontiff who sends him, far from his being of any detriment to the ordinary power of the bishops, he will rather bring an accession of stability and strength.

His authority will possess no slight weight for receiving in the individual a submissive spirit; in the clergy discipline and the reverence for the bishops; and in the bishops mutual charity and intimate union of souls. And since this union, so salutary and desirable, consists mainly in harmony of thought and action, he will not doubt bring it to pass that each one of you shall persevere in the diligent administration of the diocesan affairs; that each shall not pry into the counsels and conduct of another; finally, that with disagreements and mutual esteem maintained, you may all work together with combined energies to promote the glory of the American church and the general welfare. It is difficult to estimate the good results which will flow from this concord of the bishops. Our own people will receive edification, and the force of example will have effect on those without, who will be persuaded by that argument alone that the divine apostolate has descended by inheritance to the ranks of the Catholic episcopate.

Another consideration claims our earnest attention. All intelligent men are agreed, and we ourselves have, with pleasure, intimated it above, that America seems destined for greater things. Now, it is our wish that the Catholic church should not only share in, but help to bring about, this prospective greatness. We deem it right and proper that she should by availing herself of the opportunities daily presented to her, keep equal step with the republic in the march of improvement, at the same time striving to the utmost, by her virtue and her institutions, to aid in the rapid growth of the states. Now she will attain both these objects the more easily and abundantly in proportion to the degree in which the future shall find her constitution perfected. But what is the meaning of the legation of which we are speaking, or what is the ultimate aim except to bring about that the constitution of the church shall be strengthened, her discipline better fortified? Wherefore, we ardently desire that this trust should sink day by day more deeply into the minds of Catholics, namely, that they can in no better way safeguard their individual interests and the common good than by yielding a hearty submission and obedience to the Church. Your faithful people, however, are scarcely in need of exhortation on this point, for they are accustomed to adhere to the instructions of Catholicity with willing souls and a constancy worthy of all praise.

To one matter of the first importance, and fraught with the greatest blessings, it is a pleasure at this place to refer, on account of the holy firmness in principle and practice respecting it, which as a rule,

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rightly prevails among you. We mean the Christian dogma of the unity and indivisibility of marriage, which supplies the firmest bond of society, not merely to the family, but to society at large. Not a few of your citizens, even of those who dissent from us in other doctrines, terrified by the licentiousness of divorce, have approved in this regard the Catholic teaching and the Catholic custom. They are led to this judgment not less by love of country than by the wisdom of the doctrine. For difficult is it to imagine a more deadly pest to the community than the wish to declare dissoluble a bond which the law of God has made perpetual and inseparable.

Divorce is the fruitful cause of mutable marriage contracts; it diminishes mutual affection; it supplies a pernicious stimulus to unfaithfulness; it is injurious to the care and education of children; it gives (Concluded on 7th page.)

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