

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO THE THIRTIENITH.

TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—AFFAIRS OF GREAT MOMENT—GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS—QUESTIONS OF GENERAL CATHOLIC INTEREST OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

We give below the official and revised translation of a large portion of the Holy Father's latest Encyclical Letter to the prelates of the United States. We omit some of the lengthy paragraphs which deal with questions of exclusive interest to that country, and give in full those which most affect us in Canada:—

TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHERS THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA, LEO XIII. POPE.

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction:

We traverse in spirit and 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 ourself 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.

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For our part, we have left nothing undone, as far as circumstances permitted, to preserve and more solidly establish amongst you the Catholic religion. With this intent, we have, as you are well aware, turned our attention to two special objects: first, the advancement of learning; second, a perfecting of methods in the management of Church affairs.

THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATION.

But when the Council of Baltimore had concluded its labors, the duty still remained of putting, 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 due establishment by the Apostolic See of an American Legation. Accordingly, as you are well 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 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 and so many thousands of Catholics with the Apostolic See. For it has been, from earliest antiquity, the custom of the Roman Pontiffs in the exercise of the divinely-bestowed gift of the primacy in the administration of the Church of Christ to send forth legates to Christian nations and peoples. And they did this, not by an adventitious but an inherent right. For "the Roman Pontiff upon whom Christ has conferred ordinary and immediate jurisdiction, as well over all and singular the Churches, as over all and singular pastors and faithful, since he cannot personally visit the different regions and thus exercise the pastoral office over the flock intrusted to him, finds it necessary, from time to time, in the discharge of the ministry imposed on 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 confided to their care increased means of salvation."

But how unjust and baseless would be the suspicion, should it anywhere exist, that the powers conferred on the Legate are an obstacle to the authority of the Bishops! Sacred to us (more than to any other) are the rights of those "whom the 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, the more so since the dignity of the individual Bishop is by nature so interwoven with the dignity of the Roman Pontiff that any measure which benefits the one necessarily protects the other. "My honor is the honor of the Universal Church. My honor is the unimpaired 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 whatsoever powers he may be vested, to execute the mandates and interpret the will of the Pontiff who sends him; thus, 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 preserving in the multitude a submissive spirit; in the clergy discipline and due reverence for the Bishop, and in the Bishops mutual charity and an intimate union of souls. And since this union, so salutary and desirable, consists mainly in harmony of thought and action, he will, no doubt, bring it to pass that each one of you shall persevere in the diligent administration of his diocesan affairs; that one shall not impede another in matters of government; that one shall pry into the counsels and conduct of another; finally, that with disagreements eradicated 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 its effect on those without—who will be persuaded by this argument alone that the divine apostolate has passed 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 its ultimate aim, except to bring it about that the constitution of the Church shall be strengthened, her discipline better fortified? Wherefore, we ardently desire that this truth should sink day by day more deeply into the minds of Catholics; namely, that they can in no better way safeguard their own 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 institutions of Catholicity with willing souls and a constancy worthy of all praise.

THE CHRISTIAN DOGMA OF MARRIAGE.

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, rightly prevails amongst you; we mean the Christian dogma of the unity and indissolubility of marriage: which supplies the firmest bond of safety, 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, admire and approve in this regard the Catholic teaching and the Catholic customs. They are led to this judgment not less by love of country than by the wisdom of the doctrine. For difficult it is 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 occasion to the breaking up of domestic society; it

scatters the seeds of discord among families; it lessens and degrades the dignity of women, who incur the danger of being abandoned when they shall have subserved the lust of their husbands. And since nothing tends so effectually as the corruption of morals to ruin families and undermine the strength of kingdoms, it may easily be perceived that divorce is especially hostile to the prosperity of families and States."

THE DUTIES OF CITIZENS.

As regards civil affairs, experience has shown how important it is that the citizens should be upright and virtuous. In a free State, unless justice be generally cultivated, unless the people be repeatedly and diligently urged to observe the precepts and laws of the Gospel, liberty itself may be pernicious. Let those of the clergy, therefore, who are occupied with the instruction of the multitude, treat plainly this topic of the duties of citizens, so that all may understand and feel the necessity, in political life, of conscientiousness, self-restraint and integrity; for that cannot be lawful in public which is unlawful in private affairs. On this whole subject there are to be found, as you know, in the Encyclical Letters written by us from time to time in the course of our Pontificate, many things which Catholics should attend to and observe. In these writings and expositions we have treated of human liberty, of the chief Christian duties, of civil government, and of the Christian constitution of States, drawing our principles as well from the teaching of the Gospels as from reason. They, then, who wish to be good citizens and to discharge their duties faithfully may readily learn from our letters the ideal of an upright life. In like manner, let the priests be persistent in keeping before the minds of the people the enactments of the Third Council of Baltimore, particularly those which inculcate the virtue of temperance, the frequent use of the sacraments, and the observance of the just laws and institutions of the Republic.

CATHOLICS AND SOCIETIES.

Now, with regard to entering societies, extreme care should be taken not to be ensnared by error. And we wish to be understood as referring in a special manner to the working classes, who assuredly have the right to unite in associations for the promotion of their interests; a right acknowledged by the Church and unopposed by nature. But it is very important to take heed with whom they are to associate; else, whilst seeking aids for the improvement of their condition, they may be imperiling far weightier interests. The most effectual precaution against this peril is to determine with themselves at no time or in any matter to be parties to the violation of justice. Any society, therefore, which is ruled by, and servilely obeys, persons who are not steadfast for the right and friendly to religion, is capable of being extremely prejudicial to the interests, as well of individuals as of the community; beneficial it can not be. Let this conclusion, therefore, remain firm—to shun, not only those associations which have been openly condemned by the Church, but those also which in the opinion of intelligent men, and especially of the Bishops, are regarded as suspicious and dangerous.

Nay rather, unless forced by necessity to do otherwise, Catholics ought to prefer to associate with Catholics, a course which will be very conducive to the safeguarding of their faith. As presidents of societies thus formed among themselves, it would be well to appoint either priests or upright laymen of weight and character; guided by whose counsels, they should endeavor peacefully to adopt and carry into effect such measures as may seem most advantageous to their interests, keeping in view the rules laid down by us in our Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. Let them, however, never allow this to escape their memory; that whilst it is proper and desirable to assert and secure the rights of the many, yet this is not to be done by a violation of duty; and that these are very important duties; not to touch what belongs to another; to allow everyone to be free in the management of his own affairs; not to hinder anyone to dispose of his services when he please and where he please. The scenes of violence and riot which you witnessed last year in your own country sufficiently admonish you that America, too, is threatened with the audacity and ferocity of the enemies of public order. The state of the times, therefore, bids Cath-

olics to labor for the tranquility of the commonwealth, and for this purpose to obey the laws, abhor violence, and seek no more than equity or justice permits.

IMPORTANCE OF LITERARY WORK.

Towards these objects much may be contributed by those who have devoted themselves to writing, and in particular by those who are engaged on the daily press. We are aware that already there labor in this field many men of skill and experience, whose diligence demands words of praise rather than of encouragement. Nevertheless, since the thirst for reading and knowledge is so vehement and widespread amongst you, and since, according to circumstances, it can be productive either of good or evil, every effort should be made to increase the number of intelligent and well-disposed writers who take religion for their guide and virtue for their constant companion. And this seems all the more necessary in America, on account of the familiar intercourse and intimacy between Catholics and those who are estranged from the Catholic name, and a condition of things which certainly exacts from our people great circumspection and more than ordinary firmness. It is necessary to instruct, admonish, strengthen and urge them on to the pursuit of virtue and to the faithful observance, amid so many occasions of stumbling, of their duties towards the Church. It is, of course, the proper function of the clergy to devote their care and energies to this great work; but the age and the country require that journalists should be equally zealous in this same cause, and labor in it to the full extent of their powers. Let them, however, seriously reflect that their writings, if not positively prejudicial to religion, will surely be of slight service to it unless in concord of minds they will seek the same end. They who desire to be of real service to the Church, and with their pens heartily to defend the Catholic cause, should carry on the conflict with perfect unanimity and, as it were, with serried ranks, for they rather inflict than repel war if they waste their strength by discord. In like manner their work, instead of being profitable and fruitful, becomes injurious and disastrous whenever they presume to call before their tribunal the decisions and acts of Bishops, and casting off due reverence, cavil and find fault; not perceiving how great a disturbance of order, how many evils are thereby produced. Let them, then, be mindful of their duty, and not overstep the proper limits of moderation. The Bishops, placed in the lofty position of authority, are to be obeyed, and suitable honor befitting the magnitude and sanctity of their office should be paid them. Now, this reverence, "which it is lawful to no one to neglect, should of necessity be eminently conspicuous and exemplary in Catholic journalists. For journals, naturally circulating far and wide, come daily into the hands of everybody, and exert no small influence upon the opinions and morals of the multitude."

We have ourself, on frequent occasions, laid down many rules respecting the duties of a good writer; many of which were unanimously inculcated as well by the Third Council of Baltimore as by the Archbishops in their meeting at Chicago, in the year 1893. Let Catholic writers, therefore, bear impressed on their minds our teachings on this point as well as yours; and let them resolve that their entire method of writing shall be thereby guided if they indeed desire, as they ought to desire, to discharge their duty well.

SOLICITUDE FOR NON-CATHOLICS.

Our thoughts now turn to those who dissent from us in matters of Christian faith; and who shall deny that, with not a few of them, dissent is a matter rather of inheritance than of will? How solicitous we are of their salvation; with what ardor of soul we wish that they should be at length restored to the embrace of the Church, the common mother of all, our Apostolic Epistle, *Praeclara*, has in very recent times declared. Nor are we destitute of all hope; for He is present and hath a care Whom all things obey and Who laid down His life that He might "gather in one the children of God who were dispersed." (John, xi., 52.) Surely we ought not to desert them nor leave them to their fancies; but with mildness and charity draw them to us, using every means of persuasion to induce them to examine closely every part of the Catholic doctrine, and to free themselves from preconceived notions. In this matter, if the first place belongs to