

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE PIUS IX., ORDERING PRAYERS AND ANNOUNCING A
NEW JUBILEE.

To all the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic world.

VENERABLE BROTHERS—HEALTH AND APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION:—

It is for Us no slight subject of sorrow to behold what a sad and lamentable spectacle is presented by our holy religion and civil society in these calamitous times. None among you, Venerable Brothers, is ignorant of the perfidious artifices, the monstrous doctrines, the conspiracies of every kind which the enemies of God and of the human race are setting at work to pervert all minds, to corrupt morals, to cause, if it were possible, religion to disappear from the face of the earth, to shatter all the bonds of civil society, and to destroy it to its very foundations. Hence the deplorable darkness which blinds so many minds, the vehement war which is waged against the whole Catholic religion and this Apostolic chair; the implacable hatred which persecutes virtue and honesty; hence the most shameful vices which usurp the name of virtue; the unbridled license of thinking, corrupting, doing everything, and daring everything; the absolute impatience of all restraint, all power, and all authority; the derision and contempt for the most sacred things, for the holiest laws, for the most excellent institutions; hence, above all, the deplorable corruption of thoughtless youth, the poisonous inundation of bad books, pamphlets, and journals profusely circulated, and propagating everywhere the principles of evil; hence the deadly venom of indifference and incredulity, the seditious movements, the sacrilegious conspiracies, the mockery and outrage of all laws, human and divine. You are not ignorant, either, Venerable Brethren, what anxiety, what uncertainty, what painful hesitation, what terror, fills and agitates all minds, particularly the minds of good men, who believe with reason that public and private interests have reason to fear every misfortune when men, wandering miserably from the laws of truth, justice, and religion, in order to give themselves up to the detestable allurements of unbridled passions, meditate every species of crime.

In the midst of so many dangers who does not see that all our hopes ought to rest solely in God, our salvation; that to Him we ought continually to raise our fervent prayers, in order that His propitious bounty may shed over all nations the riches of His mercy, that He may illuminate every mind with the Heavenly light of His grace, that He may bring back into the path of justice those who are wandering, that He may vouchsafe to turn towards Him the rebellious wills of His enemies, to infuse into every heart the love and fear of His holy name, and inspire them to think always, and to do always, what is right, what is true, what is pure, what is holy; and since God is full of sweetness, mildness, and mercy—since He is bounteous towards those who call upon Him—since He regards the prayers of the humble, and loves especially to manifest His power by clemency and forgiveness, let us approach, Venerable Brethren, the Throne of Grace with confidence, in order to obtain mercy and find assistance in the time of need.

For he who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it is opened. Let us, in the first place, render immortal thanks-giving to the God of goodness; in joy let our lips praise His holy name, since in many nations of the Catholic world He deigns to work the wonders of His mercy.

Let us come, then, with one mind animated with the sincerity of the same Faith—with the firmness of the same Hope—with the ardour of the same Charity—let us not cease a single moment to pray and supplicate God humbly and earnestly, that He may rescue His holy Church from every calamity; that every day it may increase, dilate, and be exalted amongst all people in every region of the earth; that thus it may purify the world from error, conduct men with tenderness and generosity to the knowledge of truth, and to the way of salvation; that God being propitiated, may turn away the scourges of His anger, which we have deserved for our sins—may assuage this stormy ocean and restore tranquillity—may give to all that peace so much desired—may save His people, and, blessing His inheritance, may direct and conduct us to our Heavenly country.

And that God may be made more accessible, and give ear to our prayers, and hear our petitions, let us raise our hearts and hands to His most holy Mother, the Immaculate Virgin Mary. We could not find protection more powerful or more effectual with God. She is to us the most tender of mothers, our firmest reliance, and the very spring of our hopes, since she asks nothing which she does not obtain, and her prayer is ever refused. Let us also implore, in the first place, the intercession of the Prince of Apostles to whom Jesus Christ himself has given the keys of the kingdom of Heaven—whom He has established as the foundation-stone of His Church, against which the gates of Hell will never be able to prevail. Let us then pray to Paul, the companion of his Apostleship. Let us pray to the patron of each city and country, and to all the blessed, that our Most Merciful Lord may shed upon us in abundance and munificence the gifts of His bounty.

Moreover, Venerable Brethren, while we ordain here public prayers in our Holy City, we invite you by these letters that you unite yourselves with the people committed to your care with us in a community of petitions. We invoke with all our zeal your fervent devotion and your piety, in order that in your respective dioceses you may prescribe also public prayers with the object of imploring the Divine mercy.

And in order that the Faithful may enter with greater ardour and earnestness on the prayers which you shall appoint, We have resolved to open anew the celestial treasures of the Church under the form of a Jubilee, as will be clearly indicated to you by other letters which accompany these.

We entertain this firm hope, Venerable Brothers, that there are angels of peace, who, holding in their hands censers of gold, will offer on the golden altar Our humble prayers, and those of the whole Church, in order that the Lord himself, receiving them favourably, and hearing Our petitions, yours and those of all the Faithful, will dissipate all the darkness of error, avert the menacing tempest of so many misfortunes, stretch out a succouring hand to Christian and civil society, and grant that all may have the same Faith in their hearts, the same piety in their works, the same love for religion, virtue, truth, and justice, the same zeal for peace, the same attachment to the bonds of charity, and that thus throughout the entire world the reign of His only Son our Lord Jesus Christ may be every day more and more augmented, strengthened, and exalted.

Finally, as an anticipatory pledge of every celestial gift, and as a testimony of Our ardent love for you, receive Our Apostolic Benediction, which, from the bottom of Our heart, we give you with love to you, Venerable Brethren, to all the Clergy, and to all the Faithful confided to your care.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the twenty-first day of November, 1851, and of Our Pontificate the sixth.

Pius IX., Pope.

No one of you, My Dearly Beloved Brethren, shall decline this sacred invitation. No one shall deprive himself or the Christian community of the Benefit of the Present Jubilee.

But what are the means and regulations to be resorted to to gain the Jubilee? The Holy Father himself in the other Encyclical Letter alluded to and bearing the same date, Vouchsafes to come to particulars and to afford the proper direction with respect to the space of time granted for the Jubilee, to the Reception of Sacraments, to the Visits to Churches, to Penitential and Charitable Works. Therefrom We draw the following conditions to which you shall conform, in order to enjoy the Benefit of this Holy Season of Grace.

1st. The Space of time granted for the present Jubilee, is one full Month. Therefore, in our Cathedral the Jubilee will be opened the 12th of March and closed the 11th of April, Easter Sunday. In every other Parish or Mission or Chapel of the Diocese, it is left to the Respective Missionaries to appoint the time most suitable for them and for the Several sections of their flocks.

2nd. Every one shall confess all his sins with the most sincere detestation of them and with great humility, and after having been reconciled by the Sacramental absolution, he shall receive reverently the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist: Where it is to be observed that the Easter Communion does not satisfy for the Jubilee Communion.