

These have I consecrated and these have I called my Christs, because I have appointed them to give me to you. An angel has not this dignity which I have given to men that I have chosen for my ministers. *To them I have given the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*"

"That key is that of the Blood of my unique Son ; it has opened for you the door of eternal life, for a long time closed by the sin of Adam.

"And thus, the Pope, my Christ upon earth, holds the keys of the Blood, as I have shown thee in figure, when I wished to make thee understand what respect seculars should have for my ministers, good or bad, and how much those offend me who do not respect them. Thou knowest that I have shown thee the mystical body of my Holy Church under the figure of a chalice filled with the Blood of my unique Son, and it is by this Blood that all the Sacraments have their virtue and contain life.

"At the door of this chalice is my Christ upon earth ; he is commissioned to distribute the Blood and to appoint those who aid his ministry in all the domain of Christianity. To him alone belongs the unction which gives power, and no one can give that unction but himself. It is from him that all the clergy emanate, and he gives to each one his functions in the distribution of the Precious Blood. The good and the bad have the same dignity. And because their faults cannot weaken the virtue of the Sacraments, they ought not to diminish that respect which is their due, not for themselves, but for the treasure of the Precious Blood of which they are the distributors. If a man badly-clothed and filthy were to bring you a great treasure which would give you life, for love of the treasure and of the prince sending it to you, you would not detest the bearer, although he were badly-clothed and filthy. Without doubt, his exterior would displease you, but on account of the Master, you would strive to cleanse and clothe him.

"Charity dictates that you act thus, and I desire that you treat in the same way the least exemplary of my ministers, whose hands are soiled and whose vestments are torn by their imperfection of charity, but who bring to you great treasures, that is to say the Sacraments of the Holy Church, by which you receive the life of grace.