

Pastoral Letter

of Rt. Rev. J. M. Emdar

CHRISTIAN JUSTICE AND ITS OBLIGATIONS.

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To the clergy, secular and regular, religious communities and all the faithful of our diocese, health, peace and benediction in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear Beloved Brethren.—The first year of the new century is drawing to a close. Thanks to the extraordinary favors granted to the entire world by our Holy Father, the Pope, extending to all the churches the benefits of the jubilee, this first year has been marked in our regard by the most signal and the most consoling manifestations of piety. In all our parishes, eagerly responsive to the zeal of their pastors, the faithful have hastened to fulfil, on the appointed days, the conditions of a jubilee which would at once purify their consciences, sanctify their souls and be the starting point of a purer life, of a more rigorous and more faithful observance of the divine commandments.

In order to confirm the good dispositions you have given evidence of during the jubilee year, we take advantage of the occasion offered us by its close and by the coming in of the new year, to converse with you upon one of the most important obligations of the Christian life, that of justice.

It is in God Himself, dearly beloved brethren, that we must contemplate in the entire breadth of its meaning. It is difficult to discriminate between justice and sanctity, which admits neither imperfection nor limit. It is by His justice that God governs all things. It is because of this attribute of justice that God's judgments are most inexorably equitable; it is because of this attribute that He rewards and punishes. His justice has obtained for us the Incarnation, God made Man, in order to offer to God a complete expiation for the sins of men.

Justice in God, with this quadruple character of absolute sanctity, of equitable rule, of unerring adjudicator and of retribution commensurate with merit, becomes, then, the model of justice in man, in the Christian, who, created in the likeness of God and called to sanctity, should let his soul become irradiated with the divine perfection, which he should reflect in all his conduct.

vantage the effects to the ownership of which he may acquire a legal title.

As to the faculties of the soul and the advantages of the body, evidently, man can have no other domination over them than that of use; he should preserve, develop and perfect his faculties and his powers, and tend by means of them to his last end, but he may not regard them as his; he may not acquire, possess and dispose of them, as he may of exterior goods.

In fact, as to the latter, man is truly master when he possesses them legitimately; for, the right of ownership has not been devolved in a general manner, upon humanity, as a whole, but upon each man in particular, and upon each group of men legally constituted a corporate body and forming then, a distinct collective personality.

Therefore, the right of ownership has its foundation in nature herself, who makes each man as such, free in his movements and independent of all, except of God. It has been solemnly proclaimed by God, who has made it the object of one of His commandments. It has always been recognized and protected by civilized nations; Jesus Christ reaffirmed it; our Saviour's teachings upon it; our Apostles, and the Church, fulfilling throughout the ages her mission of protector especially to make this claim of ownership acknowledged by and rendered to all.

Through her, slavery has disappeared from the midst of Christian peoples, and the liberty of the full possession and the free disposal of property, legally acquired, has been rendered to everybody.

The right of ownership is, then, sacred, inviolable; it is the basis of all social organization and, because it comes from God, it should be protected by a divine virtue; this virtue is justice.

It is, in fact, justice, the faithful interpreter of the divine will, who says: "Thou shalt not steal." Exod. xx, 15. That is to say, you shall not take, nor keep, nor injure unjustly what belongs to another, and "You shall render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar."

For every man, the right of ownership must be acquired by a legitimate title; these titles are numerous. The first is that of occupation, effected by a person before any other, upon an object belonging to no one and, consequently, without proprietor. This title of first occupant rarely occurs in the actual state of society.

Another mission of the working man is to aid society in the trade that he follows; he labors for others; he engages himself in justice to give his time, his attention, his knowledge and all the skill that he possesses for the benefit of the person who employs him. He must furnish, besides, according to the terms of his contract, the materials agreed upon without, in any way, diminishing; and, above all, never taking for his own, things which belong to his employer or to his customers. These are the duties of his state. In return, the workman has a clear, inalienable right to liberty, to respect and, still more, to a just salary, equivalent to the amount of labor accomplished and capable of procuring for him an honest living, suitable to his condition.

The bread of the needy is the life of the poor; he that defrauded them thereof is a man of blood." Eccl. xxiv, 25. If the wages of a workman are withheld from him, he and his are deprived of the food they need; is not this, in a way, to be condemned to death?

Accordingly, the pious Tobias gave to his son the following counsel: "If any man has done any work for thee, immediately pay him his hire, and let not the wages of thy hired servant stay with thee at all." Tobias, iv, 15.

This is, in fact, what St. Paul says: "Every workman is worthy of his hire." St. Luke, x, 7. And the Council of Trent says: "They are pillars of the goods of others who pay not their workmen or their servants the price due to make it evident that the laws of justice should strictly preside over the intercourse of the working class among themselves with their employers, and generally speaking, with all to whom their labor is due.

At the same time is made manifest the obligation of equitable and just conduct towards workmen and the necessity of granting them in full measure, what they gain so legitimately.

No man, dear brethren, is sufficient to himself. A nation cannot any more than an individual procure for itself all necessities without help from without. Hence, commercial relations among people, as well as among citizens.

Commerce, under one form or another, is practised by all men. Who is there who has, not, every day, something to buy, to sell, or to exchange?

occasionally in international relations by material progress in every direction have brought face to face all the countries of the world in a peaceful but extremely intense contest, each trying by industry and commerce to surpass others. Industry and commerce have become powerful factors of national prosperity, and are at the base of the great patriotic questions. Now, it is with a nation as with an individual; upon its reputation for honesty and justice in its natural enterprises or in its commercial transactions will depend its ultimate success, and this common good name constitutes a public patrimony for the acquisition and the preservation of which everyone should do his part by a personal probity beyond reproach.

"Justice exalteth nations," because God protecteth and blesseth them; Justice for a people, as a whole, means the practice of this virtue by all its citizens." Prov., xiv, 34.

Individual integrity is particularly called for in those local co-operative societies based upon mutual confidence where each puts in his share of the common stock of agricultural products and partakes of the profits in proportion to his contribution.

It is evident that in those co-operative enterprises whose object is the production of certain commodities for export, it is necessary, cost what it may, for the peace of one's conscience and to preserve for his own esteem, respect and patronage of foreign countries, that everyone concerned should be proof against all dishonesty, guided at every step by justice, and not subject to fear the visits of a civil officer, more or less strict.

Men belonging to the so-called liberal professions, and more particularly lawyers, on account of their instruction, their standing and the mandatory power with which they are clothed, are in a position to exercise over their fellow-citizens, the most beneficial influence.

After the vocation of the priesthood it seems to us that there is none more beautiful than that of the lawyer, who, with a right conscience, a knowledge scrupulously kept up, frankness, always gives heed to the minutest circumstances of each case more anxious about the rectitude of his conduct than its legality. Such a man, far from turning to his own profit, the spirit of vengeance or dispute, endeavors to conciliate minds, to settle peacefully unimportant quarrels, to avoid vexatious suits; for such a man, commendation of the Apostle, Prov., xxviii, 24. In inevitable and justifiable lawsuits he shuns all occasions of unfairness, he rejects all false or doubtful testimony and spares all needless expense.

These men are the benefactors of their fellow-citizens. Acting in this spirit, they, on their own part, are faithful to the laws of justice, and, by their pure and elevated magistracy, secure their observance by all around them. They form a direct contrast with those who are the ambitious lawyers to whom St. Augustine addresses this bitter yet well-merited reproach. "Give back what you have received, because you have spoken against the truth when you have pleaded to defend justice when you have trampled under foot the right and caused the lie to triumph."

Holding the highest rank in society are men possessing the esteem and confidence of the citizens and for that reason charged by them to administer in their name and for the common good all matters affecting the well-being, material or moral of the constituents by whom they have been chosen. Thus, assuming the heaviest responsibilities, the gravest obligations, the duties they have to fulfil are essentially based upon justice. A man thus placed should act towards his constituents as the head of a family, watching over their interests, using his energy for them, and when the public good conflicts with his private advantage, he should put the latter in the background to give his preference to the former.

justice and their daily application. The father is bound in conscience to furnish to each one the necessities of life, and, especially to provide, in as far as he can, for the full development of his children. For this purpose he must scrupulously keep for his family the total fruit of his labor, withdrawing none to be lost, in vain amusements, and still more, must he refrain from using any of it for the gratification of his disorderly passions. The wife is, on her part, obliged to manage her household affairs with order and economy thus rendering possible the judicious application of the salary or earnings of her husband, and so realizing in herself the portrait of the valiant woman delineated by the Holy Spirit Himself.

Having thus constantly before their eyes this union of their parents in labor and economy, children will be formed from their earliest years to reverence their father for his hard labor. Putting to profit, while young, the advantages obtained for them by the self-imposed sacrifices of their father and mother, when the proper time arrives they will add their labor to the common fund and never permit themselves to abstract anything from their parents for their father, or from his mother; and saith, "There is no sin," is the partner of a murderer." Prov., xxviii, 24.

Parents should show themselves uncompromising in regard to their children when inculcating the notions of justice and exacting of them the practice of this virtue and a horror of the least theft, after the example of Tobias, who, before tasting of the milk which his wife had received, said: "Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen, restore ye it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft." Tobias, II, 21.

A first theft is the mark of a bad inclination which must be corrected at whatever cost if the parents would avoid the most terrible humiliations in the future.

It often happens that aged parents, after having worked hard and weakened by age and exhausted by fatigue confiding in the affectionate gratitude of their children give themselves to them; that is to say that after certain legal formalities they give to them their property abandoning themselves to their mercy and expecting to receive in return for so great liberality the care and attention necessary to their old age. How great the obligations flowing from such an act, and from particular situation in which it places both parents and children.

A son who has thus received all his father's goods on the condition of keeping, feeding, and maintaining his aged parents if he has not an upright conscience and an affectionate heart is exposed to fall short of the most common claims of justice as well as of the most ordinary obligations of filial love.

Those, also, expose themselves to sin against justice in regard to their families who contract the unfortunate habit of playing for money and who fear not to risk and to lose thereby considerable sums, which are thus diverted from their legitimate and honest use.

Experience teaches us but too well how disastrous the passion for play is, for those who allow themselves to be seduced by it. How many families have in a single day, been thrown into discomfit and even misery because the father has squandered a part of his fortune at cards. Cards, intemperance, worthless lawsuits are three, unfortunately, too frequent sources of injustice and of domestic affliction which it is our duty to point out.

Under the ordinary circumstances of life it is almost impossible not to contract debts. Moreover, debts may be legitimate when they are incurred in the daily course of commerce, and when they are contracted on reasonable credit proportioned to one's resources, and with not only the intention of paying, but the well-founded assurance of being able to fulfil the obligation with exactitude. From the moment debts become due, they represent the property of others which may not be retained without injustice.

It is necessary then to provide for the full payment of a debt at the date of its maturity. To refuse to pay a legitimate debt would be to violate the right of property. In order not to hold others' goods unjustly, one must be able to impose sacrifices upon himself, to deny himself, what is superfluous, to limit his expenditure, to practise strict economy, and, more than ever, proportion his living expenses and those of his family to the revenue that he can dispose of, after making due allowance for the obligations he has to meet.

The conscientious debtor is not one of those persons of whom Holy Scripture speaks, "Who, till they receive, kiss the hands of the lender and, in promises, humble their voice, but, when they should repay, they will ask time, and will return tedious and murmuring words, and will complain of the time, and, if he be able to pay, he will stand off, he will scarcely pay one-half, and will count it as if he had found it." Eccl., xxix.

Much less are honest creditors of the class of those who profit by the disappearance of a document, a mistake in the date, a defect of form, or of the purely legal prescription of a promissory note refusing upon such pretexts to settle an unquestionable debt, which, in spite of all legal protections, will weigh upon the conscience till judgment day.

We do not speak here of debts in the ordinary sense of the word, alone, but we refer as well to the compulsory contributions levied by the state, by society and by the Church.

One is obliged in conscience to pay taxes and duties as well as tithes and other charges imposed by religious authorities for the support of worship and the maintenance of the

ministers of the Lord, and, if in such matters a person may not be brought before the civil tribunals, this fact should only be a stronger motive to incline him to obey his conscience and give whatever is due. We may decide man, but we cannot decide God. "For man seeth these things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart." Kings, xvi, 7. "Thou art just, O Lord, and all thy judgments are just." Tobias, iii, 21.

For, dearly beloved brethren, there is this difference between justice and the other Christian virtues; as for the latter, the person who has sinned against them has no right to regret it and to accuse himself of his fault; to receive pardon, while, in the case of the former virtue, he who sins against it can only be pardoned when all the wrong committed against the neighbor, is fully repaired by restitution. The natural law itself imposes this obligation, insisted upon by all laws, human and divine, an obligation from which God, the guardian of justice, Himself, eternal justice, could not free a conscience. "And if that wicked man restore the pledge and render what he had robbed, and walk in the commandments of life, and do no unjust thing; he shall surely live and shall not die." Ez, xxxiii, 15. "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." St. Matt., xxii. "Neither thieves, nor covetous... shall possess the Kingdom of God." I Cor., vi, 10.

Even in this world, and this is an axiom confirmed by experience, "Ill-gotten goods bring no profit." He who has been guilty of an injustice, either in taking or in retaining what belongs to another, or in causing damage to his property, is then bound to make such compensation as shall completely indemnify for that he has done wrong, in which case he must obtain from his creditor, or from his victim, the pardon of his offence.

St. Augustine says that, in sins against justice, repentance without restitution is only a semblance of repentance which cannot give eternal life. "If I shall say to the wicked: Thou shalt surely die, and he do penance for his sin, and shall surely live, and shall not die. None surely lives, which he committed, shall be imputed to him." Ezechiel, xxxiii, 14, 15, 16.

Furthermore—and it is important to note the fact—this obligation bears down heavily upon all those who have, in any way, direct or indirect been abettors, accomplices or accessories of the injustice; he, for instance, who has helped, or who, unjustly obtained by another, he by whose order or command an injustice has been perpetrated, he whose duty it was, by office, to prevent the act, and who, nevertheless, failed to do so—each in proportion to his share in the guilty deed, or to the unlawful advantage he has reaped from it, is obliged in conscience, before God, to make restitution, and this independently of the action of human laws. Restitution alone, whole, entire, complete—and made in good faith, can right a wrong which has been committed.

But it often happens that the person to whom restitution should be made cannot be located, and is, therefore, out of reach. Although restitution to the person injured, for this or other similar reason be impossible yet, the obligation remains and must be discharged by almsgiving. In cases of that sort they may be substituted for the party aggrieved, for such is God's will, to make for ourselves friends of the mamon of iniquity. Luke, xvi, 9, which is in not yours, and which you cannot keep if you would, save your soul.

Although, in this letter, we have been able to give but the merest outline of the vast subject of Christian justice, yet, the little that we have said should be sufficient to recall to your minds its principal obligations. It belongs to you now to descend to the minutest details of your life and question your conscience demanding its testimony—which it will not fail to give you—in regard to the manner in which you have, up to the present moment, fulfilled the duties imposed upon you by God Himself.

The Christmas season brings us to the Crrib of the Infant Jesus in whom we adore our model, preeminently, the Just One, He Who came upon earth to establish there the reign of justice and through justice, that of peace with God, with one's neighbor and with self. "Justice and peace have kissed." Psalms, lxxviii, 11.

In closing, dearly beloved brethren, with all the fervor of our soul, we call down the most abundant blessings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercession of His divine Mother, upon you all, upon all the families of this diocese, upon all its parishes and their devoted pastors.

This present Pastoral Letter shall be read and published the first Sunday after its reception, at the prône of all parochial churches and chapels and in chapter, and in all the religious communities.

Given in Valleyfield, at our episcopal residence under our signature and seal, the counter-signature of our Secretary, December Twenty-fifth, 1901. Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH-MEDARD, Bishop of Valleyfield.

By order of His Lordship, Louis Mousleau, Priest, Secretary.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1, 1902. AN HISTORIC ROMANCE OF THE Times of Queen Elizabeth. CHAP. It is the custom when they are some melodious mence with an include, to dispose audience, whether trumpet or drum tler strains of the leading air, with runs and va anon through the tors and preacher words to introduce even the hardhe does the same. tion to deviat flex examples, th fix a few suitabl marks to the sor, tory which I sha pages, in obedie my most gracious perial Highness enia, the consor er. And the task to the best of my to the canons of may apply to me. R: Rusticus es, are country-bred, Full well do I on which the An on me to unde, was one day last Mary, my dear w or of accompany Highness, as was Casterly at Terve the Capu pel she erecte, pel she erecte Court was move boring town of B hermitage in the On the day in al pilgrimage he until a late hour because about no with thunder and over Terveneu, say nothing was ning, nor were th just come into e the hall, although stony fell, and f sky led one to f might be done, the parish churc by the sexton, a our St. Hubert's amid the roll of the voice of a lit prayer. Thus we the power the Ch the spirit of evil, says: fulgura evin Towards evening drive away th the setting sun a and the varied r rainbow appeared heaven. The Arc well read in the mind the lines: Irim de coelo mi Only this time gan goddess Jun token of peace earth, but the Heaven, invoked h hour of danger. Quae picturato amictu Ingentem fugc bus arcum. Which lights up the many-colored And spreads her cken in the clou In a little whi oriel window of the bow which heavens as a pled Noe, when my g marked that the over towards Lo minutes the rain said. Then we customed visit to ours in the Cha Fathers; it is o thanks for the p experienced." Si her cloak, which shape to those v guines, and we th stairs, followed vants. In addition, the capta Robiano, who had come to the suite of the Prin and prudent man, men of the guard as there were a about in the we our way led us. After a short p of St. Hubert, at de, the Archduch cite the Rosary, while we and th sswered the resp along the path b large pond, lead wood. The folio tent suffered from here and there a tall leaves lay some drops we showered down c shook the overh lady paid no hes tudy to say her in the copse on e birds trilled the joyously as if no ever drawn in payment of a life insurance risk.