

Your pastors, dearly beloved Brethren, whose traditions are to watch over the material welfare, as well as the moral and spiritual health of their flocks, believe that they are simply fulfilling a duty by soliciting from each one of you a contributor to this eminently national work.

The proceeds will be divided into two parts. One half will be handed over to the Manager of the Patriotic Fund for the purposes for which it is, or may be equally destined. The other half will be distributed in each diocese to those other families, which on account of enforced idleness or from other causes shall be reduced to poverty, especially during the hardships of winter. Not one of you, dearly beloved Brethren, but understands the deep sentiments of Christian charity inspiring this measure taken by your Bishops. Not one of you, We are convinced, will refuse to contribute gladly and abundantly to the decrease of the general distress. With this first duty accomplished, our task will not yet end. Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, on his accession to the Pontifical throne, sent out to the whole world a stirring call for peace. This peace, we, the faithful children of the Catholic Church, must, with all our strength, aid our common Father to obtain from the divine mercy. Like all others, we should, out of our charity, try to prevent and cure the evils of war, but more than others, we must, by our prayers, appease the anger of God, Who often makes conflicts amongst nations the instrument of His just vengeance. To discharge this obligation, dearly beloved Brethren, you shall unite your supplications to those of your Bishops and priests. In your families, you shall be more than ever faithful to recite night prayers together, and to offer them for the intentions of the unhappy nations involved in this war. Each one will deem it a duty to receive Holy Communion as often as possible for the soldiers who are fighting in Europe. No praise, however can reach the heart of God like that which proceeds from the mouths of children (1). Heads of families, teachers in our schools, colleges and convents shall therefore

(1) Ps., VIII, 3 ; MATH., XXI, 16: