

In your Episcopal solicitude assiduously warn all ecclesiastics, and exhort them to consider seriously the ministry which they have received from God, as that they exactly fulfil its obligations, that they may have at heart supremely the glories of God's house, that they give themselves up unceasingly to prayer, and the recitation of the Canonical hours conformably to the precept of the Church, with a view to obtain Divine assistance in the accomplishment of their important duties of appeasing God and rendering him propitious to the Christian people.

As you are not ignorant, Venerable Brothers, that the education of clerics is the only means of procuring good ministers for the Church, and that it exercises great influence throughout the whole course of life, continue to use all your efforts that young clerics may be formed, even from their tender years, to piety and good virtue, to a knowledge of letters, to the study of the sciences, and, above all, of sacred science. Having nothing so much at heart as to establish seminaries for clerics according to the precepts of the Fathers of Trent (25), where they do not exist, to increase and enlarge, if need be, those that are, to give them excellent superiors and masters, and to watch over them incessantly till young clerics be educated in the fear of the Lord, in the love of ecclesiastical discipline, may be therein formed to the knowledge of the sacred sciences, according to the Catholic doctrine, and without any fear of error, taught the traditions of the Church, and the writings of the Holy Fathers, instructed in ceremonies and sacred rites, you may add to them kind, skilful, and courageous workmen, who, animated with the ecclesiastical spirit, and formed by fitting studies, may, in time, cultivate the field of the Lord, and diligently fight his battles.

Moreover, understanding as you do that nothing tends more to support and preserve the dignity and holiness of the priesthood than the pious institution of spiritual exercise, encourage with all your influence this salutary work; cease not to exhort all those who have been called to the heritage of the Lord to withdraw themselves into some place proper for these exercises, so that being freed from the distraction of external affairs, and exclusively devoted to meditation on internal and divine truths, they may purify themselves from the stains, contracted amid the dust of the world steep themselves in the ecclesiastical spirit, lay aside the old man and his works, and clothe themselves with the new man, created in holiness and justice. If we have spoken at length on the subject of the education and discipline of the clergy, regret it not, for you know that there is a multitude of men, who, disgusted with the variety, inconstancy, and multiplicity, of errors, feel the necessity of embracing our holy religion, and, with the blessing of God, they will decide the more easily on embracing the precepts and practices of this religion when they see that its clergy are distinguished from other men by the piety and purity of their life, the repute of their wisdom, and the example set by them of all the virtues.

Finally, most dear Brethren, we have the consoling conviction that, kindled as you are with an ardent charity towards God and man, inflamed with great love of the Church, enriched with all but angelic virtues, gifted with episcopal courage and prudence, all animated with one holy desire, walking in the footsteps of, and imitating, as becomes Bishops, Him whose ambassadors you are, Jesus Christ, the model of all pastors, become, through your union, the form and rule of the flock, enlightening with the rays of your holiness the clergy and the faithful, having bowels of mercy, compassionating the lot of those who wander into the darkness of ignorance and error, we have, we say, the consoling conviction that you are disposed, after the example of the Shepherd in the Gospel, to go eagerly in search of the sheep which is lost, to bear it with fatherly tenderness upon your shoulders, to bring it back to the flock; and that you will spare neither care nor counsel, nor labour to fulfil religiously the duties of the pastoral charge, to put in safety from the rage, the attacks, and ambuscades of ravishing wolves the sheep that were brought with the blood of Jesus Christ, confided to your care, and who, are all very dear to us; to turn them from the poisons of error, to lead them into fat pastures, and bring them by your care, your exertions, and example to the gates of eternal Salvation.

Advance with all your power, Venerable Brothers, the glory of God and of the Church, and by your activity, zeal, vigilance, and harmony, endeavour that all errors being dissipated and vices rooted out, faith, religion, piety, and virtue, may increase from day to day in all places, and that a full and faithful renouncing of the works of darkness, conduct themselves in a manner worthy of children of light, seeking in all things the good pleasure of God and labouring to do all kinds of good works. In the midst of so many grave embarrassments, difficulties, and inseparable dangers, above all, at this present time of your episcopal charge, be not beaten down with fear, but seek strength in the Lord, and confiding in the power of his grace, think that from the height of Heaven he has fixed his eyes on those that struggle for the glory of his name, that he applauds, those who venture nobly, that he aids those who fight and crowns those who conquer (26)

As we love you all very dearly in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and desire nothing as much as to help, you with our love, our counsels, and our power, and to labour with you for the glory of God, the defence and propagation of the Catholic faith, and the salvation of those souls for whom we are ready to sacrifice, if necessary, our own life, come then, we conjure you, Venerable Brethren, come with open hearts and entire confidence to this see of the Blessed prince of the Apostles, the Centre of Catholic Unity and Fount, of Episcopacy, whence the Episcopate itself and all authority of that name was drawn, come to us whenever you think that you have need of the help or protection, of our authority and that of this Holy See.

We confidently hope that our dear sons in Jesus Christ, the princes, recollecting in their wisdom and piety that the regal power was given them not only for the government of the world, but especially for the defence of the Church (27), and that we maintain at one and the same time the cause of the Church, that of their kingdoms and of their salvation, by which they, enjoy in peace their authority over, their provinces (28), that they will favour by their support and authority the vows and desires that we form in common, and that they will defend the liberty

- (1) Apocalyp. XIII. 8.
- (2) Tertuli. de Praescript. cap. VIII.
- (3) Ad Rom. XIII. 1.
- (4) S. Joan Chrysost. Homil. 1 in Isai.
- (5) S. Ambros. in Psal. 40.
- (6) Council. Chalced. Act. 9.
- (7) Synod. Ephes. Act. 3.
- (8) S. Petr. Chrysol. Epist. ad Eutich.
- (9) Concil. Trid. Sess. VII. de Baptus.
- (10) S. Cyprian. Epist. 55. ad Cornel. Pontif.
- (11) Litter Synod. Joann. Constantinop. ad Hormied. Pontif. et Sozon. Hister. Lib. 3. Cap. 8.
- (12) S. August. Epist. 162.
- (13) S. Irenaeus Lib. 3. contra haereses cap 3.
- (14) S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Damas. Pontif.
- (15) Clemens. XII. Const. IN EMINENTI, Bened. XIV. Constit. PROVIDAS. Pius. VII. ECCLESIAM A JESU CHRISTO, Leo XII. Const. QUO GRAVIORA.
- (16) Gregor. XVI. In Litteris Encyclicis ad omnes Episcopos, quarum initium INTER PRAECIPUAS MACHINATIONES.
- (17) EX SYMBOLIO QUICUNQUE.
- (18) S. Leo Serm. VIII. cap. 4.
- (19) Concil. Triden. Sess. XIII. Cap. I, de Reformat.
- (20) Ad Roman. XIII. l. 2.
- (21) Concil. Trid. Sess. XXII. Cap. 4. de Reform.
- (22) Ad Timoth. 4. 12.
- (23) Bened. XIV. in Epist. Encycl. ad omnes Episcopos, cujus initium, UBI PRIMUM:
- (24) Ad Hebr. 4. V. 12.
- (25) Concil. Trid. Sess. XXIII. Cap. 18 de Reform.
- (26) S. Cyprian. Epist. 77. ad Nemesianum et ceteros martyres.
- (27) S. Leo Epist. 156 al. 125. ad Leonem Augustum.
- (28) Idem, Epist. 43. al. 38. ad Theodosium Augustum.
- (29) Idem ibid.