

23 Sept 1914
PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE MOST REVEREND AND RIGHT REVEREND
ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCES
OF QUEBEC, MONTREAL AND OTTAWA,
REGARDING THE DUTIES OF CATHOLICS IN THE PRESENT WAR.

WE, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY SEE-
ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PRO-
VINCES OF QUEBEC, MONTREAL AND OTTAWA.

*To the secular and regular clergy and to all the faithful of our
dioceses, health and benediction in Our Lord.*

Dearly beloved Brethren,

For the past two months — and God alone knows how long
the scourge will last — war has been raging in the greater
part of the Continent of Europe. It is our earnest hope that
all the woes following in its wake may be, in the end, God's
means to work out the moral and social regeneration of nations.
The pall of death spreads over countries hitherto most prosper-
ous, and mournings thicken in homes least known to dis-
tress. The cannon has sown desolation in families past num-
ber by thousands are wives bewailing the loss of their hus-
bands, and mothers that of their children, and orphans
that of their parents. Cities destroyed by fire, monuments
overthrown; hearths extinguished; fields laid waste; fac-

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tories closed ; trade obstructed ; whole battalions mowed down like the grass of the field ; the flower of each nation torn and scattered to the four winds of heaven ; what ruins, dear Brethren, have accumulated in this short time !

We cannot close our eyes to the fact that this conflict, one of the most awful yet seen by the world, will make its recoil felt in our country. England is engaged in this war, and who does not see that the destiny of every part of the Empire is bound up with the fate of her armies ? She counts very rightly on our co-operation, and this co-operation, We are happy to say, is being generously offered to her, both in men and in money. Already, with the reservists of the allied nations, naturalised or living amongst us, several thousand of our own compatriots have volunteered to go to the war, and others perhaps, will follow. Nearly all of them have left behind them families depending upon them for their support. How many of them will ever return to take up again the task of breadwinner for the family ? As beyond the seas, our own industries will be paralyzed ; they will suffer from the impossibility of employers to obtain raw material from the countries now at war ; and also from the absence or notable reduction in number of skilled workers. In the fatherless homes, mothers will lament that they have not the food which their children ask. On our streets, men without work will seek perhaps in vain for employment to assure their daily bread.

Already of course, the civil authorities have specified measures of human prudence to obviate the worst contingencies : the suppression of luxuries and superfluous expenditure ; the practice of rigorous economy ; the development of our national resources, and the increase of exportations to foreign markets. They have also opened, under the title of "The Canadian Patriotic Fund", a first source of protection in behalf of the families whose members have gone to the war. Though their appeal has reached the principal centres of the land, it was difficult however for them to make this appeal heard in the more remote country parts.

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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:

prevail upon the youth of our land to throng in vast numbers about the Holy Table. We count upon them especially, to obtain from Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, that respite which the world desires so much at the present time. He, Who loved children so much and Who came to establish on earth the reign of love, will not refuse to hearken to the prayers of these pure souls.

If every one, beloved Brethren, is thus faithful to prayer and alms-giving, God will be moved. He will give the unfortunate nations of Europe that tranquillity they so deeply need. He will resolve this war to the profit of justice and right. In His wisdom and power He will bring consoling returns to the faith, greater respect for and confidence in, and attachment towards Holy Church, and for the Church herself, greater liberty and a lessening of her trials and sorrows. He will deign preserve our country from the disastrous results which menace it if the war be prolonged. Such, dear Brethren, is our hope, and our confidence. It will be to the honour and glory of Canada, which is so intimately united with two of the leading belligerent powers, to have done her share, by fervent supplication for the restoration of peace in the world, and by generous contributions, to have assisted in allaying the evils which afflict mankind.

To attain this two-fold aim, the Holy Name of God invoked. We decree and ordain :

1° That on Sunday, October the 18th, at all the masses, in all the churches and chapels of our dioceses, a collection be taken, up on behalf of the soldiers and the unemployed of each of these dioceses.

2° That on the same Sunday, immediately after High Mass; the hymn of Penance and of supplication be sung, namely, the *Miserere*, and the prayer of the Mass *Pro Pace*.

3° Until the end of the war, this same prayer *Pro Pace* will be said at Mass, when allowed by the rubrics, and also at the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

4° We desire, in every parish, on the day judged most convenient, a general communion of the children for the intentions of Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XV, to obtain the great benison of peace.

This present letter shall be read at the prone of every parochial mass and in all churches where divine service is held, and at the chapter of the religious communities, on the first Sunday after its reception.

Written and signed by Us the twenty-third day of September one thousand nine hundred and fourteen.

† PAUL, Archbishop of Montreal

† CHARLES-HUGUES, Archbishop of Ottawa.

† PAUL-EUGÈNE, Archbishop of Seleucia, Admin. of Quebec.

† ANDRÉ-ALBERT, Bishop of Saint-Germain de Rimouski.

† JOSEPH-MÉDARD, Bishop of Valleyfield.

† MICHEL-THOMAS, Bishop of Chicoutimi.

† N.-ZÉPHYRIN, Bishop of Pembroke.

† FRANÇOIS-XAVIER, Bishop of Trois-Rivières.

† J.-S.-HERMANN, Bishop of Nicolet

† ALEXIS-XYTE, Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe.

† GUILLAUME, Bishop of Joliette

† FRANÇOIS-XAVIER, Bishop of Mont-Laurier.

† GUSTAVE, Bishop of Sicca, V. Ap. of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

† ELIE-A., Bishop of Catenna, V. Ap. of Temiscamingue.

H. O. CHALIFOUX, V. G., Admin. of Sherbrooke.

By mandate of the Most Reverend and
Right Reverend Archbishops and Bishops.

JULES LABERGE, *priest.*
Secretary of the Archdiocese of Quebec.

N. B. — The proceeds of this collection should be sent as soon as possible to our respective procurators.