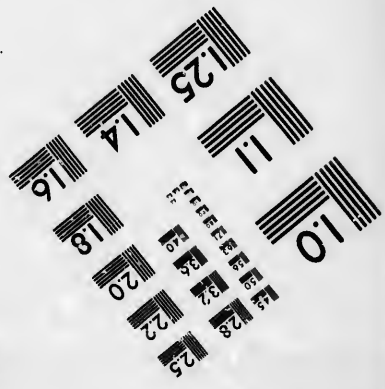
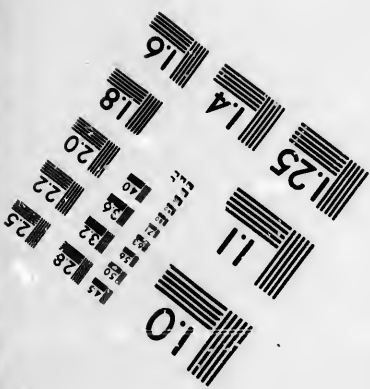
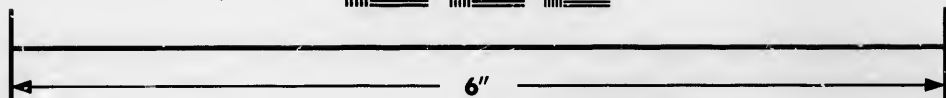
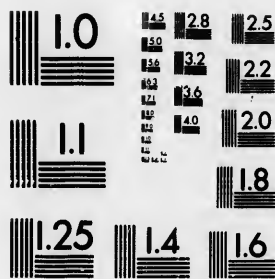


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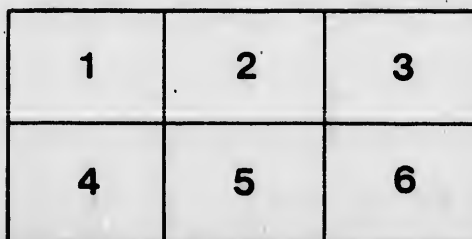
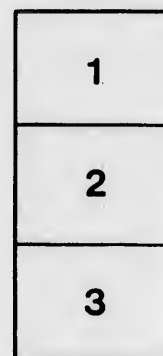
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PASTORAL LETTER

OF

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF QUEBEC,

FOR THE

PROMULGATION OF THE DOGMATIC DECREE

OF THE

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.



PETER FLAVIANUS TURGEON,

*By the Mercy of God and the Grace of the Holy Apostolic See,
Archbishop of Quebec, &c., &c.,*

*To the Clergy secular and regular and to all the faithful of our Diocese,
greeting, and benediction in the Lord.*

LET our souls, D. B. B., rejoice in the Lord, and our hearts throb with rapturous delight in God our Saviour; let us bless and praise Him for the ineffable favours He has lavished on His Holy Mother. For behold a new ray of light, radiating from the centre of the Church has appeared to reveal, amidst the splendours of our faith, one of those marvellous operations of His grace, wherewith He has adorned our Holy Mother, and which claims and calls for the renewed expression of our love and admiration, and urges us to exclaim that She is full of grace, blessed and happy amongst women.

Yes, the time-honored and pious belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, has been at length solemnly sanctioned and defined an Article of Faith: and it is on the great day already consecrated for the celebration of this glorious and peculiar privilege that this dogma has been publicly proclaimed.

How many generations have fervently desired to see this auspicious day, and have not seen it? This happiness was reserved for us. Yes, we bless God that a solemn decree, emanating from the Apostolic See, has at length disclosed to our anxious gaze this bright star shining in all its effulgence, which ever adorned the diadem of the Queen of Heaven, but whose mild brilliancy was hitherto dimmed and obscured, as it were, by a cloud.

As in times gone by, the Church of God, by virtue of her infallible authority, has declared that the Divine Maternity, the perpetual and inviolate Virginity, and the impeccability of Mary were revealed truths, so in like manner, on this happy day, She has proclaimed the truth of Her Immaculate Conception, which is so admirably united, and so inseparably connected, with the former. After long and fervent prayers, humiliations and fastings offered up to God, after protracted and mature deliberations, consultations and discussion of the question in all its bearings, the Vicar of Jesus-Christ has at last pronounced and defined, from the Chair of Peter, that the doctrine, which teaches the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, is revealed from God, and that, consequently, all the faithful are bound to believe it firmly and constantly.

You are well aware, D. B. B., that, when pronouncing her infallible decision on matters of doctrine which call for her final definition, the Church does nothing more than expose and declare her faith, and merely pronounces that such truth is contained in the deposit of divine revelation. For, unity in her faith ever was, and ever will be, the characteristic mark of the Church; and all the truths she teaches, or ever will teach until the end of the world, these she has received from the beginning, stored up in the treasury of the Sacred Scriptures and divine traditions committed to her safe keeping by the Son of God, and of which He has established her alone the incorruptible guardian and the infallible interpreter. It is, therefore, evident that when the august Head of the Church, in whom live, and ever will live, the authority and ministry of Peter, pronounces a decree defining any article of doctrine, He does not introduce any doctrine novel, or different from those contained in the deposit of faith, but merely and simply settles and determines the true sense of revelation with regard to the mooted question, and declares that it contains a divine truth.

Wherefore the Church of Jesus Christ, ever enlightened and assisted by the Holy Ghost, ever invigorated by the life of her divine founder, who has promised

to be with her always even to the consummation of ages, and to never abandon her, the church, thus possessing the promise of infallibility, never at any time has admitted or taught, nor ever will she teach or admit, as a revealed truth, any article that is not really and truly such.

She may, therefore, as she has always done, and as she will always do, proclaim with infallible authority and without fear of error, whatever truth is contained in the treasury of divine revelation confided to her care.

Thus, D. B. B., you understand that by the definition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, no new doctrine has been broached, but that thereby has been confirmed and proclaimed, a truth revealed to the Apostles, and by them handed down to their successors, which was also ever believed by the church.

It is true that hitherto this truth was not presented to the faithful with the certainty of faith; the reason hereof is that every truth comprised in divine revelation is only an article of faith, inasmuch as it is infallibly acknowledged to be revealed, and it is not acknowledged, nor ever can be so acknowledged, save when expressly defined as such by the church. Up to the present time the church was pleased merely to insinuate and suggest her faith, and had not as yet definitely proclaimed the Immaculate Conception of Mary; but eternal thanks to God, now that she has spoken,—now that the decree of her august Head so ardently desired has been promulgated, all the shadows which had obscured the glory and sanctity of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin have been dispelled; all doubt has disappeared, the truth now shines in all its lustre: it is an article of faith that Mary has not sinned in Adam: it is an article of faith that her Conception was immaculate: it is an article of faith that, through the merits of Jesus-Christ her divine Son, she has been preserved from original sin, and that in her Conception itself, she was sanctified by God, replenished with all the gifts, graces and favours that could be conferred on a privileged creature, chosen from all eternity to be the mother of God.

What a glorious triumph for all the children of God to witness the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, whom they own and acknowledge for their mother! Who could undertake to narrate the manifold graces and advantages which this joyful event can not fail to diffuse throughout the church on earth? What feelings of piety, devotion and love towards the Blessed Virgin, what confidence in her powerful protection is it not calculated to inspire us with?

Who can refrain from admiring, in this instance, the marvellous dispensations of Divine Providence in our regard? It is after so many vows and ardent desires offered up to heaven during so many ages, at a time when the kings of the earth are conspiring against God and against his Christ, during these latter days, when faith is weakening and disappearing, and charity is waxing cold, that Our

Lord Jesus presents to us His Holy Mother gloriously triumphing over sin and hell. Who but must see that by His introducing Her with all the lustre of Her glorious triumph as the bright star of the sea, or the luminous sign of His alliance amidst the storms that convulse the world, He intended to afford to His Church, agitated and tossed by the stormy waves, and threatened with shipwreck, a signal proof of His promised assistance, and a peremptory pledge of salvation, giving us all thereby to understand that it is through Mary that He has resolved to save us, that having bequeathed Her to us for our Mother, and committed our protection to Her maternal care, He is desirous that we should have recourse to Her in all our wants and temptations; that through Her we may be delivered from all dangers, and obtain an easy victory over all the assaults of the world and of the devil, and that being placed under Her powerful protection we may have nothing to fear?

And our sweet and Divine Mother who to-day receives from the Church a new meed of honor, She who has always proved herself to be the help and protection of the Christian people, will she, unmoved and indifferent, hear the accents of praise and strains of love, which like a melodious concert, now ascend to Heaven from the hearts of all Her children? Does She not owe them, and will She not grant them, fresh proofs of Her tender charity and visible signs of Her protection? Oh! little indeed would we be acquainted with the heart of Mary, if we could entertain the slightest apprehension or hesitation in this respect!

But you especially, children of the Church of Quebec, what lively emotions of holy joy, and sweet confidence ought not the definition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary to excite within your breasts! For it is indeed Mary, inasmuch as She was conceived without sin, who is the Patroness of the Cathedral of Quebec, and consequently of all the faithful of the Diocese; it is indeed under the protection of Mary, inasmuch as She was conceived without sin, that you have been placed in an especial manner from the first settlement of this Colony and that you have grown and increased and have preserved your Faith in the midst of innumerable dangers and trials: it is indeed Mary, inasmuch as She was conceived without Sin, whom you have ever honoured and invoked, when celebrating the solemn festival of the Conception. What a triumph, what a holy consolation for you to hear, on this occasion, this magnificent title confirmed by the oracles of Heaven!

Prepare yourselves then to celebrate, with the rapturous delights of holy joy, this happy event, which must be the fruitful source of grace and happiness to the universal church, and to yourselves in particular. To a worthy celebration of Mary's glory, the example of Catholics throughout the world should incite you; your own sincere devotion and gratitude, towards the Blessed Virgin, should enforce it as a duty, and you are also invited by the Sovereign Pontiff himself. For by a

special Indulto, dated 22nd January last, he has condescended to authorize us to celebrate, by a *Triduum* or three days of solemn devotion, the dogmatick decree defining the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and to grant a partial indulgence of seven years and as many forty days, in favour of all the faithful, for each day they shall assist at, and follow the prescribed devotional exercises, and moreover a plenary indulgence in favour of all those, who shall receive sacramental penance and the Holy Eucharist, assist at the three days exercises, and, on the last, will pray according to his intention; His Holiness allows those indulgences to be applied in behalf of the souls in Purgatory; and, in order to favour the piety of the faithful and heighten the solemnity of the *Triduum* in honor of the blessed Virgin, he permits us to sing the High Mass of the Immaculate Conception, on each of the three days.

We exhort you, D. B. B., to avail yourselves of these indulgences, which in your regard, may be considered as the first fruits of grace and the first emanations of blessings resulting from the belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

WHEREFORE, we have decreed, and do by these presents decree what follows:—

1st. There will be celebrated, with all possible pomp, in all the Parishes and Missions throughout the Diocese, a *Triduum* of prayers, to return thanks to the Almighty for the publication of the dogmatic decrees of our Holy Father the Pope defining the Immaculate Conception.

2nd. The *Triduum* will be celebrated in the Cathedral, on the three first days in May next. With respect to the other churches in the city, wherein public service is held, as well as to the Rural Districts, the Parish Priests, Chaplains and Missionaries, are authorized to make choice of any other three days within the said month which may be deemed most convenient; the religious communities shall enjoy the same privilege in favor of the persons attached to their houses.

3rd. During the *Triduum*, a solemn High Mass of the Immaculate Conception will be sung on each day, unless such day should occur with the festival of the Ascension, the day or Vigil of Pentecost, in which case the Mass should be the one proper to the Festival. Mass will conclude with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, wherein should be sung the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin, of which the last invocation *Regina sine labe concepta, ora pro nobis*, is to be repeated three times, and followed by the *Tantum ergo*, versicle and prayer.

4th. The Bull of His Holiness, promulgating the abovementioned decree, shall be read in its entirety during the *Triduum*. It is left to the option of the Pastors either to read the Bull at full length once, or so to distribute the reading of it, as to assign a part for each day.

5th. The exercises of the three days shall be closed with the solemn chant of the *Te Deum*.

6th In the Cathedral and the other churches of the city, wherein divine service is publicly celebrated, at 7 o'clock each evening, there will be a sermon, followed by the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, at which shall be sung, as in the morning office, the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin with the *Tantum ergo*, &c. The object of the evening exercises is to afford to the faithful, who are prevented by their pursuits and avocations from attending in the morning, an opportunity of sharing also in the benefit of the indulgences of the *Triduum*.

7th. During the exercises of the *Triduum*, the churches and chapels should be decorated as in the most solemn festivals.

This our present Pastoral Letter is to be read at the *Prons* of all churches in which divine service is celebrated, and in chapter in all religious houses, the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at Quebec, under the signature of our Coadjutor, the Seal of the Archdiocese, and the counter-signature of our Secretary, on the Festival of the Annunciation of the B. V. M., one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five.



† C. F. BISHOP OF TLOA.

By His Grace's command,

EDMOND LANGEVIN, Pst.
Secretary.

Letters Apostolic

OF

OUR MOST HOLY LORD PIUS IX, BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE POPE,

CONCERNING THE

Dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God.

PIUS, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

For the perpetual remembrance of the thing.

The Ineffable God, whose ways are mercy and truth, whose will is omnipotence, and whose wisdom reaches powerfully from end to end, and sweetly disposes everything, when He foresaw from all eternity the most sorrowful ruin of the entire human race to follow from the transgression of Adam, and in a mystery hidden from ages, determined to complete, through the incarnation of the Word in a more hidden sacrament the first work of His goodness, so that man, led into sin by the craft of diabolical iniquity, should not perish contrary to His merciful design, and that what was about to befall in the first Adam should be restored more happily in the second; from the beginning and before ages chose and ordained a mother for His only-begotten Son, of whom made flesh, He should be born in the blessed plenitude of time, and followed her with so great love before all creatures that in her alone He pleased Himself with a most benign complacency. Wherefore, far before all the angelic spirits and all the Saints, He so wonderfully endowed her with the abundance of all the heavenly gifts drawn from the treasure of divinity, that she might be ever free from every stain of sin, and all fair and perfect, would bear before her that plenitude of innocence and holiness than which, under God, none greater is understood, and which, except God, no one can reach even in thought. And indeed it was most becoming that she would shine always adorned with the splendour of the most perfect holiness, and free even from the stain of original sin, would gain a most complete

triumph over the ancient serpent, she the Mother so venerable, to whom God the Father, disposed to give his only Son, whom begotten and equal to Himself from His heart he loved as Himself, in such a manner that He would be by nature one and the same common Son of God the Father, and of the Virgin, and whom the Son Himself chose to make substantially his Mother, and from whom the Holy Ghost willed and operated that He would be conceived and born from whom He Himself proceeds.

Which original innocence of the august Virgin agreeing completely with her admirable holiness, and with the most excellent dignity of the Mother of God, the Catholic Church, which, ever taught by the Holy Spirit, is the pillar and ground of truth, as possessing a doctrine divinely received, and comprehended in the deposit of heavenly revelation, has never ceased to lay down, to cherish, and to illustrate continually by numerous proofs, and more and more daily by splendid facts. For this doctrine, flourishing from the most ancient times, and implanted in the minds of the Faithful, and by the care and zeal of the Holy Pontiffs wonderfully propagated, the Church herself has most clearly pointed out when she did not hesitate to propose the conception of the same Virgin for the public devotion and veneration of the Faithful. By which illustrious act she pointed out the conception of the Virgin as singular, wonderful, and very far removed from the origins of the rest of mankind, and to be venerated as entirely holy since the Church celebrates festival days only of the Saints. And, therefore, the very words in which the Sacred Scriptures speak of uncreated wisdom and represent his eternal origins, she has been accustomed to use not only in the offices of the Church, but also in the holy liturgy, and to transfer to the origin of that Virgin, which was preordained by one and the same decree with the incarnation of Divine Wisdom.

But though all those things everywhere justly received amongst the Faithful show with what zeal the Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all Churches, has supported the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, yet the illustrious acts of this Church are evidently worthy that they should be reviewed by name; since so great is the dignity and authority of the same Church, so much is due to her who is the centre of Catholic truth and unity, in whom alone religion has been inviolably guarded, and from whom it is right that all the Churches should receive the tradition of Faith. Thus the same Roman Church had nothing more at heart than to assert, to protect, to promote, and to vindicate in the most eloquent manner the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, its devotion and doctrine, which fact so many illustrious acts of the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, most evidently and fully testify and declare, to whom in the

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person of the Prince of the Apostles was divinely committed by Christ our Lord the supreme care and power of feeding lambs and sheep, of confirming the brethren, and of ruling and governing the universal Church.

Indeed, Our predecessors vehemently gloried to institute in the Roman Church by their own Apostolic authority the Feast of the Conception, and to augment, ennoble and promote with all their power the devotion thus instituted, by a proper Office and a proper Mass, by which the prerogative of Immunity from hereditary stain was most manifestly asserted; to increase it either by indulgences granted or by leave given to states, provinces, and kingdoms that they might choose as their patron the Mother of God, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, or by approved sodalities, congregations, and religious families instituted to the honour of the Immaculate Conception; or by praises given to the piety of those who have erected monasteries, hospitals, or churches under the title of the Immaculate Conception, or who have bound themselves by a religious vow to defend strenuously the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. Above all, they were happy to ordain that the Feast of the Conception should be celebrated through the whole Church as that of the Nativity; and, in fine, that it should be celebrated with an Octave in the universal Church as it was placed in the rank of the festivals which are commanded to be kept holy; also that a Pontifical service in Our Patriarchal Liberian Basilica should be performed yearly on the day sacred to the Conception of the Virgin; and desiring to cherish daily more and more in the minds of the Faithful this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and to exalte their piety to worshipping and venerating the Virgin conceived without original sin, they have rejoiced most freely to give leave that in the Litany of Loretto, and in the preface of the Mass itself the Immaculate Conception of the same Virgin should be proclaimed, and that thus the rule of faith would be established by the rule itself of supplication. We ourselves, treading in the footsteps of so many predecessors, have not only received and approved what had been most wisely and piously established and appointed by them, but also, mindful of the institution of Sixtus IV., We have appointed by Our authority a proper Office for the Immaculate Conception, and with a most joyful mind have granted the use of it to the universal Church.

But since those things which pertain to worship are evidently bound by an intimate chord to its object, and cannot remain fixed and determined, if it be doubtful, and placed in uncertainty, therefore Our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, increasing with all their care the devotion of the Conception, studied most especially to declare and inculcate its object and doctrine; for they taught

clearly and openly that the festival was celebrated for the Conception of the Virgin, and they proscribed as false and most foreign to the intention of the Church the opinion of those who considered and affirmed that it was not of the Conception itself, but the sanctification to which devotion was paid by the Church. Nor did they think of treating more indulgently those who, in order to weaken the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, drawing a distinction between the first and second instant and moment of the Conception, asserted that the Conception was indeed celebrated, but not for the first instant and moment; for Our predecessors themselves thought it their duty to protect and defend with all zeal both the Feast of the Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, and the Conception from the first instant as the true object of devotion. Hence the words, evidently detentive, in which Alexander VII. declared the true intention of the Church, saying: "Certainly, it is the ancient piety of the Faithful of Christ towards His Most Blessed Mother the Virgin Mary believing that her soul, in the first instant of creation, and of infusion into the body, was by a special grace and privilege of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus-Christ her Son, the Redeemer of mankind, preserved free from the stain of original sin, and in this sense they keep and celebrate with solemn rite the Festival of her Conception."

And to the same, Our predecessors, this also was most especially a duty to preserve from contention the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God guarded and protected with all care and zeal. For not only have they never suffered that this doctrine should ever be censured or traduced in any way or by any one, but they have gone much further, and in clear declarations on repeated occasions they have proclaimed that the doctrine in which we confess the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin is, and by its own merit, is held evidently consistent with Ecclesiastical worship, that it is ancient and nearly universal, and of the same sort as that which the Roman Church has undertaken to cherish and protect, and above all, worthy to be placed in its sacred liturgy and its solemn prayers. Nor content with this, in order that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin should remain inviolate, they have most severely prohibited the opinion adverse to this doctrine to be defended either in public or in private, and they have wished to crush it as it were by repeated blows. To which reiterated and most clear declarations, lest they might appear empty, they added a sanction; all which things Our illustrious predecessor Alexander I. embraced in these words:—

"Considering that the Holy Roman Church solemnly celebrates the festival of the Conception of the Immaculate and Ever-Blessed Virgin, and has appointed for this a special and proper office according to the pious, devout, and laudable institution

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which emanated from Our predecessor Sixtus IV., and wishing, after the example of the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, to favor this laudable piety, devotion, and festival, and the reverence shown towards it never changed in the Roman Church since the institution of the worship itself; also in order to protect the piety and devotion of venerating and celebrating the Most Blessed Virgin, preserved from original sin by the preventing grace of the Holy Ghost, and desiring to preserve in the flock of Christ unity of spirit in the bond of peace, removing offences, and brawls, and scandals; at the instance and prayers of the said Bishops, with the Chapters of their Churches, and of King Philip and his kingdoms, We renew the constitutions and decrees issued by the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, and especially by Sixtus IV., Paul V., and Gregory XV., in favour of asserting the opinion that the soul of the Blessed Virgin in its creation and infusion into the body was endowed with the grace of the Holy Ghost, and preserved from original sin; likewise, also, in favour of the festival of the same Virgin Mother of God, celebrated according to that pious belief which is recited above, and We command that it shall be observed under the censures and punishments contained in the same constitutions.

“ And against all and each of those who try to interpret the aforesaid constitutions or decrees so that they may frustrate the favour shewn through these to the said belief and to the festival or worship celebrated according to it, or who try to recast into dispute the same belief, festival, or worship, or against these in any manner, either directly or indirectly, and on any pretext, even that of examining the grounds of defining it, or of explaining or interpreting the Sacred Scriptures or the Holy Fathers or Doctors; in fine, who should dare under any pretext or on any occasion whatsoever, to say, either in writing or in speech, to preach, to treat, to dispute, by determining or asserting anything against these, or by bringing arguments against them and leaving these arguments unanswered, or by expressing dissent in any other possible manner; besides the punishments and censures contained in the constitutions of Sixtus IV., to which we desire to add, and by these presents do add, those: We will that they should be deprived *ipso facto* and without other declaration of the faculty of preaching, of reading in public, or of teaching and interpreting, and also of their voice, whether active or passive in elections; from which censures they cannot be absolved, nor obtain dispensation, unless from Us, or Our successors, the Roman Pontiffs; likewise, We wish to subject, and We hereby do subject, the same persons to other penalties, to be inflicted at Our will, and at that of the same Roman Pontiffs, Our successors, renewing the constitutions or decrees of Paul IV., and Gregory XV., above referred to.

“ And We prohibit, under the penalties and censures contained in the Index of Prohibited Books, and we will and declare that they should be esteemed prohibited *ipso facto*, and without other declaration, books in which the aforesaid belief and the festival or devotion celebrated according to it is recalled into dispute, or in which anything whatever is written or read against these, or lectures, sermons, treatises, and disputations against the same, published after the decree above eulogised of Paul V., or to be published at any future time.”

All are aware with how much zeal this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God has been handed down, asserted and propagated by the most distinguished Religious Orders, the most celebrated theological academies, and the most eminent Doctors of the science of Divinity. All know likewise how anxious have been the Bishops openly and publicly to profess, even in the Ecclesiastical assemblies themselves, that the Most Holy Mother of God the Virgin Mary, by virtue of the merits of Christ Our Lord, the Saviour of mankind, never lay under original sin, but was preserved free from the stain of origin, and thus was redeemed in a more sublime manner. To which, lastly, is added this fact, most grave and, in an especial manner, most important of all, that the Council of Trent itself, when it promulgated the dogmatic decree concerning original sin, in which, according to the testimonies of the Sacred Scriptures, of the Holy Fathers, and of the most approved councils, it determined and defined that all mankind are born under original sin: solemnly declared, however, that it was not its intention to include in the decree itself, and in the amplitude of its definition, the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Indeed, by this declaration, the Tridentine Fathers have assented, according to the times and the circumstances of affairs, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was free from the original stain, and thus clearly signified that nothing could be justly adduced from the sacred writings, nor from the authority of the Fathers, which would in any way gainsay so great a prerogative of the Virgin.

And, in real truth, illustrious monuments of a venerated antiquity of the Eastern and of the Western Church most powerfully testify that this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, every day more and more so splendidly explained and confirmed by the highest authority, teaching, zeal, science, and wisdom of the Church, and so wonderfully propagated amongst all the nations and peoples of the Catholic world, always existed in the Church as received from Our ancestors, and stamped with the character of a divine revelation. For the Church of Christ, careful guardian and defender of the dogmas deposited with her, changes nothing in them, diminishes nothing, adds nothing, but, with all industry, by faithfully and wisely treating ancient things, if they

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are handed down from antiquity, so studies to eliminate, to clear them up, that these ancient dogmas of heavenly faith may receive evidence, light, distinction, but still may retain their fullness, integrity, propriety, and may increase only in their own kind, that is, in the same dogma, the same sense, and the same belief.

The Fathers and writers of the Church, taught by the heavenly writings, had nothing more at heart, in the books written to explain the Scriptures, to vindicate the dogmas, and to instruct the Faithful, than emulously to declare and exhibit in many and wonderful ways the Virgin's most high sanctity, dignity, and freedom from all stain of original sin, and her renowned victory over the most foul enemy of the human race. Wherefore, repeating the words in which, at the beginning of the world, the Almighty, announcing the remedies of His mercy, prepared for regenerating mankind, crushed the audacity of the lying serpent, and wonderfully raised up the hope of our race, saying—"I will place enmity between thee and the woman, thy seed and hers," they taught that in this Divine oracle was clearly and openly pointed out the merciful Redeemer of the human race—the only-begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus, and that his Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was designated, and at the same time that the enmity of both against the serpent was signally expressed. Wherefore, as Christ, the mediator of God and men, having assumed human nature, blotting out the handwriting of the decree which stood against us, fastened it triumphantly to the cross, so the Most Holy Virgin, bound by a most close and indissoluble chain with Him, exercising with Him and through Him eternal enmity against the malignant serpent, and triumphing most amply over the same, has crushed his head with her immaculate foot.

This illustrious and singular triumph of the Virgin, and her most exalted innocence, purity, and holiness, her freedom from all stain of sin, and ineffable abundance and greatness of all heavenly graces, virtues, and privileges, the same fathers beheld in that ark of Noah which, divinely appointed, escaped, safe and sound, from the common shipwreck of the whole world; also in that ladder which Jacob beheld to reach from earth to Heaven, by whose steps the Angels of God ascended and descended, on whose top leaned God himself; also in that bush which, in the holy place, Moses beheld blaze on every side, and amidst the crackling flames, neither to be consumed nor to suffer the least injury, but to grow green and to blossom fairly; also, in that tower unassailable in the face of an enemy, from which depend a thousand bucklers and all the armour of the brave; also, in that garden fenced round about, which cannot be violated nor corrupted by any schemes of fraud; also in that brilliant city of God, whose foundations are

in the holy mounts ; also in that most august temple of God, which, shining with divine splendour, is filled with the glory of God ; likewise in many other things of this kind in which the Fathers have handed down, that the exalted dignity of the Mother of God and her spotless innocence, and her holiness, obnoxious to no blemish, have been signally pre-announced.

To describe the same totality, as it were, of Divine gifts, and the original integrity of the Virgin of whom Jesus was born, the same Fathers, using the eloquence of the Prophets, celebrate the august Virgin as the spotless dove, the holy Jerusalem, the exalted throne of God, the ark and house of sanctification, which Eternal Wisdom built for itself ; and as that Queen who, abounding in delights and leaning on her beloved, came forth entirely perfect from the mouth of the Most High, fair and most dear to God, and never stained with the last spot. But when the same Fathers and the writers of the Church resolved in their hearts and minds that the Most Blessed Virgin, in the name and by the order of God himself, was proclaimed full of grace by the Angel Gabriel, when announcing her most sublime dignity of the Mother of God, they taught that, by this singular and solemn salutation never heard on any other occasion, is shown that the Mother of God is the seat of all Divine graces, and adorned with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost—yea, the infinite storehouse and inexhaustible abyss of the same gifts ; so that, never obnoxious to an evil word, and alone with her Son partaker of perpetual benediction, she deserved to hear from Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost, “ Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”

Hence it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the same that the Most Glorious Virgini, for whom He who is powerful has done great things, has shone with such a brilliancy of all heavenly gifts, such fulness of grace, and such innocence, that she has been an ineffable miracle of the Almighty, yea, the crown of all miracles, and worthy Mother of God ; that she approaches as nearly to God as created nature can do, and is more exalted than all human and angelic encomiums.

And therefore, to vindicate the original innocence and justice of the Mother of God, they not only compared her to Eve as yet virgin, as yet innocent, as yet incorrupted, and not yet deceived by the most deadly snares of the most treacherous serpent, but they have preferred her with a wonderful variety of thought and expression. For Eve, miserably obeying the serpent, fell from original innocence, and became his slave, but the Most Blessed Virgin, ever increasing her original gift, not only never leant an ear to the serpent, but by a virtue divinely received, utterly broke his power.

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Wherefore they have never ceased to call the Mother of God the lily amongst the thorns, earth entirely untouched, virgin, undefiled, immaculate, ever blessed, and free from all contagion of sin, from which was formed the new Adam, a reproachless, most sweet paradise of innocence, immortality, and delights planted by God himself, and fenced from all snares of the malignant serpent, incorruptible branch that the worm of sin has never injured; fountain ever clear, and marked by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, a most Divine temple, or treasure of immortality, or the sole and only daughter not of death but of life, the seed not of enmity but of grace, which by the singular providence of God has always flourished, reviving from a corrupt and imperfect root, contrary to the settled and common laws. But as if these encomiums, though most splendid, were not sufficient, they proclaimed in proper and defined opinions that when sin should be treated of, no question should be entertained concerning the Holy Virgin Mary, to whom an abundance of grace was given to conquer sin completely. They also declared that the Most Glorious Virgin was the reparatrix of her parents, the vivifier of posterity, chosen from the ages, prepared for himself by the Most High, predicted by God when He said to the serpent, "I will place enmity between thee and the woman," who undoubtedly has crushed the poisonous head of the same serpent; and therefore they affirm that the same Blessed Virgin was through grace perfectly free from every stain of sin, and from all contagion of body and soul, and mind, and always conversant with God and united with Him in an eternal covenant, never was in darkness but always in light, and therefore was plainly a fit habitation for Christ, not on account of her bodily state, but on account of her original grace.

To these things are added the noble words in which, speaking of the Conception of the Virgin, they have testified that nature yielded to grace and stood trembling, not being able to proceed further; for it was to be that the Virgin Mother of God should not be conceived by Anna before grace should bear fruit. For she ought thus to be conceived as the first born, from whom should be conceived the first born of every creature. They have testified that the flesh of the Virgin, taken from Adam, did not admit the stains of Adam, and on this account that the Most Blessed Virgin was the tabernacle created by God himself, formed by the Holy Spirit, truly enriched with purple which that new Beseleel made, adorned and woven with gold; and that this same Virgin is, and deservedly is, celebrated as she who was the first and the peculiar work of God, escaped from the fiery weapons of evil, and fair by nature, and entirely free from all stain, came into the world all shining like the Morn in her immaculate Conception; nor, truly, was it right that this vessel of election should be assailed by common

injuries, since, differing very much from others, she had community with them only in their nature, not in their fault.

Far more, it was right that, as the Only Begotten had a Father in Heaven whom the Seraphim extol three times holy, so He should have a Mother on the earth, who never should want the splendour of holiness. And this doctrine, indeed, so filled the minds and souls of our forefathers, that a marvellous and singular form of speech prevailed with them, in which they very frequently called the Mother of God immaculate and entirely immaculate, innocent and most innocent, spotless, holy, and most distant from every stain of sin, all pure, all perfect, the type and model of purity and innocence, more beautiful than beauty, more gracious than grace, more holy than holiness, and alone holy, and most pure in soul and body, who has surpassed all perfectitude and all virginity, and has become the dwelling-place of all the graces of the Most Holy Spirit, and who, God alone excepted, is superior to all, and by nature fairer, more beautiful, and more holy than the Cherubim and Seraphim; she whom all the tongues of Heaven and earth do not suffice to extol. No one is ignorant that these forms of speech have passed, as it were, spontaneously into the monuments of the most holy liturgy, and the Offices of the Church, and that they occur often in them and abound amply; since the Mother of God is invoked and named in them as a spotless dove of beauty, as a rose ever blooming and perfectly pure, and ever spotless and ever blessed, and is celebrated as innocence which was never wounded, and a second Eve who brought forth Emmanuel.

It is no wonder, then, if the Pastors of the Church and the faithful people have daily more and more gloried to profess with so much piety and fervour this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God, pointed out in the Sacred Scriptures, according to the judgment of the Fathers, handed down in so many mighty testimonies of the same, expressed and celebrated in so many illustrious monuments of a revered antiquity, and proposed, and with great piety confirmed by the greatest and highest judgment of the Church; so that nothing would be more dear, more pleasing to the same than everywhere to worship, venerate, invoke, and proclaim the Virgin Mother of God conceived without original stain. Wherefore from the ancient times the Princes of the Church, Ecclesiastics, and even emperors and kings themselves, have earnestly entreated of this Apostolic See that the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God should be defined as a dogma of Catholic faith. Which entreaties were renewed also in these Our times, and especially were addressed to Gregory XVI, Our predecessor of happy memory, and to ourselves, not only by Bishops, but by the Secular Clergy, Religious Orders, and the greatest princes and faithful people.

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Therefore, with singular joy of mind, well knowing all these things, and seriously considering them, scarcely had We, though unworthy, been raised by a mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence to the exalted Chair of Peter, and undertaken the government of the whole Church, than, following the veneration, the piety, and love We had entertained for the Blessed Virgin from Our tender years, We had nothing at heart more than to accomplish all these things which as yet were amongst the ardent wishes of the Church, that the honour of the Most Blessed Virgin should be increased, and her prerogatives should shine with a fuller light. But wishing to bring to this full maturity We appoint a special congregation of Our Venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the H. R. C., illustrious by their piety, their wisdom, and their knowledge of the sacred sciences, and we also selected Ecclesiastics, both Secular and Regular, well trained in the logical discipline, that they should most carefully weigh all those things which relate to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and report to us their opinion. And, although from the entreaties lately received by us for at length defining the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, the opinions of most of the Bishops of the Church were understood; however, We sent Encyclic Letters, dated at Gaeta, the 2nd day of February, in the year 1849, to all our Venerable Brethren the Bishops of all the Catholic world, in order that having offered prayers to God they would signify to Us, in writing, what was in the piety and devotion of their flocks towards the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and especially what the Bishops themselves thought about promulgating the definition, or what they desired in order that We might pronounce Our supreme judgment as solemnly as possible.

Certainly we were filled with no slight consolation when the replies of our Venerable Brethren came to Us. For, with an incredible joyfulness, gladness, and zeal, they not only confirmed their own singular piety, and that of their Clergy and faithful people, towards the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, but they even entreated of Us with a common voice that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin should be defined by Our supreme judgment and authority. Nor, indeed, were We filled with less joy when Our Venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the H. R. C., composing the Special Congregation aforesaid, and the consulting theologians chosen by Us, after a diligent examination demanded from Us with equal alacrity and zeal this definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.

Afterwards walking in the illustrious footsteps of Our predecessors, and desiring to proceed duly and properly, We proclaimed and held a Consistory, in which We addressed Our Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and with the greatest consolation of mind We heard them entreat of Us that We should

promulgate the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God.

Therefore, having full trust in the Lord that the opportune time had come for defining the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary Mother of God, which the Divine words, venerable tradition, the perpetual opinion of the Church, the singular agreement of Catholic Prelates and Faithful, and the signal acts and constitutions of Our predecessors, wonderfully illustrate and proclaim; having most diligently weighed all things, and poured forth to God assiduous and fervent prayers, We resolved that We should no longer delay to sanction and define, by Our supreme authority, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and thus to satisfy the most pious desires of the Catholic world and Our own piety towards the Most Holy Virgin, and, at the same time, to honour more and more the only-begotten Son Jesus-Christ Our Lord, since whatever honour and praise is given to the Mother redounds to the Son.

Wherefore after We had unceasingly, in humility and fasting, offered Our own prayers and the public prayers of the Church to God the Father through His Son, that He would deign to direct and confirm Our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, and having implored the aid of the entire Heavenly Host, and invoked the Paraclete with sighs, and He thus inspiring, to the honour of the Holy and undivided Trinity, to the glory and ornament of the Virgin Mother of God, to the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the increase of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus-Christ Our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus-Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the Faithful. Wherefore if any shall dare—which God avert—to think otherwise than as it has been defined by Us, they should know and understand that they are condemned by their own judgment, that they have suffered shipwreck of the faith, and have revolted from the unity of the Church; and besides, by their own act they subject themselves to the penalties justly established if what they think they should dare to signify by word, writing, or any other outward means.

Our mouth is filled with joy and Our tongue with exultation, and We return, and shall ever return, the most humble and the greatest thanks to Jesus-Christ Our Lord, because through His singular beneficence He has granted to Us, though unworthy, to offer and decree this honour, glory, and praise to His Most Holy Mother; but We rely with most certain hope and confidence that this Most

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Blessed Virgin, who, all fair and immaculate, has bruised the poisonous head of the most malignant serpent, and brought salvation to the world, who is the praise of the Prophets and the Apostles, the honour of the Martyrs, and the crown and joy of all the Saints,—who is the safest refuge and most faithful helper of all who are in danger, and the most powerful mediatrix and conciliatrix with the only-begotten Son of the whole world, and the most illustrious glory, and ornament, and most firm guardian of the Holy Church,—who has destroyed all heresies, and snatched from the greatest calamities of all kinds the faithful people and nations, and delivered Us from so many threatening dangers; will effect by her most powerful patronage that, all difficulties being removed, and all errors dissipated, Our Holy Mother the Catholic Church may flourish daily more and more throughout all nations and countries, and may reign from sea to sea to the end of the earth and may enjoy all peace, tranquillity, and liberty; that the sinful may obtain pardon, the sick healing, the weak strength of heart, the afflicted consolation, and that all who are in error, their spiritual blindness being dissipated, may return to the path of truth and justice, and may become one flock and one shepherd.

Let all the children of the Catholic Church most dear to Us hear these Our words, and, with a more ardent zeal of piety, religion, and love, proceed to worship, invoke, and pray to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, conceived without original sin and let them fly with entire confidence to this most sweet Mother of Mercy and Grace in all dangers, difficulties, doubts, and fears. For nothing is to be feared, and nothing is to be despaired of under her guidance, under her auspices, under her favour, under her protection, who, bearing towards us a maternal affection, and taking up the business of our salvation, is solicitous for the whole human race, and, appointed by God the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and exalted above all the choirs of Angels, and orders of Saints, standing at the right hand of the only-begotten Son, Jesus-Christ Our Lord, intercedes most powerfully and obtains what she asks, and cannot be frustrated.

Finally, in order that this Our definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary may be brought to the knowledge of the universal Church, We will these Letters Apostolic to stand for a perpetual remembrance of the thing, commanding that to transcripts or printed copies, subscribed by the hand of some notary public, and authenticated by the seal of a person of Ecclesiastical rank, appointed for the purpose, the same faith shall be paid which would be paid to those presents if they were exhibited or shown.

Let no man interfere with this Our declaration, pronouncement, and definition or oppose and contradict it with presumptuous rashness. If any should presume

to assail it, let him know that he will incur the indignation of the Omnipotent God and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord, 1854, the sixth of the Ides of December, in the ninth year of our Pontificate.

PIUS IX., POPE.

A true copy,

Secretary of the Archbishoprick.

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NOTA.

By virtue of an Indult from Rome, dated the 28th January, 1855, and received since the Pastoral letter has been sent to the press, we allow all the indulgences granted for the triduo, to be gained by the faithful who shall assist on one day only at the exercises, provided that on the two other days they shall recite the beads, or at least the litanies in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and shall, on the other hand, observe what is prescribed concerning confession, communion and the prayer for the Sovereign Pontif.

† C. F. BISHOP OF TLOA.

