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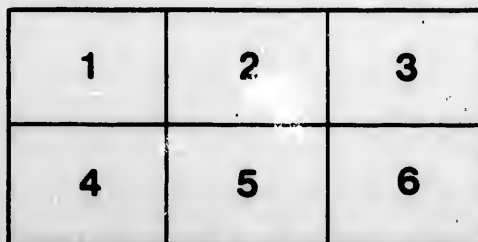
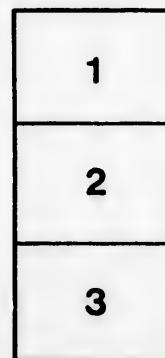
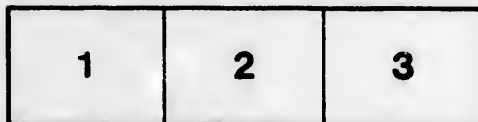
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CIRCULAR

PROMULGATING IN THE DIOCESE OF CHATHAM,

THE ENCYCLICAL LETTER

OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE LEO XIII,

AGAINST AFRICAN SLAVERY

AND ORDERING A

COLLECTION IN THE CHURCHES

ON THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY EACH YEAR.

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CIRCULAR

PROMULGATING IN THE DIOCESE OF CHATHAM,

**THE ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF OUR HOLY FATHER POPE LEO XIII,
AGAINST AFRICAN SLAVERY AND ORDERING A COL-
LECTION IN THE CHURCHES ON THE FEAST OF THE
EPIPHANY EACH YEAR.**

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

A few days ago we received through our venerable Metropolitan, the Archbishop of Halifax, the official copy of an Encyclical Letter recently addressed by Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, to all the Bishops of the Catholic world, ordaining that henceforth in every Catholic Church on the Feast of the Epiphany each year, a collection be taken up from the faithful to be transmitted to the Ordinary, who will duly forward it to the Propaganda, Rome; and the committee appointed for that purpose by the Pope will distribute the alms thus received among the various missionaries in Africa, who are sent to bear the light of the Christian Religion to multitudes who are still in pagan darkness and worse than anti-Christian slavery, in that vast continent.

We beg to send you herewith a copy of the said letter, such as received, in Latin, preceded by translations in English and in French, and request that you will read the same (in the vernacular of your people) on the first Sunday after its reception, announcing at the same time, that on the following Sunday a collection will be taken up in that Church or congregation, for the object specified, according to the wishes of the Pope. This collection will be repeated each succeeding year on the Feast of the Epiphany or following Sunday.

There is another annual collection to be taken up each year, on Good Friday, in behalf of the Franciscans who are charged with the care of the sacred places of pilgrimage in the Holy Land, which collection in its totality as soon as received, will, as in the past, be transmitted by the Bishop, to the Rev. Father, Commissary of the Holy Land for Canada, (at present Father Frederic de Ghyvelde, O. S. F., residing at Three Rivers, P. Q.)

Knowing as we do the limited financial resources and straitened circumstances of our faithful people in this young and struggling Diocese, where a sufficiency of Churches, Clergy, religious schools, and institutions, though gradually increasing,

are not yet sufficiently numerous and well founded; and also knowing the noble spirit of generosity and piety, with which they have in the past responded to every call made upon them, we should feel loth to appeal to our flock for contributions towards distant and outside objects, were it not for the authoritative voice of the Sovereign Pontiff, who as the father of all the faithful, feels for all, especially the most needy, and begs in their behalf even from those who have but little, a portion of that little, to relieve and sustain their afflicted brethren; and indeed, of all outside calls, the two objects above specified justly claim the consideration of all Christian people.

The sacred places in the Holy Land dear to the hearts of all christians, the places that were sanctified by the presence of Our Divine Lord, where the great mysteries of our religion, the Incarnation, Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Our Saviour took place, where the Holy Ghost first descended upon the disciples and first members of the christian church, and where so many miracles and great events in connection with the establishment of christianity occurred—these holy places have ever been the objects of the christian's affection, their preservation and honorable religious condition, to receive the visits of pious pilgrims, have ever been the object of the paternal official solicitude of the Pope in every age. It was for this that the wars of the Crusades were indicted by Popes, and carried on by christian kings and people, against the Saracens who desecrated the holy places and used to insult, persecute and put to death the christians who undertook pious pilgrimages in those cradle lands of their holy religion. That whole country, Syria, in which are located Jerusalem; Bethlehem, Nazareth, Calvary, Mount Olivet, etc., still continues to be in the possession and under the government of the Turkish Sultan. The power and influence of the christian nations of Europe during the past centuries, were not able to deprive the Turkish empire of these holy places. But their diplomatic relations with the government of the Sultan of Turkey, obtained certain permissions and priveleges from the Turkish government, by which religious communities of monks and nuns, some under the patronage of France, some under that of England, others under that of Austria, and some schismatical Greeks under the patronage of Russia, are located adjacent to, and are the guardians of these holy places respectively. So that christian travellers and pilgrims from the various countries of Europe and America, can now happily and without molestation or insult visit those sacred shrines, and while there receive needed information, guidance and hospitality, from the christian religious families and persons who are located there, and who

are supported by the donations and contributions distributed amongst them by the christian people and nations who patronize them, and without whose help they could not support themselves in that now almost desert country. It is for this object that Our Holy Father has ordered the annual collection on Good Friday to be made for the Franciscans of the Holy Land.

The object of the other annual collection to be made on the feast of the Epiphany for christianizing and delivering from both spiritual and corporal slavery and barbarism, the vast multitudes of the "Dark Continent," to whom the light of the Gospel has not yet penetrated, is a most just and important one. It is most appropriate that the Sovereign Pontiff who in his life is realizing the prophetic title attributed to him "Lumen in Coelo," should interest himself in the conversion to the christian faith, as well as the deliverance from barbaric slavery, of those fellow-creatures of the interior of Africa, towards whom the civilized nations of Europe are giving their attention. The explorations of so many travellers, recently, through the interior of Africa, the wars waged by English troops in Egypt, among whom were several from our Canadian provinces, the trade and commercial relations opening up between outside Christian peoples and the Africans, make opportune and favorable the time and means intended by the Holy Father for his most laudable missionary designs and enterprises in that continent. Hence I trust this collection of the Epiphany for the Africans will be generous and duly sustained.

I avail myself of this occasion to announce that the dispensation from the obligations of fasting and abstinence, on account of prevalent influenza, proclaimed to the faithful under our jurisdiction in our circular letter dated Feb. 27th, 1890, as authorized by the Pope's decree, is hereby withdrawn; and further that the regulations for Lent this year will be the same as those in existence in our Diocese during the previous nine years.

Given at Chatham, N. B., this 31st day of December, 1890.

† JAMES ROGERS, Bishop of Chatham.

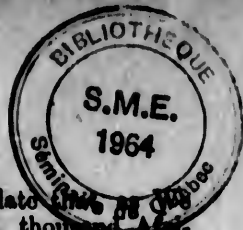
THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL LETTER.

VENERABLE BROTHER.

Health and Apostolic Benediction.

As you have known, venerable Brother, there was scarcely anything dearer to the Church from the beginning than to see the slavery which oppressed so many human beings by its miserable yoke removed and entirely destroyed. A careful custodian of the doctrine of her Founder, Who from His own mouth and through the voice of His Apostles had taught the fraternal amity which unites all men, inasmuch as they have the same origin, are redeemed at the same price, and are called to the same eternal bliss, she took up the neglected cause of the slaves and stood forth a strenuous defender of liberty, although her action was gradual and temperate in accordance as circumstances and times required. That is to say, she did this with prudence and discretion, constantly demanding what she sought in the name of religion, justice and humanity; by the adoption of which course she has most admirably furthered the prosperity of nations and civil culture. Nor did this zeal of the Church for setting slaves free grow weak with the lapse of time; nay, the more fruitful it proved, the more ardent it became. This is most certainly attested by the monuments of history which have for that work commended to posterity many of Our predecessors, amongst whom are conspicuous St. Gregory the Great, Hadrian I., Alexander III., Innocent III., Gregory IX., Pious II., Leo X., Paul III., Urban VIII., Benedict XIV., Pious VII., and Gregory XVI., who labored most earnestly that the system of slavery might be abolished wherever it flourished, and that care should be taken to prevent it from taking root again where it had been destroyed.

Such a praiseworthy inheritance bequeathed by Our predecessors could not be repudiated by Us; wherefore We have omitted no occasion of openly reprehending and condemning this cruel plague of slavery; and the opportunity occurring We treated of this matter in the letter sent to the Bishops of Brazil on the 7th May, 1888, in which we congratulated them on what had been done in that country, in a laudable manner, by private individuals and by the State for the liberty of the slaves, and at the same time We showed how much slavery is opposed to religion and the dignity of man. When We wrote that letter We were, indeed, greatly moved by the condition of those who were in servitude to others; but We have been much more keenly affected by the account of the miseries with which all the inhabitants of certain regions in the interior of Africa have to



struggle. It is truly woful and horrible to relate. We learn from sure informants, nearly four hundred thousand Africans, without distinction of age or sex, are every year forcibly torn from their rural villages, whence, bound in chains and beaten with scourges, they are dragged a long distance to the market-places, where like cattle for sale, they are exhibited and disposed of. As these things have been attested by those who have seen them, and, as the reports have been confirmed by recent explorers of Central Africa, We have entertained an ardent desire of aiding those unfortunate creatures, as far as Our power will permit, and relieving their wretchedness. Without delay, therefore, We requested Our beloved son, Cardinal Charles Martial Lavigerie, whose apostolic energy and zeal are well known to Us, to go through the principal nations of Europe in order that he might point out the ignominy of this most disgraceful traffic and induce rulers and states to come to the assistance of those afflicted people. Wherefore, We have to thank Christ our Lord, the beloved Redeemer of all people, Who in His bounty has not suffered Our efforts to remain without effect, but has willed that they should be, as it were seed sown in fertile ground, which gives promise of a satisfactory crop; for both the rulers of states and Catholics throughout the world—all, in fact, to whom the laws of nations and nature are sacred—have entered into rivalry to examine as to the best method and means to be adopted for the radical abolition of this inhuman traffic. The solemn congress held not long since at Brussels, at which representatives of the rulers of Europe assembled, and the more recent gathering of private men who met at Paris for the same great purpose, are proofs that the cause of the African race will be defended with a force and constancy proportionate to the miseries under which they are suffering. We are, therefore, unwilling to let pass the occasion of returning due praise and thanks to the rulers of Europe and other men of good will, and We earnestly pray God to grant a successful issue to their designs and undertakings in such an important work.

But, besides the anxiety to defend liberty, another desire touches more closely our Apostolic ministry, which bids us take care to propagate in the regions of Africa the Gospel doctrine by which their inhabitants sitting, as they are, in darkness and sunk in blind superstition, may be enlightened with the light of Divine truth through which they may become with Us sharers in the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. This object We sought to attain all the more earnestly because when they have received this light they will also shake off the yoke of human slavery; for where Christian customs and laws prevail, where

religion has taught men to observe justice and honour human dignity, where the spirit of fraternal charity which Christ breathed has spread far and wide, *there* neither slavery, nor a state of slavery, nor barbarism can exist; but gentleness of manners and Christian liberty adorned by civil culture, flourish. Already many Apostolic men, picked Christian soldiers, as it were, have entered those regions, and *there* have not merely exerted themselves actively but laid down their lives for the salvation of their brethren. Still "the harvest is rich, indeed, but the labourers few." Hence it is necessary that as many more as possible, led by the same spirit of God, and fearing no dangers, inconveniences, nor labours, should proceed to the regions where this shameful traffic is carried on, with the view of carrying to the inhabitants the doctrine of Christ which is bound up with true liberty. But the undertaking of such a work demands resources commensurate with its extent; for not without immense expense can we look forward to the establishment of missionary institutions, the making of long journeys, the preparation of houses, the raising and completion of churches, and the carrying out of other necessary requirements of this kind, which expense must be borne for some years until the missionaries shall be in a position to support themselves in the places where they shall have taken up their residence. Would that we had resources which would enable us to take upon ourselves this burden, but since the straitness of Our circumstances stand in the way of Our desires, with paternal voice, We address you, Venerable Brother, other sacred administrators, and all Catholics, and We recommend to your and their charity a work so holy and salutary; for We wish that all should become sharers in it, if only by a small contribution, in order that divided amongst many, the burden may be lighter to bear for each, and that all may abundantly receive the grace of Christ (the furtherance of Whose Kingdom is in question) and that by that grace all may obtain peace, pardon of sin, and the choicest blessings.

Wherefore We decree that each year, wherever the mysteries of the Epiphany of Our Lord are celebrated, there shall be held on that day a collection, as of alms, in aid of the work We have described. And We have chosen that solemn day above others because, as you well know, Venerable Brother, on that day the Son of God revealed Himself to the nations when He showed himself to the Magi, who were therefore happily called by St. Leo the Great, Our predecessor, "the first fruits of our vocation and Faith." We are, therefore, buoyed up by the firm hope that Christ Our Lord, moved by the charity and the prayers of His children, who have received the light of truth, will also shed

the light of His Divine revelation on this most wretched portion of the human race, and will rescue it from the mire of superstition and the miserable condition in which it has so long been cast down and neglected.

We desire that the money collected in the churches and chapels under your jurisdiction on the day mentioned be forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda at Rome. It will be the duty of that Congregation to distribute the money amongst the missions which exist or shall be established to abolish slavery most effectually in Africa. The distribution will take place this way: the money obtained from the nations which have their own Catholic missions for the redemption of the slaves, as We have stated, will be devoted to the support and assistance of those missions. The Sacred Congregation, to whom the necessities of these same missions are known, shall with prudent judgment distribute amongst the more needy the remainder of the contributions.

We doubt not that God, who abounds in mercy will graciously answer the intentions We have formed for the benefit of the unhappy Africans and that you, venerable brother, will willingly exercise your zeal and lend your assistance so that they may be amply fulfilled. We trust, moreover, that the temporary and special aid, which the faithful will contribute for the purpose of wiping out the shame of this inhuman traffic and sustaining the ministers of the Gospel in the places where it flourishes, will not result in any diminution of the liberality with which they are wont to assist Catholic missions through the institution founded at Lyons for the Propagation of the Faith. On that useful work which we have on a former occasion commended to the zeal of the faithful, We bestow, now that the opportunity occurs, a fresh testimony of praise, desiring that it may widely extend its benefits, and may enjoy a healthy prosperity. Meanwhile, to you, venerable brother, and to the clergy and faithful committed to your pastoral care, We most lovingly impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St. Peter's, Rome, on the 20th Nov., 1890, the thirteenth year of Our Pontificate.
LEO XIII, POPE.

L E T T R E
DE SA SAINTETÉ LE PAPE LÉON XIII
AUX ÉVÊQUES DU MONDE CATHOLIQUE
SUR L'ABOLITION DE L'ESCLAVAGE

Vénérables Frères,
Salut et bénédiction apostolique.

L'Eglise catholique, qui embrasse tous les hommes dans sa maternelle affection, n'a eu dans tous les temps rien de plus à cœur, comme vous le savez, Vénérable Frère, que de voir l'esclavage, qui faisait peser un joug cruel sur un si grand nombre des mortels, être supprimé et disparaître entièrement. Gardienne vigilante de la doctrine de son Fondateur, qui avait enseigné aux hommes, par lui-même et par la voix des Apôtres, le lien fraternal qui les unit tous, comme sortis de la même origine, rachetés du même prix, appelés au même bonheur éternel, elle prit en mains la cause abandonnée des esclaves et se montra le champion valliant de la liberté, bien que, selou l'exigence des choses et des temps, elle agit graduellement et avec mesure. Elle accomplit en effet cette œuvre avec sagesse et maturité, ne cessant de poursuivre son but au nom de la religion, de la justice et de l'humanité, et elle mérita ainsi excellemment du progrès et de la civilisation.

Ce zèle de l'Eglise pour l'affranchissement des esclaves ne s'affaiblit pas avec le cours des âges ; au contraire, plus il obtenait de succès, plus son ardeur croissait. Cela est attesté par les monuments les plus certains de l'histoire, qui a recommandé à ce titre à la postérité nombre de Nos prédécesseurs, parmi lesquels on distingue saint Grégoire le Grand, Adrien I, Alexandre III, Innocent III, Grégoire IX, Pie II, Léon X, Paul III, Urbain VIII, Benoît XIV, Pie VII, Grégoire XVI, qui consacrent tous leurs efforts à faire disparaître l'institution de l'esclavage de là où elle existait, et à empêcher que, là où elle était supprimée, ses germes ne vinsent à reprendre vie.

Nous ne pouvions répudier un héritage si glorieux transmis par Nos prédécesseurs ; c'est pourquoi Nous n'avons négligé aucune occasion de réprover publiquement et de condamner cet horrible fléau de l'esclavage ; et nous avons traité avec soin de cette question dans la Lettre que Nous avons adressée, le 3 des nones de mai de l'année 1888, aux évêques du Brésil, par laquelle Nous les avons félicités de tout ce que les particuliers et le pouvoir avaient accompli de louable dans ce pays pour la

liberté des esclaves, et Nous avons montré en même temps combien l'esclavage est contraire à la religion et à la dignité humaine.

A la vérité, pendant que Nous écrivions cette Lettre, Nous étions vivement ému de la condition de ceux qui sont la propriété d'un autre; mais Nous étions bien plus cruellement affecté par le récit des maux qui assaillent tous les habitants de certaines régions de l'Afrique intérieure. C'est chose lamentable assurément et horrible à rappeler ce que nous apprennent des témoignages certains, que près de quatre cent mille Africains, sans distinction d'âge ni de sexe, sont chaque année arrachés par violence des villages qu'ils habitent, d'où, chargés de chaînes et accablés de coups, ils sont trainés par de longs chemins sur des marchés pour y être exposés et vendus comme un vil bétail.

Comme ces faits ont été attestés par des témoins oculaires et confirmés par les récents explorateurs de l'Afrique équatoriale, Nous avons été enflammé du désir de secourir selon Nos forces ces malheureux et de soulager leur infortune. C'est pourquoi, sans aucun retard, Nous avons confié à Notre chers Fils le cardinal Charles-Martial Lavigerie, dont l'activité et le zèle apostolique Nous sont connus, le soin d'aller dans les principales villes de l'Europe pour faire ressortir l'ignominie de cet infame négoce et pour incliner l'esprit des Princes et des citoyens à prêter assistance à une race mal heureuse.

A ce sujet, Nous devons des actions de grâce au Christ Seigneur, Rédempteur très aimant de tous les peuples, qui n'a pas permis, dans sa bonté, que Nos sollicitudes fussent vaines, mais qui a voulu qu'elles fussent comme la semence confiée à une terre fertile, promettant une joyeuse moisson. Car les chefs des peuples et les catholiques du monde entier, tous ceux enfin à qui le droit des gens et les droits de la nature sont sacrés, ont rivalisé dans la recherche des meilleurs moyens à employer pour extirper radicalement ce commerce inhumain. Le congrès solennel tenu il y a peu de temps à Bruxelles, auquel ont pris part les délégués des princes de l'Europe, et l'assemblée plus récente dans laquelle des hommes privés se sont réunis à Paris dans le même but, témoignent ostensiblement que la cause des nègres sera défendue avec une force et une constance proportionnées à la masse des maux qui les écrasent. C'est pourquoi nous ne voulons pas laisser échapper l'occasion qui s'offre de nouveau de louer et de remercier comme ils le méritent les princes de l'Europe et les autres hommes de bonne volonté, et Nous prions instamment le Dieu tout-puissant qu'il daigne don-

ner le succès à leurs desseins et aux commencements d'une si grande entreprise.

Mais, outre le souci de protéger la liberté, une autre sollicitude plus grave tient de plus près à Notre ministère apostolique, lequel Nous prescrit de veiller à ce que la doctrine évangélique soit propagée dans les régions de l'Afrique, afin qu'elle illumine les habitants de ces terres assis dans les ténèbres, aveuglés par d'épaisses superstitions, des clartés de la vérité divine, qui les rende participants avec nous de l'héritage du royaume de Dieu. Nous poursuivons ce but avec d'autant plus d'ardeur qu'ayant reçu cette lumière, ils secoueront aussi le joug de la servitude humaine. Là, en effet, où les mœurs et les lois chrétiennes sont en vigueur ; là où la religion a instruit les hommes à observer la justice et à honorer la dignité humaine ; là où s'est largement répandu l'esprit de la charité fraternelle que Jésus-Christ nous a enseignée, il ne peut plus subsister ni servitude, ni férocité, ni barbarie ; mais on voit fleurir l'aménité des mœurs et la liberté chrétienne ornée des biens de la civilisation.

Déjà plusieurs hommes apostoliques, comme des soldats d'avant garde de Jésus-Christ, ont abordé ces régions et y ont répandu non seulement leur sueur, mais aussi leur vie pour le salut de leurs frères. Mais *la moisson est abondante et peu nombreux sont les travailleurs* ; c'est pourquoi il faut que d'autres, en grand nombre, sous l'action du même esprit de Dieu, sans craindre aucun péril, aucune difficulté, aucun labeur, s'en aillent vers les régions où s'exerce ce honteux commerce, pour porter à leurs habitants la doctrine de Jésus-Christ unie à la vraie liberté.

Mais l'entreprise d'une si grande œuvre réclame des ressources égales à ses proportions. Car ce n'est pas sans de grandes dépenses qu'on peut pourvoir à l'établissement des missionnaires, aux frais de longs voyages, à la mise en état des maisons, à la construction et à l'ornementation des églises et aux autres nécessités du même genre ; toutes ces dépenses devront être supportées durant quelques années, jusqu'à ce que, dans les lieux où ils se seront établis, les prédicateurs de l'Évangile puissent se suffire avec leurs propres moyens.

Plût à Dieu que Nos ressources fussent suffisantes pour Nous permettre d'assumer cette charge ! Mais, puisque l'état de détresse où Nous sommes s'oppose à cette réalisation de Nos vœux, Nous vous adressons un appel paternel, à vous, Vénérables Frères, à tous les autres évêques et à tous les catholiques, et Nous recommandons à votre charité comme à la leur une œuvre si sainte et salutaire. Nous souhaitons, en effet, que tous y participent, fût-ce par la plus légère aumône, afin que, répartie entre plus de

monde, la charge soit plus facile à porter pour chacun ; afin aussi que la grâce de Jesus Christ, dont il s'agit d'étendre le règne, se répande sur tous et qu'à tous elle apporte la paix, le pardon des péchés et tous les dons de choix.

C'est pourquoi nous établissons que, chaque année, au jour et dans tous les lieux où l'on célèbre la fête de l'Épiphanie du Seigneur, une quête sera faite pour venir en aide à l'œuvre dont Nous venons de parler. Nous avons choisi entre les autres, cette solennité parce que, comme vous le comprenez très bien, Vénéralles Frères, c'est en ce jour que le Fils de Dieu s'est premièrement révélé aux nations en se faisant voir aux Magis qui, à cause de cela, ont été heureusement appelés par saint Léon le Grand, Notre prédécesseur, *les prémices de notre vocation et de notre foi*. Aussi Nous avons bon espoir que Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ, touché de la charité et des prières de ses fils qui ont reçu la lumière de la vérité, illuminera semblablement par la révélation de sa divinité cette partie, si malheureuse du genre humain, et qu'il l'arrachera au borbier de superstition et à la condition misérable où, dans l'abjection et l'abandon, elle est depuis si longtemps plongée.

C'est en outre Notre volonté que l'argent recueilli au jour indiqué dans les églises et les chapelles soumises à votre juridiction soit envoyé à Rome, à la Sacrée-Congrégation de la Propagande. C'est à celle-ci qu'il appartiendra de partager ces offrandes entre les missions qui sont ou seront installées dans les régions de l'Afrique *principalement pour y détruire l'esclavage* ; et la règle de la repartition sera que l'argent provenant de nations ayant leurs missions catholiques pour la libération des esclaves, ainsi que Nous l'avons dit, soit appliqué à soutenir et à aider ces missions. Quant au reste des aumônes, il sera distribué avec un sage discernement entre les missions les plus pauvres par la même Sacrée-Congrégation, qui est au courant des besoins de ces missions.

Nous ne saurions douter que le Dieu riche en miséricorde n'accueille avec bonté les vœux que Nous formons pour les malheureux Africains, et que vous, Vénéralles Frères, vous ne donniez avec empressement votre zèle et vos efforts pour qu'ils soient pleinement accomplis. De plus, Nous avons confiance que ce secours temporaire et particulier, apporté par les fidèles pour faire disparaître la tâche d'un trafic inhumain et pour soutenir les messagers de l'Évangile dans les lieux où ce trafic existe, n'amènera aucune diminution dans la libéralité avec laquelle ils ont coutume d'aider les missions catholiques en versant leurs offrandes à l'œuvre fondée à Lyon sous le nom de *Propagation de la Foi*. Cette œuvre salutaire, que Nous avons déjà recom-

mandée à la sollicitude des fidèles, aujourd'hui encore Nous saisissons l'occasion de l'honorer par un nouvel éloge, en exprimant le désir qu'elle étende au loin sa bienfaisance et qu'elle jouisse d'une florissante et heureuse prospérité.

En attendant Nous vous donnons très affectueusement la bénédiction apostolique, à vous, Vénérables Frères, ainsi qu'au clergé et aux fidèles confiés à votre vigilance pastorale.

Donné à Rome, près Saint Pierre, le 20 novembre de l'année 1890, la treizième de Notre Pontificat.

LÉON XIII, PAPE.

VENERABILIS FRATER

SALVTEM ET APOSTOLICAM BENEDICTIONEM

Catholicae Ecclesiae, quae omnes homines materna caritate complectitur, nihil fere antiquius fuit inde ab initio, ceu nosti, Venerabilis Frater, quam ut servitutem, quae misero jugo premebat mortalium quamplurimos, sublatam cerneret penitusque deletam. Sedula enim custos doctrinae Conditoris sui, qui per se Ipsum et Apostolorum voce docuerat homines fraternam necessitudinem quae jungit universos, utpote eadem origine cretos, eodem pretio redemptos, ad eandem vocatos beatitatem aeternam, suscepit neglectam servorum causam ac strenua vindex libertatis extitit, etsi, prout res et tempora ferebant, sensim reingereret ac temperate. Scilicet id praestitit prudentia et consilio constanter postulans quod intendebat religionis, justitiae et humanitatis nomine; quo facto de nationum prosperitate cultuque civili meruit optime.—Neque aetatis decursu hoc Ecclesiae studium adserendi mancipia in libertatem elanguit; imo quo fructuosius erat in dies, eo flagrabat impensius. Quod certissima testantur monumenta historiae, quae eo nomine plures commendavit posteritati Decessores Nostros, quos inter praestant S. Gregorius Magnus, Hadrianus I, Alexander III, Innocentius III, Gregorius IX, Pius II, Leo X, Paulus III, Urbanus VIII, Benedictus XIV, Pius VII, Gregorius XVI, qui omnem curam et operam contulere, ut servitutis institutio, ubi vigeat, excideret, et caveretur ne unde exsecta fuerat, ibi ejus germina reviviscerent.

Tantae laudis hereditas a Praedecessoribus tradita repudiari a Nobis non poterat: quare nulla praetermissa a Nobis occasio est, improbandi palam damnandique tetricam hanc servitutis pestem; ac data opera de ea re in litteris egimus, quas III Nonas Maias anno MDCCCLXXXVIII ad Episcopos Brasiliae dedimus, quibus gratulati sumus de iis, quae pro mancipiorum libertate in ea regione gesta fuerant laudabili exemplo privatim et publice, simulque ostendimus quantopere servitus religioni et humanae dignitati adversetur. Equidem cum ea scriberemus, vehementer commovebamur eorum conditione qui dominio subduntur alieno; at multo acerbius affecti sumus narratione aerumnarum, quibus conflictantur incolae universi regionum quarumdam Africae interioris. Miserum sane et horrendum memoratu est, quod certis nunciis accepimus, fere quadringenta Afrorum millia, nullo aetatis ac sexus discrimine, quotannis abripi per vim e rusticis pagis, unde catenis vincti ac caesi verberibus longo itinere trahuntur ad fora, ubi pecudum instar promercialium exhibentur ac veneunt.

—Quae cum testata essent ab iis qui viderunt, et a recentibus exploratoribus Africae aequinoctialis confirmata, desiderio incensum sumus opitulandi pro viribus miseris illis, levandique eorum calamitatem. Propterea, nulla interjecta mora, dilecto Filio Nostro Cardinali Carolo Martiali Lavigerie, cujus perspecta Nobis est alacritas ac zelus Apostolicus, curam demandavimus obeundi praecipuas Europae civitates, ut mercatus hujus turpissimi ignominiam ostenderet, et Principum civiumque animos ad opem ferendam aeruunosae genti inclinaret.—Quam ob rem gratiae Nobis habendae sunt Christo Domino, gentium omnium Redemptori amantissimo, qui pro benignitate sua passus non est curas Nostras in irritum cedere, sed voluit esse quasi semem feraci creditum humo, quod laetam segetem pollicetur. Namque et Rectores populorum et Catholici ex toto terrarum orbe, omnes demum, quibus sancta sunt gentium et naturae jura, certarunt inquirere, qua potissimum ratione et ope conniti praestet, ut inhumanum illud commercium evellatur radicibus. Solemnis Conventus non ita pridem Bruxellis actus, quo Legati Principum Europae congressi sunt, ac recentior coetus privatorum virorum, qui eodem spectantes magno animo Lutetiam convenere, manifesto portendunt tanta vi et constantia Nigritarum causam defensum iri, quanta est ea qua premuntur aerumnarum moles; Quare oblatam iterum occasionem nolimus omittere, ut meritas agamus laudes et gratias Europae Principibus ceterisque bonae voluntatis hominibus, atque a summo Deo precamur enixe, ut eorum consiliis et orsis tanti operis prosperos dare velit eventus.

At vero praeter tuendae libertatis curam, gravior alia pressius attingit apostolicum ministerium Nostrum, quod Nos curare jubet, ut in Africae regionibus propagetur Evangelii doctrina, quae illarum incolas sedentes in tenebris, a caeca superstitione offusis, illustret divinae veritatis luce, perquam nobiscum fiant participes hereditatis Regni Dei. Idem autem eo curamus enixius, quod illi, hac luce recepta, etiam humanae servitutis ab se jugum excutiant. Ubi enim christiani mores legesque vigent, ubi religio sic homines instituit, ut justitiam servent atque in honore habeant humanam dignitatem, ubi late spiritus manavit fraternae caritatis, quam Christus nos docuit, ibi neque servitus, nec feritas, neque barbaria extare potest; sed floret morum suavitas, et civili ornata cultu christiana libertas.—Plures jam Apostolici viri, quasi Christi milites antesignani adiere regiones illas, ibique ad fratrum salutem non sudorem modo sed vitam ipsam profuderunt. Sed *messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci*: quare opus est, ut alii quamplures eodem acti spiritu Dei, nulla verentes discrimina, incommoda et labores, ad eas regiones pergant, ubi probrosum illud commercium exer-

cetur, allaturi illarum incolis doctrinam Christi verae libertati conjunctam.—Verum tanti operis aggressio copias flagitat ejus amplitudini pares. Non enim sine ingenti sumptu prospici potest Missionariorum institutioni, longis itineribus, parandis aedibus, templis excitandis et instruendis, aliisque id genus necessariis, quae quidem impendia per aliquot annos sustinenda erunt, donec in iis locis ubi considerint evangelii praecones, suis se sumptibus tueri possint. Utinam Nobis vires suppetent quibus possemus hoc onus suscipere. At quum votis Nostris obsistant graves, in quibus versamur, rerum angustiae, te, Venerabilis Frater, aliosque sacrorum Antistites et Catholicos omnes paterna voce compellamus, et Vestrae eorumque caritati commendamus opus tam sanctum et salutare. Omnes enim participes ejus optamus fieri, exigua licet collata stipe, ut dispartitum in plures onus levius cuique toleratu sit, atque ut in omnes effundatur gratia Christi, de cuius regni propugnatione agitur, eaque cunctis pacem, veniam peccatorum, et lectissima quaeque munera impertiat.

Propterea constituimus, ut quotannis, qua die in quibusque locis Epiphaniae Domini celebrantur mysteria, in subsidium memorati operis pecunia stipis instar corrogetur. Hanc autem solemnem diem prae ceteris elegimus quia, uti probe intelligis Venerabilis Frater, ea die Filius Dei primitus sese gentibus revelavit dum Magis videndum se praebuit, qui ideo a S. Leone Magno decessore Nostro scite dicti sunt *vocationis nostrae fideique primitiae*. Itaque bona spe nitimur fore, ut Christus Dominus permotus caritate et precibus filiorum, qui veritatis lucem acceperunt, revelatione divinitatis suae etiam miserrimam illam humani generis partem illustret, eamque a superstitionis coeno et aerumosa conditione, in qua tamdiu abjecta et neglecta jacet, eripiat.

Placet autem Nobis, ut pecunia, praedicta die, collecta in ecclesiis et sacellis subjectis jurisdictioni tuae, Romam mittatur ad Sacrum Consilium Christiano nomini propagando. Hujus porro munus erit partiendi eam pecuniam inter Missiones quae *ad delendam potissimum servitutum* in Africae regionibus extant aut instituentur: cujus partitionis hic modus erit, ut pecunia profecta ex nationibus, quae suas habent catholicas missiones ad vindicandos in libertatem servos, ut memoravimus, istis missionibus sustentandis juvandisque addicatur. Reliquam vero stipem idem Sacrum Consilium, cui earundem missionum necessitates compertae sunt, inter egentiores prudenti judicio partietur.

Equidem non ambigimus, quin vota Nostra pro infelicibus Afris concepta, benigne excipiat dives in misericordia Deus, ac

tu Venerabilis Frater, ultro collaturus sis studium operamque tuam, ut ea expleantur cumulate.—Confidimus insuper, per hoc temporarium ac peculiare subsidium, quod fideles conferent ad inhumani commercii labem abolendam et sustentandos evangelii nuncios in locis ubi illud viget, nihil imminutum iri de liberalitate qua Catholicas missiones adjuvare solent collata stipe in Institutum quod Lugduni conditum a *propagatione fidei* nomen accepit. Salutare hoc opus, quod fidelium studiis pridem commendavimus, hac nunc opportunitate oblata novo ornamus laudis testimonio, optantes ut late porrigat beneficentiam suam et lacta floreat prosperitate. Interim Tibi, Venerabilis Frater, Clero et fidelibus pastoralis vigilantiae tuae commissis, Apostolicam Benedictionem peramanter impertimus.

Datum Romae apud S. Petrum, die xx Novembris anno MDCCCXC, Pontificatus Nostri decimo tertio.

LEO PP. XIII.

