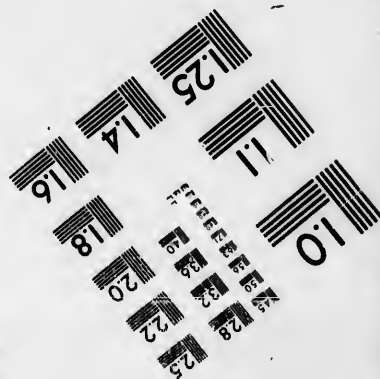
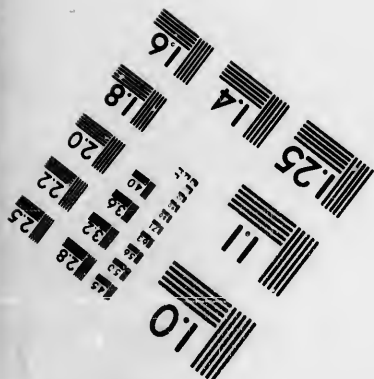
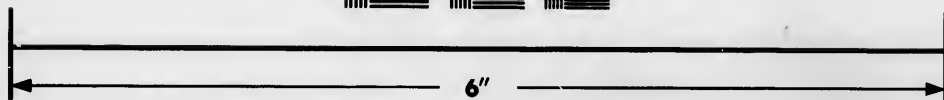
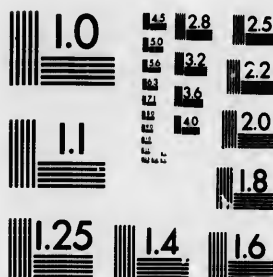


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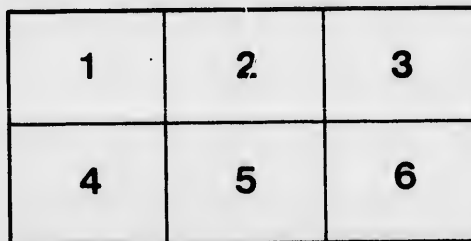
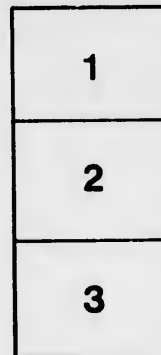
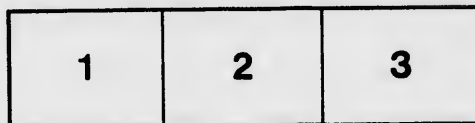
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28 Feb 1858

PASTORAL LETTER

FOR THE LENT OF MDCCCLIX.

EDWARD JOHN, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE FAVOR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, BISHOP OF KINGSTON.

TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF OUR DIOCESS, HEALTH AND BLESSING IN THE LORD.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :

Since the day when, notwithstanding my unworthiness, I was appointed to the government of this important Diocese, I have never failed to beg of God that He would watch over your spiritual interests, enrich you with His most precious gifts, and grant me grace to fulfill, to the utmost of my poor abilities, the heavy duties imposed on me.

At the approach of the solemn season upon which we are about to enter, I deem it my duty as your Pastor, to address you and exhort you to profit of the abundant favors which the Almighty places before us during these days of salvation. We are about to commence, with the Universal Church, that Holy Season of Penance and Prayer,—that season of combat and of victory for the Christian. With what holy zeal and courage should we not observe this Holy Fast, sanctified as it is by the example of our Blessed Master. The lenten fast, (according to St. Augustin), is founded on the authority both of the Old and of the New Testament. Under the old dispensation we behold MOSES fasting forty days to prepare himself to receive the Tables of the Law; ELIAS, by the command of the LORD, also fasted forty days, and in the New Law have we not the example of our DIVINE REDEEMER Himself, who, before entering upon His public life, fasted in the desert during forty days and forty nights.

Thus do we see that the fast of Lent is as ancient as the preaching of the Gospel, since the Saviour commenced preaching His holy doctrines after he had performed the fast of forty days, being pleased, (as St. Jerome tells us), thus to sanctify the Christian fast.

Our Mother, the Church, ever guided by the Holy Ghost, commands her children to fast during forty days in memory of the fast which JESUS CHRIST observed in the desert, to give us the means of satisfying the justice of God, offended by our sins, and to prepare us to celebrate in a becoming and worthy manner, the solemn festival of Easter. The practice of mortification and fasting, at all times useful and salutary, is now, during the time of Lent, commanded by the Church. To fast at other times might be a remedy, or a preventive to sin: not to fast during Lent would be a grievous sin, which God would not fail to visit with condign punishment.

Let me, then, exhort you, dearly beloved, to show yourselves obedient to the commands of the Church. But do not remain content with an outward submission; be careful rather to join to exterior acts of mortification, interior acts of penance,—“Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God.” Enter into yourselves, examine carefully the most hidden recesses of your conscience—renounce all sin and all occasions of sin, wash out your iniquities by tears of bitter repentance, and apply yourselves to good works, to prayer, spiritual reading, and alms-giving. Thus may you hope to obtain pardon for the sins of your past life, and to be enabled to guard yourselves against future danger. Embrace then, with christian sentiments, this lenten penance for the sins you have had the misfortune to commit against the divine Majesty. And indeed, since we every day offend God, no single moment of our life should be exempt from penance. But since the Church, like a kind and tender mother, who pities the weakness of her children, has set apart this particular time as a season for serious recollection, ah! do not turn a deaf ear to her voice, but listen rather to her admonitions, and joyfully obey her salutary commands, remembering the teaching of our divine Redeemer that it is only by prayer and fasting we can hope to overcome the enemies of our souls. Deprive for a time your body of its ordinary nourishment. Banish from your minds those frivolous thoughts which occupy but too much of your attention. Retire for some time from worldly conversations and worldly amusements. In this manner you will observe the fast of lent according to the spirit of the Church. By these practices of mortification you will overcome concupiscence, the passions will be weakened and subdued, and the soul, rising above the things of this transitory life, will find a solid and substantial food in the contemplation of heavenly things. Let your fasting be sanctified by prayer, and let your prayer be purified by fasting; you will then have nothing to fear from the enemy of your soul, but strengthened by these holy exercises you will easily overcome all his attacks, and repel all temptations.

Among the works of charity which should ever accompany fasting, to render it truly acceptable to God, there is one work of mercy which I desire to commend in a special manner to your attention: that is THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH, an association which has for its object to carry the knowledge of our Holy Religion to the infidel nations of the Old and the New World.

What more glorious, dearly Beloved Brethren, than to assist in extending the Kingdom of Christ? What can there be more agreeable to our Blessed Saviour than to contribute to the conversion of those souls for whose salvation he gave up his life? Oh! call to mind the infinite value of a soul, remember that the price of these souls which are yet seated in the shadow of death is the blood of Jesus Christ; and remembering this, can you be insensible to their eternal loss? Will you refuse to make a slight sacrifice to save them from eternal misery and make them heirs to the kingdom of heaven? If through your neglect and apathy those immortal souls perish, would you not have reason to fear lest the Almighty should demand at your hands a strict account of them. Should you not tremble lest the Lord to punish your want of charity for your fellow-men, should fulfil, in your regard, those words of the gospel, “With the same measure you dispense to others, it shall be measured to you again.”

Another motive which ought to engage you to become members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, is to be found in the numerous spiritual advantages which the Sovereign Pontiffs have granted to the members of the association. The present reigning Pontiff, the venerable and dearly loved Pius IX, has, both by his letters and new indulgences, endeavored to extend this Association, which, under God, has already effected so great an amount of good, and has brought innumerable souls into the saving fold of Christ. Let me hope then, dearly beloved brethren, that you will all join this pious Association. I say *all*, for the conditions are within the reach of every one, without exception. No one so poor that he cannot afford one half-penny a week, no one so lukewarm, so indifferent to the spiritual destitution of so many millions of souls, as to refuse saying every day *one Pater and one Ave Maria* to obtain the conversion of Infidels. And for so small an offering, for this short prayer, what a rich return! To have a share in all the toils, in all the dangers, in all the sufferings of those holy Missionaries who affront every difficulty, and overcome

every obstacle, who are not arrested by the fear of torments, or death itself, those saintly men for whom "to live is Christ, and to die is gain!" And who shall say what gratitude is felt by those poor nations thus snatched from the darkness of idolatry, towards those to whose charity they are indebted for so inestimable a blessing. How consoling for the members of this heaven-born association to reflect that in every clime, under every sky, so many pure hands are raised to heaven in their behalf, so many grateful hearts invoke blessings on their heads.

Let these reflections awaken in your hearts a true zeal for the glory of God's holy name. Every day, both night and morn, we pray that "*Hallowed be thy name.*" By these words which Jesus Christ himself has taught us to repeat, we ask that the name of God may be known and glorified throughout the whole world, and how can we better prove the sincerity of our hearts in pronouncing those words, than by joining the Association for the Propagation of the Faith?

Once more then, dearly beloved Brethren, I exhort you by the bowels of God's infinite mercy, take pity on those unfortunate nations upon whom the Sun of Justice hath never shone. By your prayers, by your alms, contribute to procure for those of your perishing brethren, a share in the spiritual advantages you enjoy. Let the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, be established in every Mission of this Diocess; let every inhabitant consider it an obligation to become a member of the Association: and thus by your zeal to procure for other nations the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, you will obtain from God that the same Holy Faith may continue to flourish in your midst; for there is no surer means of preserving the Faith amongst yourselves, than to assist in propagating it in other countries.

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

This, our present Pastoral Letter, is to be read in all the Churches and Chapels of this Diocess, on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at the Episcopal Palace at Kingston, under our signature, the Seal of the Diocess, and the countersign of our Secretary, the twenty eighth day of February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Nine.

(L. † S.)

† E. J. Bp. OF KINGSTON.

By His Lordship's command.

P. J. CANNEY,
Pro. Secretary.

(A true copy.)

Pro. Secretary.

N. B.—The regulations for Lent are the same as those established during the preceding years

† E. J. Bp. OF KINGSTON.

