

A LIVING VOICE

BISHOP JOHN BAPTIST SCALABRINI

Translated by
Fr. Gino Dalpiaz, c.s.

Excerpts from his Writings

- I - [Man of God and for God](#)
- II - [Man of the Church and for the Church](#)
- III - [Man of the Word and for the Word](#)
- IV - [Man of the people and for the people](#)
- V - [Man of the migrants and for the migrants](#)

PART I

MAN OF GOD AND FOR GOD

1. Christ, the Alpha and the Omega

- a) [God in us: recapitulating all things in Christ](#)
- b) [The response to God's gift](#)
- c) [Prayer nourishes faith](#)

2. I live by faith in Jesus Christi

- a) [God's greatest gift](#)
- b) [The response to God's gift](#)
- c) [Prayer nourishes faith](#)
- d) [History seen through the eyes of faith](#)
- e) [Faith and reason are two sisters](#)

3. The image of the Christ

- a) [Mary](#)
 - b) [The Saints](#)
 - c) [The poor](#)
-

PART II

MAN OF THE CHURCH AND FOR THE CHURCH

1. The Church

- a) [Continuation of the Incarnation](#)
- b) [Our Mather](#)
- c) [The Church is Holy](#)
- d) [The Church in one](#)
- e) [The Church is a teacher](#)
- f) [The Church is sovereign](#)
- g) [Love is the law of the Church](#)

2. The Pope

- a) [The foundation stone of the Church](#)
- b) [A Father to be loved](#)
- c) [A Father to be obeyed](#)

3. The Bishop

- a) I Know I am a Bishop
- b) Fatherhood and Service
- c) A link in the hierarchy of the Church
- d) I cannot keep silent
- e) Universal Church and local Church

4. The Priest

- a) Priestly Ministry
- b) The holiness of the priest
- c) The Priest's prayer
- d) The learning of the clergy
- e) The promotion of vocations

5. Lay people

- a) The priesthood of the faithful
 - b) The activity of lay people
 - c) The profession of faith
-

PART III

MAN OF THE WORD AND FOR THE WORD

1. The Sheperd

- a) A new pastoral method
- b) The pastoral visitation
- c) Preaching the word
- d) Christian education and religious instruction
- e) The family
- f) Sunday, day of the word and the bread

2. Catechetical Apostolate

- a) The primacy of catechesis
- b) The need for the catechism
- c) The schools and teachers of christian doctrine
- d) Catechetical pedagogy
- e) A catechism for all

3. The deaf-mutes

PART IV

MAN FOR MAN AND FOR MEN

1. Catholic action

2. The working classes

3. The Roman Question

- a) The fundamental reasons for Reconciliation
- b) The historical reasons behind the roman question

c) [The ways toward Reconciliation](#)

4. [Christian humanism](#)

a) [Love for the truth](#)

b) [Realism and consistency](#)

c) [“Dedicated without measure and free without measure”](#)

d) [Friendship](#)

e) [Love for the beauty](#)

PART V

[MAN OF THE MIGRANTS AND FOR THE MIGRANTS](#)

1. [Emigration seen through the eyes of Scalabrini](#)

a) [The magnitude and the causes](#)

b) [Emigration is a natural right](#)

c) [The consequences](#)

d) [God’s plan](#)

2. [The Church and emigration](#)

a) [The presence of the Church](#)

b) [Religion and Country](#)

c) [The pastoral care of migrants](#)

d) [Emigration: a concern for the whole Church](#)

3. [The Missionaries of St. Charles for the migrants](#)

a) [The Foundation](#)

b) [In the Church and for the Church](#)

c) [Missionary spirit](#)

d) [Religious life](#)

4. [Lay people and emigration](#)

a) [The duty of the State and of the ruling class](#)

b) [The St. Raphael Society](#)

On the occasion of the centennial of the founding of the Missionary Fathers and Brothers of St. Charles, the General Administrations of the Missionary Fathers and Brothers of St. Charles and of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles have undertaken to jointly publish an anthology of the writings of their Founder, Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini (1839-1905).

The collected writings of Bishop Scalabrini fill some 7000 pages, gathered into fourteen thick volumes. In culling from these pages the passages found in the present anthology, the editors observed several criteria. They wanted:

- to put into the hands of the religious men and women who look to Scalabrini as their founder the key notions for a better understanding of his charism in all its various aspects;
- to give the admirers of the Servant of God, particularly those who have the cause of the migrants at heart, the chance to read the more important pages of his message;
- to help people understand Scalabrini's life as Servant of God, priest and bishop of the Church, evangelizer, man of social and cultural action, and Apostle of the Migrants, through direct knowledge of the ideas and principles that guided him.

Around these five themes, in fact, we have collected these pages of the anthology:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| I | <u>Man of God and for God</u> |
| II | <u>Man of the Church and for the Church</u> |
| III | <u>Man of the Word and for the Word</u> |
| IV | <u>Man of the people and for the people</u> |
| V | <u>Man of the migrants and for the migrants</u> |

In other words, Scalabrini is a man who was all for God because he belonged wholly to God; a man who worked and sacrificed himself for the Church because he felt he was a living part of the Church; a man who devoted himself to the Word of God because he let himself be molded by it; a man who poured himself out for his fellow human beings because he was gifted with a rich humanity; a man who consecrated himself to the migrants because he made their cause his own.

There are five sections in the book. At the beginning of each section, we offer some guidelines for interpreting that section and, at the beginning of each subdivision, a brief summary showing the logical sequence of the passages to follow.

In putting together this anthology, we tried not to exceed the dimensions of an easy-to-handle book. Passages not indispensable to the understanding of the text were left out. We indicate this fact by the use of the ellipsis between parenthesis. The bibliographical apparatus is very simple. The explanatory notes, too, are kept to a minimum. Anyone wishing to better understand the context should read the biography of Mario Francesconi, *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*.

Following are the more common abbreviations:

AGS = Archivio Generale Scalabriniano (Via Calandrelli 11, Roma)

ASV-SS Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Segreteria di Stato

Biografia M. FRANCESCONI, *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati* (Città Nuova Editrice, Rome, 1985)

Carteggio S.B. = *Carteggio Scalabrini Bonomelli (1868-1905)*, edited by C. MARCORA (Editrice Studium, Rome, 1983)

Id. = Idem (repetition of the preceding citation)

Ibid. = Ibidem (the same bibliographical or archival reference)

F. = FOLIO



[HOME PAGE CONGREGATIO SCALABRINIANA](#)

PART ONE

MAN OF GOD AND FOR GOD

“A man all God’s and all for God”: this is how Bishop Scalabrini was described. His life was “theological,” consecrated to God and the cause of God. The thoughts and texts we have gathered show the essentially Christological dimension of his life of faith.

Christ is God-in-us: Love itself made flesh in humanity and diffused into our hearts by the Spirit.

Christ is God-with-us: Love itself come to pitch his tent among us in the Eucharist.

Christ is God-for-us: Love itself enduring unto the end, Love dead and resurrected to make us sharers in his life, death, and resurrection.

Christians are justified and sanctified by faith in Christ. Faith is the gift by which God gives himself completely to us. We respond to him by the total gift of self, constantly directing our minds and hearts to God in prayer and receiving from the Spirit the light that unveils the mystery of man and of history as they move forward toward the realization of the Kingdom of heaven.

Bishop Scalabrini’s ideal of holiness is that of offering his own person to Christ so that in his person Christ will prolong his Incarnation, that is to say, will continue, through the person of Scalabrini, to love, see, speak and work in a visible and tangible way as He did during his earthly life: “I live, no longer I, but Christ Jesus lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

Christ, present in the Paschal mystery that is prolonged in our everyday life, walks along with us. He becomes our neighbor in the person of our fellow travelers, especially in those in whom he has more vividly engraved his image: Our Lady, the saints and the poor.

1. CHRIST, THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

Christ is everything: divinity and humanity, transcendence and immanence, the beginning and the end of all creation, the center of the visible and invisible world, the primeval source and ultimate goal of our life, the Way, the Truth and the Life. God is love: he embraces Christ and man in a single act of love, uniting all humanity in his Son. Christ is the God who becomes “ours” in order to make us “his.” We are an “extension” of Christ. Christian life is Christ living in us. The “imitation of Christ” means living as members of the Head who embodies all things in himself; it means loving in such a way as to become alike.

Christ is Emmanuel, God-with-us. In the Eucharist, the Word made flesh “prolongs himself” in us. He is the life of the Church and of its members, the food nourishing the new man, the viaticum -- the food-for-the-way -- for the earthly pilgrimage, the divinization of created human beings, and the seed of eternal life. Eucharistic piety is the essence of Christian piety. By our sharing in the sacrifice and in the sacrament, by our adoration, by our reparation, we, in fact, share in the eternal high priesthood of Christ.

Christ died on the cross for love of us. His sacrifice calls for our sacrifice in return. To rise with him we must also die with him. This is the meaning of Christian penance, which despoils us of the

old man and clothes us with the new man according to Christ. The Cross alone redeems and saves. In it Christians find their joy: “Fac me cruce inebriari” (Let me be intoxicated by your Cross)!

a) GOD IN US: RECAPITULATING ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

“He is the Word of God, the Alpha and the Omega, the Messiah.”

Who is Jesus Christ? He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev 1:8). He is before all things, the firstborn and prince of all created things (Col 1:15). He is the heir, the center of the visible and invisible world (Heb 1-2), the compendium of the ages (Heb 13:8). Without the light that blazes forth from him, there is only darkness. Without his action, the order of nature and grace, mankind and the world, the past and the future are a book sealed with seven seals (Rev 5: 1).¹

“The center of creation”

Jesus is creation’s point of convergence, the precious link that unites the work of the Almighty to the divine Creator. He is the goal of all the works and plans of Divine Providence, the supreme and ultimate end of all God’s designs for redeemed humanity, of which he (Jesus) is the head. He is the model for all our progress since he is the only true light that enlightens every human being, in a word, all humanity.²

“The Word of God became flesh and pitched his tent among us”

A great mystery, an awesome mystery, a most sweet mystery! In a word, the Word of God became flesh and made his home among us (Jn 1:14). Divinity united itself to humanity; the Invisible One became visible; the Almighty One made himself weak; the Eternal One began to be; the Immense One became limited, becoming what he was not without ceasing to be what he was (Phil 2:6). If nations once feared the very name of the divinity, we have a God who does not want to be feared but loved (Rom 8:15). Hence, he puts aside his glory, conceals his majesty, and gives up every display of greatness so that he might not look like anything other than a man (Phil 2:7).

He is the one who abides in the highest heavens, who walks on the wings of the wind and measures the earth with a glance; he is God (Jn 1:1). But he is almost afraid to appear so. He tries, it seems, to let only his humanity come through and thus make his clemency absolutely endearing (Ti 3:4).³

“We are wrapped up in him by the Father in a single act of love”

God loves his Son and loves him essentially. He cannot take pleasure in anybody other than him because the love of God is infinite and can have only an infinite object: “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased” (Mt 17:5). But that beloved Son of his became man. So, in his Son God loves man. With a single act of complacent love God, in Jesus, embraces everything: even the

¹*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1878, 1878, pp. 5-6*

²*Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

body, even the flesh, even the soul. We are now that flesh and those bones. We are that nature. We are one body with Christ. In him and through him we have become sons and daughters of God, indeed the very Son of God who prolongs himself in us. So, in him we too are encompassed and embraced by the Father in a single act of love. Just as the sonship by which Christ is Son of God spreads and extends to us and over us, in the same way the Father's love spreads and extends to us as well. Hence, in his Son who, by his very nature, is pleasing to and beloved of the Father, we too have become pleasing to and beloved of the Father: "in his beloved Son he took pleasure in us."⁴

"In Christ we have everything"

Jesus Christ is the light of the world (Jn 8:12). He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (Jn 14:6). He is the bond of union, the kiss of peace between heaven and earth, between God and man (Eph 2:14). Jesus is our Redeemer, our Teacher, our Advocate, our Exemplar, our Doctor, our Head, our Companion, our Brother, our Friend, our Comfort, our Refuge, our Glory, our Joy, and our Greatness. He is the High Priest of the new covenant, the eternal Priest, the Mediator between God and man, the victim for our sins, our true and only happiness. He is the door we must enter to reach his kingdom, the Cornerstone and Foundation on which the spiritual edifice must be built. He is the Bread of our souls, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, our Reward, our Crown, our Life, and our All.

To Jesus we owe the grace and friendship of the Father, the confidence and freedom of the sons and daughters of God. To Jesus we owe all the gifts of nature, grace, and glory that we receive from God. To Jesus we owe it if God preserves us, sustains us, and defends us; if he does not punish us as we deserve; if he continues to bear with us and wait for us. From Jesus we get all wisdom and prudence, all inspirations and good thoughts, all pious desires. From Jesus comes courage in time of danger, strength in time of temptation, long-suffering in time of pain, patience in time of adversity, and perseverance in doing good: "In Christ you have become rich in all things" (I Cor I). Yes, we have everything in Jesus, we can do everything in Jesus, we can hope everything and obtain everything from Jesus, since it was Jesus who wanted to humiliate himself for us, sacrifice himself for us, and become all things for us (I Cor 1).⁵

"He is ours, really ours, entirely ours"

Behold, by becoming man, he, the Eternal One, the Immense One, the Creator and Lord of the universe, the Immortal King of the ages has become our friend, our brother, the companion of our exile. From that day, until the end of time, he would never abandon us, first living thirty years of our mortal existence and then continuing to abide with us under the Eucharistic veils: "When he was born, he became our companion."

With truly singular and exquisite love, he makes himself our food. Nothing is more intimate to us than food, which, by becoming our substance, preserves and renews our energies. And it is precisely under this form that Jesus wants to belong to us: "by being our food at his banquet."

⁴Ibid., pp. 16-17

⁵Ibid., pp. 21-22,

And if this were not enough, on the Cross he will become our victim. To redeem us from sin and death, he will pour out his blood to the last drop and will sacrifice his life, making himself the price for our ransom: “dying he gave himself up as a ransom.”

Finally, after giving himself for us in all these ways, he will crown his favors by giving himself to the elect as their eternal reward in the splendors and glory of heaven: “Reigning he will be their reward.”

Yes, from now on, Jesus is ours, really ours, completely ours. May he be everything for us. Blessed is the soul that understands this and therefore seeks, desires and longs only for Jesus in everything!⁶

“Jesus Christ must live in us”

Jesus Christ must live in us. Jesus Christ must continuously work in us because he alone can reconcile heaven and earth. He alone can love God as much as God deserves to be loved. He alone can give God the honor due to him.

But how can Jesus Christ live in us? We have already said how. He lives in us through his Spirit: “This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit” (I Jn 5:13). The spirit of Jesus Christ is the spirit of humility; it is the spirit of charity; above all, it is the spirit of self-denial, sacrifice and penance.⁷

“He comes to earth to make us live of his life”

Jesus comes to earth to make us share his life, to make us one single thing with him, so to speak. I have come, he himself says, so that they may have life and have it in abundance. Now, this life that Jesus comes to give us by uniting himself to our soul is his very own life.

The union of Jesus with the Christian soul is the very foundation of the whole supernatural order. By this union, human beings raise themselves up to share in the divine nature; and by this union, they in turn raise up all creation. Everything belongs to you, the Apostle exclaims, be it the world, be it life or death, be it the present or the future. You, in turn, belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God: “All things belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God.”

These are magnificent words indeed. They reveal to us the sublime harmony of the Gospel. United to the Word through the Incarnation, the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ became one sole person in him. United as we are to Jesus Christ by a less perfect union -- but one that is intimate beyond imagination -- we are like an extension of him. We belong to him as the members belong to the body. “We are one body in Christ.”⁸

“He himself must be our life”

⁶Christmas Homily, 1894 (AGS 3016/1).

⁷*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1883, Piacenza 1883, pp. 13-14.*

⁸Christmas homily, 1994 (ags 3016/1).

We must not simply live in Jesus Christ. Rather he himself must be our life and must live in us. He must live in us with his spirit, with his grace, with the impression of his mysteries, with the application of his merits, with the efficacy of his Sacraments, above all, with the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, so that we can say with the Apostle: It is not I who live; it is Christ who lives in me: "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). According to St. Francis De Sales, the golden-tongued Doctor of Geneva, this means that Christ lives in our heart and reigns there like a master and king. It means that Christ's spirit expands and grows in us and that, like life-giving heat, Christ encompasses us, sets everything right again, warms everything, sanctifies everything, and divinizes everything. He loves with our heart, thinks with our mind, speaks with our tongue, and works with our hands. For him we consume ourselves; for his glory we study; with his grace we perform our duties; for love of him we bear pain; to give him pleasure we enjoy pastimes and partake of nourishment itself. His throne is established in the heart of every Christian: The Kingdom of God is in your midst (Lk 17:21).

A coin must have the image of the sovereign; otherwise it would not be worth anything and could not circulate in the marketplace. In the same way, the works of Christians cannot earn heaven because nothing pleases the eternal Father if it does not display the image of his Son and does not, in some way, bear his likeness. We, we ourselves, venerable Brothers and dearest children, will not be allowed to enter into glory, if we do not conform to this divine model (Rom 8:29).⁹

"Jesus the mirror, Jesus the model, Jesus the seal"

Our manner of speaking must be that of Jesus (...), the look of our eyes that of Jesus, the meekness of our behavior that of Jesus. Jesus must be the mirror, Jesus must be the model, Jesus must be the seal. Jesus must pronounce judgment, mark out the paths, and make decisions. He is to govern, to direct, and to rule our life. Finally, he is our love, our joy, our crown, the thought of our minds, the beat of our heart, the wings of our aspirations, the sound that is music to our ears, the balm that soothes our hurts, the staff that sustains us on our earthly pilgrimage, the anthem and canticle that echo on our lips and accompany us from time into eternity.¹⁰

"Making ourselves copies of him"

What does a painter do if he wants to faithfully portray a beloved person on canvass? He keeps his eyes constantly fixed on that person so as not to make one stroke of the brush that does not help in depicting some trait of the original. In some way, this is what we have to do. All our thoughts, all our words, all our actions, all our aspirations, all our dispositions, all our suffering must be strokes of the brush that form and depict in us some trait of the life of Jesus Christ, to the point of making ourselves other copies of him, as it were.

Venerable brothers and beloved children, would you like to know when this will happen? When we will judge all things the way Jesus Christ himself judged them; when we will love what he loved and in the very way he loved; when we will have in our hearts the very sentiments and dispositions he had in his heart.

⁹*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1878, Piacenza 1878, pp. 27-29.*

¹⁰*Ibid., pp. 33-34.*

Not all of us, of course, are obliged to live in such great exterior poverty as was the poverty Jesus lived in. Nor are we all obliged to suffer the indescribable torments he suffered. But all of us, great and small, rich and poor, priests and lay people, are obliged to have the same interior dispositions of poverty, humility, charity, sacrifice and all the other Christian virtues, so as to be ready to sacrifice everything and suffer everything, even death, rather than betray his holy law: "Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5).

But we must not deceive ourselves, beloved. We will never have this interior conformity with Jesus Christ, if we do not have even some exterior conformity with Jesus Christ. The life of Jesus Christ, says the Apostle, must manifest itself in our mortal flesh (Cor 4:11).¹¹

"Disciples of a poor, humble, crucified God"

Yes, even in our exterior we must appear to be disciples of a poor, humble, crucified God. Without this, what is the use of protesting and boasting that we are Christians? It will always be true that whatever we do will be inspired either by the spirit of the old man or by the spirit of the new man. If we conform our exterior to the sentiments of the former, we are reprehensible. If we conform our exterior to the spirit of the latter, everything in us is holy; everything in us shares in the life of Jesus Christ since Jesus Christ lives in us only through his spirit (...).

Therefore, for our life to be considered Christian, it is not enough to work well, to be upright, to live honorably, to struggle and suffer any which way. It is not enough. We must absolutely do all these things with our gaze on God, out of love for Jesus Christ, with the submission, love, and spirit of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ must be the Alpha and the Omega of our works, the soul of our soul, the life of our life.¹²

"It is Christ who enkindles love"

Life consists primarily in love, without which, as St. John says, one remains in death. And what fills the soul with this balm of life is the grace that comes from the Savior. It is Christ who enkindles this love, giving us the unfathomable marvel of his death, which prods us, spurs us with sweet violence to love him in return and to sacrifice ourselves for his glory and the salvation of our brothers and sisters: "The love of Christ impels us." It is Christ who enkindles this love, giving us in his Resurrection the most radiant proof of his divinity and the surest pledge of our future Resurrection. It is Christ who enkindles this love with the continual miracle of the Eucharist, the mystery of love par excellence, with which he perpetuates himself on our altars.¹³

"Love never says: enough"

He is ablaze with the most burning love for us. Love never says: enough. Christ lived a life of continual hardship for us. He cannot wait to sacrifice this life for us (Lk 12:50). And his hour did

¹¹*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1883, Piacenza 1882, pp. 10-11.*

¹²*Ibid., pp. 11-12.*

¹³*Easter Homily, 1901 (AGS 3016/4).*

arrive. The hour of his sacrifice arrived, and the world beheld the tragic scene of a God who dies, who dies crucified for his people (Rom 5:9)! Can we think of anything more marvelous, more awesome than this extravagant love?

Surely, no one, as Jesus Christ himself assures us, no one can show greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends (Jn 15:3). But how much he must have loved us to want to die for us his enemies, he who is our God, our Creator whom we have offended and insulted! With this thought in mind, the Apostle said that only with difficulty does one die for a just person. But God, he says, proves his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:7). And why did he die? Because he himself wanted to (Is 53:7): no one could force him to do this, as he himself said (Jn 10:17). But why did he want to do this? For one simple reason: he loved us. "He loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph 5:2).¹⁴

"Love Jesus"

O Jesus, you are the true source of all our good: you always were, you constantly were and you still are. Jesus! Pronouncing this name makes the heart glow, the spirit quicken, and the soul soar on the wings of hope. Jesus! This name is sweeter to the mouth than honey, more melodious to the ear than the sound of the harp, more satisfying to the heart than the purest joy! Oh, let us love Jesus, let us love him! Whom else shall we love if not this most gentle Savior? (...).

Love Jesus. Keep united with Jesus because a Christian's whole perfection lies precisely in his or her union with Jesus Christ. Herein dwells the principle of every good, the foundation and origin of all our greatness. The Lord says: "I am the true vine and you are the branches" (Jn 15:5). Now, just as a branch detached from the vine withers and dies, so you too will die if separated from Jesus Christ. Union with Jesus Christ is something vital for us. Without it, we are dead and dead is everything that is ours. We become corpses, just as a body without a soul is a corpse (...).

Jesus Christ is a dear brother, to whom we must hold on tight during the journey of life. On him we must lean. With him we must walk because, as we said, from him comes every grace, the value of every action, the strength to perform it, in a word, our life, and also the breath of our souls.¹⁵

b) GOD WITH US: CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

"He who believes in the Eucharist believes in all Christian truths"

We can say that he who believes in the Eucharist believes in all Christian truths. He believes in the ineffable Trinity of persons in the absolute unity of divine being. He believes in the Incarnation of the Word, in his immolation for us. He believes in his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven. He believes in the divine motherhood of the Virgin and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles gathered around her. He believes in the divine institution of the Church, in its indefectibility and in the need to be members of it to attain eternal life (...).

¹⁴ *Lett. Apost. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1878, Piacenza 1878, PP. 12-13.*

¹⁵ *Ibid., pp. 22-23, 26-27*

The Eucharist is the masterpiece of God's mind and heart, the center of our religion, the point of contact where the infinite and the finite, nature and grace, come together in the ineffable embrace of truth and love itself (...).

On our altars we find Golgotha where we clasp the cross in tears; we find Tabor where we build tabernacles to intoxicate ourself in heavenly peace. On our altars takes place the agony of Gethsemani, the morning of the resurrection, the mystical death and the source of life.¹⁶

"The perfect solution to the problem of the Emmanuel"

In your preaching, you must show how the words, "This is my body, this is my blood," contain the perfect solution to the problem of the Emmanuel, the God-with-us, a solution which for such a long time humanity had feverishly hungered for. Indeed, because of its divine origin, humanity unceasingly seeks to communicate personally with its source and last end. Through those words, in fact, not only does Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum, Tiberias, and Jerusalem, in a word Palestine, become the dwelling place of the Man-God, but the whole earth as well. Now he dwells equally in the basilicas of great cities, in the rustic churches built for him by poor peasants, as well as in thatched huts, where primitive people worship him. Now he is accessible to everybody, to the Greeks as well as to the barbarians, to the people of Israel as well as to the children of the desert.¹⁷

"The Eucharist is the center of the Church"

The Eucharist is the heart of the Church, the compendium of divine worship, the tree of life planted in the midst of the Church, whose foliage gives comfort to all people. The Eucharist is the leaven hidden by the Incarnate Wisdom in this sacrament. If the Christian soul applies this leaven to the three faculties, to the rational, the concupiscent and the irascible, that is to say, to the mind, the spirit and the heart, the whole person becomes spiritual. Moreover, when introduced by the Church through the ministry of her priests into the various classes of society -- ruling class, youth and family -- this leaven will make this foolish world wise, will unite the separated peoples of the world into the one body of the Church, and will make those previously listless in the face of what is good, staunch and steadfast in the performance of all manner of virtuous deeds.¹⁸

"Everything gravitates toward the Eucharist"

In the spiritual world, the Eucharist is what the sun is in the physical world. Just as everything in the firmament gravitates toward that magnificent celestial body, whose light and warmth disseminate fertility and life everywhere, in the same way everything gravitates toward the most adorable Eucharist. Because of the Eucharist and the Eucharist alone, all created things, which unceasingly descend from the Creator, unceasingly return to him.¹⁹

¹⁶*La devozione al SS. Sacramento*, Piacenza 1902, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁸3^o discorso del 3^o Sinodo, Aug. 30, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Tertia...*, Piacenza 1900, p. 259 (translated from the Latin).

¹⁹*Let. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1878*, Piacenza 1978, p. 15.

“The Eucharist is the extension of the Incarnation”

Besides the supernatural help that will sustain us in the bitter battles of life, we also need -- as long as we are pilgrims on this earth -- an immaculate victim to offer to God in expiation for our sins. We find this help in Holy Communion. We find this victim in the Mass, which is none other than the sacrifice of the cross, continuing across the ages in the sight of all generations (...).

Just as the Eucharist is an extension of the Incarnation, in the same way the Eucharist is an extension of the sacrifice of Golgotha. True, the sacrifice of Golgotha was offered only once, in a few hours, in Jerusalem, while the other sacrifice is offered at every moment of the day and in all the corners of the earth. We all know that, while our hemisphere is at rest, the other hemisphere watches. Other brothers and sisters pray for us. Other priests hold aloft, between heaven and earth, the Eucharistic victim, from which the blood of Christ pours forth, like a mysterious life-giving stream covering the universe from one end to the other (...).

If in his first offering the Son of God gave himself up for all, in the offering of the Mass he offers himself for each one of us in particular. At every moment, he comes to cancel the bond entered against us because of our sins. He removes it and nails it, together with his adorable body, to the altar of the cross. And if the debts we have incurred with God because of our sins are great, much greater is the price of our redemption. However, we have been ransomed not at the price of perishable things, like gold or silver, but at the price of the blood of the spotless Lamb. This blood is of infinite value, because it belongs to a divine person. One single drop of this blood would be enough to redeem the world. Hence, just as the ocean surpasses one drop of water, in the same way Christ's merits at Mass surpass our sins.²⁰

At Mass “the supernatural life of the Church is enkindled”

Not only is the Mass the world's daily redemption and salvation, but it is also the nourishment of true and solid piety, the furnace in which the supernatural life of the Church is enkindled. In fact, ask the Church, this virgin spouse of the Nazarene, how she is able to nourish and awaken in so many of her children the spirit of sacrifice to the point of heroism and why the meanness and weaknesses afflicting us make her love us all the more. She would answer by pointing to the inscription adorning her altar: “This is how God loved his people.” These are sublime words expressing an even more sublime truth. In fact, ever since eternity begot time, the horizon of Christian charity has never expanded so much as it has since the moment the Word of God immolated himself under the appearances of bread and wine. Only then did Christian charity realize that sacrifice is the culmination of a pure, noble and holy life; only then did it desire to repay life with life, love with love.²¹

“The Mass!”

The Mass! The Mass epitomizes all the ancient sacrifices, through which the religious acts uniting mankind with God took place. The Mass is the one and only sacrifice, at once holocaust, peace

²⁰*La devozione al SS. Sacramento*, Piacenza 1902, pp. 26-28.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 29.

offering and victim for sin. The Mass! The Mass is the sacrifice of the cross drawing close to us, thus sparing our faith the arduous return to a distant past, sparing us efforts so utterly ineffectual because of our weakness and sloth. The Mass! The Mass is the immolation of a God who, in some way, has been placed into our hands, so that we might take as much as we need in accordance with the times and conditions, in the measure and for the purposes determined by divine Providence. The Mass! The Mass is a God who adores, a God who gives thanks, a God who appeases, a God who implores. The Mass! The Mass is the crown of religious worship, the center of the Christian life, the most resplendent seal of the priest's greatness and power.²²

"In the Eucharist we have a marvelous banquet"

I appeal to your experience, venerable brothers. Is it not true that, after celebrating the divine Sacrifice, you find insipid everything the world considers good? Doesn't everything urge you to be generous? Don't you embrace all adversity as an exercise of virtue? From the celebration of the Mass we derive a greater inclination to recollection, a greater longing for prayer, an inner joy in self-contempt, a desire for perpetual immolation, the choice of a life hidden in Christ, and the wondrous ascents unto God.

In the Eucharist, then, we have such a marvelous banquet that there is nothing more precious and more beneficial. It is the food that nourished our spiritual infancy, that makes our adolescence develop, that fortifies our adulthood, that keeps us from getting old and staves off death altogether (...).

The Eucharist is the center of all religion, the compendium of all God's works and, as it were, a summary of the Word. Hence, it has always been the first and essential devotion of Christians. Without this devotion one cannot call himself a Christian, because he is missing the head, which is Christ.

The Eucharist is the most beneficial of all devotions. In it Christ addresses this invitation to us: Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). In it he entertains sinners at his table, forgets all sins, and clothes his guests with grace. In the Eucharist, like an eagle that incites her nestlings forth by hovering over her brood, Christ spreads out his wings over the righteous. He gathers them together, carries them on his back and raises them aloft to the heights of holiness (Deut 22).

In the Eucharist, Christ creates apostles, fortifies martyrs for the crown of victory and raises up virgins. In fact, the Eucharist is "the sacred Banquet in which Christ is eaten as food, the memory of his passion is recalled, the mind is filled with grace, and we are given the pledge of future glory" (Office of Corpus Christi).²³

"The Eucharist was the first rule of life in the Church"

The Eucharist was truly the first rule of life in the Church. Christ was fully present in everyone. In the Eucharist, he was the life of all Christians. Thus it was in the Church at the beginning. Now, we

²²*Il prete cattolico*, Piacenza 1892, pp.11-12.

²³1^o discorso del 3^o Sinodo, Aug. 28, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Tertia...*, Piacenza 1900, pp. 228-232 (translated from the Latin).

see that times have changed and other forms of piety have, in some sense, replaced faith in Christ and love for him, namely, devotion to the saints and filial devotion to the Mother of God.

I do not say this to deplore these devotions or belittle them in the least. There is no disparagement in my words. I enthusiastically applaud these manifestations of piety. In fact, I make every effort to have them take root and become ever more diffused. They are, in fact, very useful for a life of piety and are desired by our good God.

The contemplation of the blessed souls in heaven has a twofold “theology”: the *morning* one, which, from the divine perfections seen in God, descends to the contemplation of the work of the Lord, and the *evening* one, which, from the divine works rises to the contemplation of God himself. This is true also of the piety of the faithful. Some want to reach God by using the cult of the saints and the Mother of God like steps. Instead, others -- more effectively -- take possession of Christ himself through faith and, through Christ, approach the Father, thus encompassing also the saints. Both ways lead to the same goal. Nevertheless we must see to it that imitation of the saints and devotion to them do not lessen our faith in Christ and our love for him.

Hence, I ardently hope that the love we all have for Christ will emulate and surpass our devotion to the Mother of God and the saints. Christ, in fact, is “the way, the truth and the life,” as he himself said; and “no one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6, 17). Even Paul says: “Through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph 2:18).²⁴

“He Christianizes our whole person”

Holy Communion is the source from which the soul draws the water that rises to eternal life, the place where the soul heals its wounds. In a word, Holy Communion is the origin and goal of union with God raised to the highest power and brought to the ultimate degree of perfection possible in the present order of things. In fact, if, in the Incarnation, the Word of God united himself personally to human nature, in Holy Communion he unites himself even more intimately to our person. In this way, he divinizes our essence and, in fact, Christianizes our whole person. His union with us is patterned after the transformation of food into the substance of the body that is nourished. And so, as a holy doctor of the Church once wrote, those who receive Communion have Jesus in their mind, in their heart, in their soul, before their eyes and on their tongue. This Savior sets everything straight, purifies everything, gives life to everything. He loves with our heart, thinks with our mind, invigorates our soul, sees through our eyes, speaks with our tongue, and moves all other faculties in us. He works all things in all people, so that they no longer live for themselves. The Word of God now lives in them and sets down for their actions nobler and more sublime goals, purer and more perfect motives.²⁵

“The radiant seed of the resurrection”

St. Macarius says that the common bread that comes from the earth cannot give us eternal life. But the bread that has its origin in Christ’s blessed body united to the divinity confers immortality to the one receiving this bread. The flesh of Christ, once eaten, is not destroyed; and the blood, once

²⁴Ibid., pp. 223-225.

²⁵*La devozione al SS. Sacramento*, Piacenza 1902, pp. 22-23. The “holy doctor” is St. Frances De Sales.

drunk, does not cease to exist because both are indissolubly united to the divinity. Hence, the glorious body of Christ puts the radiant seed of resurrection and incorruptibility into the corruptible body of a human being. This seed, animated by the blood of him who conquered death, develops and grows until the renewed human being lays aside his mortal flesh like a useless garment and, showing all the splendor of his life hidden in God, enters into the eternal tabernacles²⁶

“Getting into the spirit of the sacred liturgy”

Abstract and speculative instruction, excellent though it may be, is not enough by itself. It must be accompanied by practice. If so many Christians, while celebrating the divine mysteries, seem undignified and listless in church and indifferent to everything that is taking place, the reason is that they see only the outward appearance of the sacred rites. Well, then, teach them to understand the different parts of the sacred rites. If, in some way, you help them get into the spirit of the sacred liturgy, their minds will at once begin to focus on God and their lips will instinctively move to prayer. As long as they are able to ascend from the sensible to the intelligible, people, no matter how cold and indifferent they may be, are enraptured by Catholic worship, which converges wholly on the Eucharist, just as all the architectural lines in our churches, built by great Christian minds, converge on the sanctuary.²⁷

“Wasting time with confessions?”

I cannot keep quiet about some priests who think they are wasting their time when they have to minister to good souls who love to go to confession often and, even more often, to nourish themselves with the flesh of the spotless Lamb. The most charitable thing I can say about these priests is that they do not know that, just as you cannot have life without a soul, in the same way you cannot have a parish alive with the exuberant life of Christ if it does not have a certain number of the faithful who confess often and go to Communion almost daily. These are the people who, with the example of their good lives, stimulate the others to goodness. They make the ideal of Christian perfection shine forth. In a word, they are the dedicated people who accomplish all the good works that are done in the parish. Blessed is the pastor who forms people of this kind and cares for them with particular solicitude. The time he can wisely spend with them is time well spent, because these godly souls will draw down upon our people the graces that will keep them from wickedness. And if our people are already wicked, these graces will transform them as they transformed the Greek and Roman world in apostolic times and, down through the centuries, led many other nations to the foot of the cross.²⁸

“Frequent Communion”

So, even if they have imperfections and fall into venial sins, Christians adorned with sanctifying grace are nonetheless sons and daughters of God and heirs of heaven and, as such, are worthy to sit even daily at the great banquet Jesus Christ prepares in his Church, as long as they depart from it

²⁶Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²⁷Ibid., p. 9.

²⁸Ibid., p. 25. The Author urges priests to be ever more available for confessions, so people will go to Holy Communion more often.

with ever increasing fervor and with a greater desire to go back to it. So why should we demand of our good people an extraordinary purity of mind, of heart and deeds before admitting them to such a banquet? Is not frequent Communion precisely the best disposition for approaching the Eucharist worthily? If everybody had a loftier appreciation of the beauty and nobility of a soul in grace, the restoration of frequent Communion would surely not be long delayed, to the great and inestimable benefit of the Christian people and of civil society itself.²⁹

“The pious practice of the daily visit”

You will find that one of the most efficacious ways of engendering and developing devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is, first of all, the pious practice of the daily visit to him, a prisoner of love in our tabernacles. This practice is surely positive proof of the sincere love people have for the divine Eucharist, just as, on the contrary, the deplorable neglect in which many leave the Eucharist seems to belie their faith.

How beautiful it is to engage in frequent and familiar conversation with Jesus through such a salutary practice! “Blessed is he who abides near the holy tabernacle,” exclaims the prophet. The Lord is his strength and his light, the remedy for all his ills, the balm for all his wounds, his solace in all pain. At the foot of the altar, we forget the world and the misfortunes of life because, wherever there is Jesus, pain fades away; and only joy remains, even in the midst of tribulations. This is the place where the faithful hear mysterious and gentle voices in the depths of their hearts, the place they leave with a burning desire to get back to it, with that holy desire that always draws them to the place where their treasure lies and where they are able to store up supernatural energies.

So everybody should offer this daily homage to the divine Eucharist. I recommend this practice to the children, so that Jesus will set them on the paths of virtue. I recommend it to young people, so that Jesus will give them the strength to resist the allurements and seductions of vice. I recommend it to those who are in the twilight of their lives, so that Jesus will help them look peacefully into the face of death.³⁰

“Daytime and nighttime adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament”

In some parishes of the diocese -- and I say this with keenest satisfaction -- a society for daytime adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament has already been instituted. I would love to see it take root in all the other parishes, too. Where there are many people, this will be easy. But if a parish has only a few parishioners and cannot have daily adoration, could there not be adoration at least two or three times a week, especially on Sundays and holy days? I trust in the zeal of my excellent co-workers and in the solicitude the beloved people of my diocese have always shown toward Eucharistic worship.

But if it is so comforting to spend time before Jesus during the day, it is also delightful to keep vigil at the his feet in the silence and stillness of the night! In this way, we imitate the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, who never cease celebrating the glories of the Lord (...).

²⁹Ibid., p. 24.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

So, brothers and beloved sons and daughters, try to understand the importance of nocturnal adoration, to set it up in your parishes and to have it at least once a year (...).

In anything that has to do with the Eucharist, I do not want to hear from your lips that insipid expression: *this is impossible*. There is no such thing as impossible, except for those who run away from self-denial and sacrifice.³¹

“Before that Host of pardon and peace”

Before that Host of pardon and peace, the tumult of our earthly desires subsides, our obsession with worldly matters calms down, pride loosens its grip on us, love and compassion for our brothers and sisters quickens, a holy rivalry in good works heats up, and the longing for a holier life intensifies. Don't you hear a voice coming from that Tabernacle, a voice that ennobles and dignifies your very sufferings, assuring you that the tears you shed at the altar are counted by him who takes care of the lily of the field, of the bird in the forest and of the least hair of our head? Oh, indeed, here our spirit finds strength in the power of resignation and hope. Here, where confidence in God soars, nothing is hopeless. Here we are all sons and daughters of God. He who comes here to draw the strength that wells up from that divine Tabernacle is not at the mercy of fate or of enemies (...).

The temple is the refuge of the poor, the asylum of the troubled and the burdened! Here all of us feel -- sincerely, not hypocritically -- that we are brothers and sisters. Here, before our common Father, all distinctions based on ostentation, riches and human power disappear. Here we claim to be equal and all do feel equal at the common banquet of Jesus. Here before the spectacle of a God who in the Blessed Sacrament lowers himself equally before the small and the great and raises all things to his loftiness, we consecrate not the false democracy of the world but the true democracy of all the redeemed.³²

“United with him, you will all feel like brothers and sisters”

So, you must unite in a holy alliance around Jesus, the divine victim, in a spirit of faith, of reparation and love. If you are united with him, you will all feel like brothers and sisters, all together in an alliance, an alliance to love one another and to work for each other's good. From this will come that harmonious fellowship that will make you share joys as well as sorrows, smiles as well as tears, and spread far and wide the balm of resignation and Christian hope. Get together and organize yourselves into societies of adorers for the different hours of the day, so that the holy Eucharist will never be neglected.³³

“You have been made sharers in the eternal priesthood of Christ”

³¹Ibid., pp. 12-13.

³²Per l'inaugurazione del Tempio del Carmine in Piacenza, Feb. 17, 1884 (AGS 3018/2).

³³*La devozione al SS. Sacramento*, Piacenza 1902, p. 15.

You must understand the loftiness of your dignity. You have all been made sharers in the same eternal priesthood, which the Son of God himself did not arrogate to himself but received from his Father

According to the Apostle, you who have achieved the priesthood must also have something to offer (Heb 8:3); from this, precisely, does your nobility derive. You know that the victim of our Sacrifice is the very Son of God, who is, at once, the principal priest, who makes the offering through your ministry, and the God to whom the offering is made.

Appraise your dignity from this Sacrifice, which is the most august and sublime action of the Church.

The Eucharistic sacrament and sacrifice is the Church's treasure, its absolute good, its supreme beauty: "For what wealth is theirs and what beauty! grain that makes the youths flourish, and new wine, the maidens!" (Zec 9:17). Under different species, which are now pure signs, are hidden sublime realities: flesh that is food, blood that is drink. The Church is fashioned by this Sacrament, and all her riches are summed up in bread and wine. I urge you to enrich yourselves with this treasure and to enrich others with it as well. This is how Christ instituted this sacrament: he wanted to entrust its administration to priests alone; it belongs to them to receive him and give him to others (Office for Corpus Christi).

The Eucharist, which is the treasure of the priests, is, at the same time, a deposit entrusted to their faithful care. However, we are dealing with a "deposit" of a special kind, much different from the usual ones. By law, whoever receives a "deposit" must guard and preserve it faithfully and give it back intact to the giver. Not so with the Eucharist, for it is a deposit of wheat. It would be a crime to hide it: "He who hides the wheat shall be cursed by the people" (Prv 11:26) (...).

The Eucharist is your guiding star. It appeared to you in your childhood and led you to Christ. It guided your adolescence and strengthened your youth. May the Eucharist be, in your maturity and in your old age, your "mighty shield and strong support, a shelter from the heat, a shade from the noonday sun, a guard against stumbling, a help against falling, buoying up the spirit, bringing a sparkle to the eyes, giving health, life, and blessing" (Eccl 34:19-20).

Venerable brothers, everything you are and have, everything comes to you from the Eucharist. I am telling you the simple truth when I say that the priest is fenced in on all sides by the Eucharist, that he is in all things marked by the Eucharist.³⁴

"Christ in the Eucharist is the book offered to priests"

Recall the words you heard at your ordination: *Dignoscite quod agitis* (Pontif. Rom.). Christ in the Eucharist is really the book offered to priests, so they can devour it. Numerous are the writings of the Doctors and Fathers, from which you can gather an abundant harvest of doctrine. You have the Summa of St. Thomas, which treats of this venerable Sacrament in a truly angelic way. You have the explanation of Sacred Scripture in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, published expressly for your instruction. You also have the ascetical books, the principal one being the Imitation of Christ, which, in the 4th book, speaks about the Eucharist like no other. Many modern writers, who have written on the Eucharist, can give you many useful insights.

³⁴1° discorso del 3° Sinodo, Aug. 28, 1899, *Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Tertia...*, Piacenza 1900, pp. 229-231 (translated from the Latin).

Everyone must recall with the Apostle: “To me, the very least of all the holy ones, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8). Are not all riches of Christ hidden in this Sacrament?³⁵

“Your devotion must be interior and exterior”

If you really want to revive devotion to the Eucharist in your parishes, show by your deeds that you, first of all, have this devotion and that it is deeply rooted in your heart. Your devotion must be interior and exterior and must be rooted in a lively faith in Jesus, the divine victim, and in a sincere love for him.

But, alas, we must confess that faith is often feeble. After many years in the priesthood, one still does not love the divine Master or perhaps loves him with a lifeless love. And yet the priest is a man who lives, works and sacrifices himself for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the only goal of all his aspirations. Is this the way you are? The sanctuary, the altar, the tabernacle: what do they tell you? What impression do they make on you? After receiving the body and blood of Jesus, don't you feel, as St. Vincent De Paul would say to his priests, don't you feel that your heart is inflamed with divine fire? Now, does this fire, which burned so brightly in the heart of that humble priest, of that hero of Christian charity, does this fire also devour your heart, or does your heart still remain cold and icy?... So how could you possibly have enough zeal to kindle in others this devotion, if it is a thousand miles away from your own heart? I beg you: if you do not feel called to a deep interior life, to a life of profound contemplation, at least stay with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with your heart and with your deeds, in private and in public, now and always. Let your tongue speak of him often, let your heart sigh for him. And do not let one hour of the day pass without your having dedicated to him a thought of humble and loving gratitude.³⁶

Perpetual adoration by priests

Something else is very close to my heart. I would very much want all of you, venerable brothers, to be enrolled in the Pious Society of Priests for Perpetual Adoration, which has been instituted in our diocese.

If all the faithful must repay Jesus love for love and make reparation for the offenses that wicked and evil Christians commit against him, you, in a very special way, must shed tears in his presence and come between the altar and sinners, as ministers of peace and pardon. You, more than anyone else, must live the Eucharistic life and delight in staying close to the tabernacle, where you will draw strength to sacrifice yourselves and to die for Jesus, for the glory of God and the good of souls. This is the only ideal of authentic priests.³⁷

I propose that every diocese establish perpetual adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament for priests who are willing to commit themselves to an hour of adoration every certain number of days (...).

³⁵2° discorso del 3° Sinodo, Aug. 29, 1899 (ibid., pp. 242-243) (translated from Latin).

³⁶*La devozione al SS. Sacramento*, Piacenza 1902, pp. 34-36.

³⁷Ibid., p. 14.

How moving it is to think that, at every hour of the day or night, a priest is lying prostrate before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to pray for himself, for his confreres, for the Church, for her august Head, for the preservation of the faith, for the final perseverance of repentant sinners, and for those who are close to the judgment of God (...).

A priest, who is a fervent adorer of the Most Blessed Sacrament, will quickly become its most eloquent apostle and will tirelessly and constantly champion it. He will be creative in coming up with a thousand little ploys, all his own, to revive and propagate this devotion among the faithful. Yes, the zeal of such priest, of such a bishop, will be blessed; it will be all-powerful.³⁸

“Mentioning the Eucharist in every talk”

Preaching the Eucharist day in and day out means that you must seize every opportunity to keep reminding people of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. With his disciple Timothy, the Apostle used to stress how important it was to persist in the ministry of preaching: “Preach the word in season and out of season.” You should do the same thing, too. When speaking about the Eucharist, you can take, as a starting point, the different seasons of the year -- winter, spring, summer, autumn -- as well as the rain and the sunshine or the many problems and pursuits of the people. This is what Christ himself does: he takes the occasion to speak of his Sacrament when he sees the people’s concern with bread for the body: “Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (Jn 6:27). The Apostle imitated him when he gave his speech to the Athenians, taking his cue from the altar to the unknown god.

But we have another very important reason for persisting in our preaching about the Eucharist: we must mention the Eucharist in every talk and end every talk with the Eucharist. Are you talking about a virtue? Offer Christ in the Eucharist as the perfect exemplar of it. Are you dealing with sin? Show that Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Propose the Eucharist as the antidote that frees us from our daily faults and keeps us from mortal sins: Christ is the doctor and the medicine. O wonderful banquet, which administers the medicine of humility against pride, of charity against envy, of almsgiving against avarice, of chastity against lust, of virtue against all vices! (Tertullian, *De Resurrectione*)³⁹

“The 20th century will be called the century of the Eucharist”

For the man or woman who fears God, Christ -- in this sacrament -- makes present his supplications to the Father, namely, the sacrifice of his body and his blood offered on the cross. What will the fruit of such a sublime sacrifice be? “The branch of the Lord will be luster and glory, and the fruit of the earth will be honor and splendor” (Is 4:2). In fact, the poor will eat and be satisfied: their souls will live for ever and ever. Sinners will return to their senses. All the earth will be converted to God and all people will adore him.

All people will eat and adore, all mortal beings will fall down on their knees before him. The future generation will take its name from the name of the Lord, because the heavens, namely, the priests, will announce the sanctity of the people about to be born, a people fashioned by the Lord. It will be

³⁸Discorso al Congresso Eucaristico di Torino, 1894, (AGS 3018/2)

³⁹2° discorso del 3° Sinodo, Aug. 29, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Tertia...*, Piacenza, 1900, pp. 241-242 (translated from Latin).

the people of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the 20th century will be called the century of the Eucharist. "Because the kingdom is the Lord's and he will rule the peoples" (Ps 21).⁴⁰

"Nunc dimittis..."

When the Lord, in his infinite goodness and mercy, will have granted me the joy of seeing the Eucharistic devotion deeply rooted in my beloved diocese, then I will have nothing more to do except to exclaim with the prophet Simeon: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace ... because my eyes have seen the Savior given by you" loved, thanked and worshiped by those who in time are, and in eternity will be, my joy and my crown.⁴¹

"The sweetest consolation"

Make absolutely sure, venerable co-workers of mine, that when I come, I will be able to pass out the bread of angels to all my children, to all, from the First Communion children all the way up to those who are on the threshold of eternity. This, brothers and children of mine, is the sweetest consolation you could give your bishop in the midst of the constant worries and deep anxieties of his pastoral ministry.⁴²

c) GOD FOR US: CHRIST CRUCIFIED

"Down with the crucifix? The Crucified One is the foundation"

A cry has broken out from a number of people and has made the rounds of the world during our century. It has screamed and is still screaming: Down with the crucifix! Unfortunately, it has in part succeeded in its diabolical design. Once, the crucifix was the most beautiful ornament of Christian homes. Today other images have taken its place. Once, Christian families found inspiration in the crucifix and from the Crucified One took their name and their example. Today other ideals inspire them, other standards sway them. But after the crucifix was banned from our neighborhoods, from our schools, from Parliament, after the only means that could cure our ills was removed, what has happened to society? I do not for a moment disavow any of the feats our century is justly proud of: the advance of science, the disappearance of distances, and the thousand and one stupendous discoveries with which human beings have been able to wrest from nature its most hidden secrets. But, despite these many marvelous accomplishments, everybody agrees that, at no other time in history, has society been so horrendously shaken and distressed as in our time (...).

People have declared war on the crucifix: this is the real cause of so many misfortunes. This is a fact some people just will not admit. They put the blame on the depravity of people and the wickedness of our times. Not at all! Instead they should take off the blindfolds hiding the truth from them; they should look a lot more deeply into things. The Crucified One is the foundation of all things, St. Paul writes, and he who refuses to build on this foundation can only amass ruins upon ruins (...).

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 245.

⁴¹*La devozione al SS. Sacramento*, Piacenza 1902, p. 37.

⁴²Pastoral Letter of May 5, 1905, Piacenza 1905, pp. 4-5.

Jesus Crucified is the center of all things, the precious link that unites the handiwork of the Almighty with its Divine Creator. Jesus Crucified is the end of all the works and designs of Divine Providence, the supreme and ultimate reason of all God's plans for redeemed humanity, which, faraway from him, behaves like a blind man staggering and falling under the rays of a resplendent sun. Jesus Crucified is the norm of all social progress since he alone is the true light that enlightens all men and women, hence all society.⁴³

"The world turns but the Cross does not waver"

Christ conquers, Christ rules, Christ triumphs. Even in our day we have evidence of this. In the midst of the greatest cataclysms of history, in the midst of the broken pieces of scepters and crowns, between the rise and fall of all kinds of heresies, in the fury of the raging seas, in the midst of violent storms stands the Cross, a beacon of inextinguishable light, the tree of our salvation, the glorious trophy of him who purpled that Cross with his divine blood: "The world turns but the Cross does not waver."⁴⁴

"The Cross proclaims love to us"

More than anything else, the Cross proclaims love to us. Yes, the Cross proclaims love, a love that became a victim of expiation for you and so loved you as to die on a gibbet for you. But one does not hear the cry of the Cross unless one repeats with the Apostle: the world is crucified to me and I to the world. The Cross is the best school of love. Woe to you, then, if you live your days without remembering the mystery of the Cross! You would show that your heart does not burn with love, that you are failing in the great commandment that requires us to put all our affections in Jesus Christ and to establish in our hearts his kingdom, which is the kingdom of love.

Love Jesus, and you will then come to understand that the Christian people, the believing people, comprises only those who honor and love the Cross or die on it⁴⁵

"Christ's whole life was a cross and a martyrdom"

Dearly beloved, he is the great model of Christian life, such an essential model that, in the words of St. Paul, the secret of our predestination lies in our likeness to Christ. So I ask: what kind of life did Christ live in order to ascend into heaven? A life of riches perhaps? of glory and pleasure? or rather one of poverty, humiliation and suffering? His whole life, writes St. John Chrysostom, was a cross and a martyrdom! *Tota vita Christi crux et martyrium!* From the first to the last moment of his life, how much poverty, how many hardships, how much toil, how many persecutions, how many calumnies, how much suffering, how much pain! Do we not realize, then, that in penance we find our true good, the short, sure and only road leading to our salvation?⁴⁶

⁴³Discorso sul SS. Sacramento, 1880 (AGS 3017/3).

⁴⁴Discorso per l'VIII Centenario della I Crociata, 1896, (AGS 3018/26).

⁴⁵Discorso del April 13, 1865 (AGS 3017/3).

⁴⁶*La penitenza cristiana*, Piacenza 1895, p.9.

“Jesus Christ tells everyone: do penance”

What does the divine Teacher say, my beloved? First of all, he says he came to call sinners, that is to say, everybody, to penance. He says the kingdom of heaven is taken by force and only by the strong.

He says: he who does not take up his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Again he says: Do penance. And he adds: If you will not do penance, you will all likewise perish: *Nisi poenitentiam egeritis, omnes simul peribitis (...)*.”

From his lips I seem almost to hear only one word, one teaching, one command: Penance! And whom does he say this to? He says it to everybody -- the evangelist St. Luke tells us -- thus forestalling perhaps the false interpretations of many modern Christians who would like to restrict the practice of a command as absolute as this one just to those living in monasteries. Yes, Christ speaks to everybody: to small and big, to young and old, to poor and rich, to kings on their thrones, to religious in their retreats, to priests in the exercise of their ministry, to business men in their affairs, to craftsmen in their workshops, to everybody without distinction of rank, social condition, time, place or age: “He said it unto all,” because nobody, unless he first gives up eternal salvation, can dispense himself from penance, which helps him stand firm in the law of God.⁴⁷

“The exercise of evangelical mortification”

Whoever wishes to come after me -- our divine Teacher himself says -- must renounce himself, carry his cross and, with this badge of honor, follow me: “let him renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me.” *Let him renounce himself*, that is to say, one’s intellect, by submitting it to faith; one’s will, by always doing God’s; one’s unruly appetites, by following the holy Gospel alone in all things. Secondly, *Let him carry his cross*, that is to say, let him bear with resignation all the evils of this present life, the tribulations, the troubles, and the labors inherent in one’s state of life. *With this badge of honor, let him follow me*, that is to say, let him walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ; let him be clothed with his spirit; let him enter into his way of thinking; let him be animated by his sentiments; let him behave according to his principles; let him conform to his will; let him abandon himself to his Providence. Now, what does all this mean? It means that to live the Christian life we must practice evangelical mortification. It is so necessary that, without it, we would be lost, lost forever: “Unless you do penance” -- it is the Incarnate Word speaking -- “you will all likewise perish” (Lk 13:3).⁴⁸

“Two sacrifices indivisibly joined”

We must fill up what, on our part, is lacking in his Passion. In fact, St. Paul says: “I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ” (Col 1:24).

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1883, Piacenza 1883, pp. 14-15.*

This is the supreme law on which our salvation depends. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ and our sacrifice are two sacrifices that are equally necessary. These two sacrifices do not appease divine Justice if they are not indivisibly joined, because our sacrifice without Christ's sacrifice is unworthy of God, while Christ's sacrifice without our sacrifice is useless to us. This explains, in part, the great mystery of suffering which is part and parcel of the order of things in the universe. In this way, suffering and death -- inescapable scourges of nature, as presently found -- were turned into means of perfection and glorification, hence of solace and joy, and were thus restored to the order of divine wisdom and goodness. Hence our duty is to conform ourselves to the Passion of Jesus Christ if we want to share in his glory: "I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ."⁴⁹

"When we mortify ourselves, we do not want to destroy but to build"

Some people have a very superficial and narrow concept of Christian penance. They think that to mortify oneself means to want to suffer for the sake of suffering. Not at all, dearly beloved, not at all. We are aiming at a much higher goal. When we mortify ourselves -- I will say with a famous philosopher -- we do not want to destroy but to build. We want to control the flesh but only to give freedom to the spirit. We want to put away the old self, but only to put on the new self; to deny our corrupt will, but only to put God's holy will in its place; to die to self-love, but only to live for charity; to topple the kingdom of evil, declaring war on it and on its external and internal accomplices, but only to establish the kingdom of goodness, the kingdom of truth and love in ourselves. We want to lose a bit of the present, but only to assure ourselves of the future. In other words, we want to recover our crown: we want to be not just human beings but Christians as well, to reign not just in time but in eternity as well.⁵⁰

"To be filled with joy in every tribulation"

If you were always as cheerful as the letter you wrote me, I would indeed be surprised. I would do anything if I could give your grief-stricken heart some comfort. But I hope peace and joy will return to you. Providence is leading your Eminence by ways that are uncommon and almost incredible. This is a source of joy for your true friends, as well as for you. Faith and reason teach us what we already feel in the depths of our being, namely, that everything we do is wanted or permitted by God, infinite love, and that sometimes, for the sake of the cross, albeit undeserved, he wants his servants to be humbled -- not dismayed. He wants his servants to joyfully meditate on the ways of God, to love, to give thanks always, to be filled with joy in every tribulation.

Tribulations, even if only interior, spread a wholesome bitterness over our present life and detach us imperceptibly from everything mortal. They bring us a priceless gift: they help us, in the midst of greatness, to understand the nothingness of greatness. There isn't a more beautiful grace than this.

However, in his wisdom, Your Eminence, God has truly disposed everything mightily and tenderly. If for a few hours he makes us drink a cup of bitterness, he later offers us a drink of the most intoxicating joys: it is a mysterious chalice that alternates. Blessed is he who is able to bring it to his lips with unshakable faith, thus uniting himself intimately with God. Our main weapon is patience and prayer.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 16.

⁵⁰*La penitenza cristiana*, Piacenza 1895, p. 13.

⁵¹Letter to a Cardinal, s.d. (AGS 3020/5).

“Go forth, apostles of Jesus Christ, and fear not: the Cross will accompany you”

The sign of universal redemption, the sign lifted up among the peoples of the earth is the Cross. The society of the first redeemed is the Church. The word that moves from place to place, from nation to nation, announcing salvation, is the Catholic apostolate. Thank God, ever since this sign of the Cross was raised on the hill of Golgotha, ever since the Church appeared in the world, the word announcing the glory of God, the word enlightening minds, enkindling hearts, and regenerating souls, the word reuniting the human family in one faith, hope, and love by attracting our dispersed brothers and sisters from all corners, this word has never ceased to make itself heard (...).

So, go forth, O generous apostles of Jesus Christ, go wherever he calls you. I know you will run into great labors, serious difficulties, many tribulations, never-ending struggles and sacrifices. But fear not: the Cross accompanies you. The Cross accompanies you, the Cross which is the memorial of past victories and pledge of future ones. The Cross, once an ignominy to the Gentiles and a scandal to the Jews, has now taken possession of the whole earth (...).

Fear not! The Cross accompanies you! The Cross is the protection of the meek, the humiliation of the proud, the victory of Christ, the defeat of hell, the death of infidelity, the life of the just, the fullness of all virtues. The Cross is the hope of Christians, the resurrection of the dead, the consolation of the poor, the wood of eternal life, the power of God. Fear not! The Cross accompanies you! It is the Cross that molds the heroes of religion, that sustains them, animates them, guides them, and enraptures them, that makes them superior to flesh and blood and to earthly joys and sorrows, that infuses into their hearts the noble aspirations of Christ's martyr who lives and dies exclaiming: Long live Jesus! Long live the Cross! Long live martyrdom! “May I never boast except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Cross is folly to the world. But for you it becomes wisdom and life. Just one hour spent meditating on the Cross will do you more good than long years wasted over the most erudite books, which, of themselves, puff up and leave one dry. Without books, with the Cross alone, one soars in the knowledge of God. Yes, the Cross will be a balm for every wound, a sedative for every pain, support for every weakness, comfort in every trouble, illumination for every doubt, light in every darkness. In adversity, in despair, in disillusionment, clasp to your heart the Cross I have given you; and, with a cry of utter abandon, lift up your eyes to heaven, saying again and again: “Let me be intoxicated by your Cross. May I never boast except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” At once your heart will rejoice, your soul will open up to all the delights of Christian hope, and everything you do will become precious for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.⁵²

2. “I LIVE BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST”

Faith is a new creation, by which God gives himself to us and shares his life with us. Faith is life, not philosophy. It is truth, perfection, the good. To the gift of God, human beings respond with the gift of self, a gift that consecrates them to God, makes them “holy.” The life of the just man is to

⁵²Words spoken to the Missionaries leaving from St. Calogero in Milan on June 10, 1884 (AGS 3018/2),

believe in Christ, source of all virtues. Faith is grace that “divinizes” human beings, that motivates the asceticism that raises daily existence to union with Christ.

Faith is nourished by prayer, which is “God infused into our hearts.” The person who prays is the voice of the universe. Prayer is what unites human beings. Prayer is communion with the prayer of Christ and of the Church. Prayer is God’s omnipotence placed at our disposal. He who does not pray does not live.

Faith perceives and interprets history as salvation history. God saves people through their history. His plans, albeit mysterious, are infallible. There is no question that human society is evolving, even through sufferings and cataclysms, toward the kingdom of God. The events of history and social transformations are preparing the coming of a humanity united in one sheepfold and under one shepherd, thus reconstituting all peoples into one family under one Father, through Christ and the Church.

Real progress is Jesus Christ. Faith and reason, religion and science, theology and philosophy, everything comes from God and belongs to God, the one and only Truth.

a) GOD’S GREATEST GIFT

“Faith is God’s greatest gift”

Faith is a gift from God, nay, the first and greatest gift that God, in his infinite mercy, has ever bestowed. In fact, without faith, we cannot please him and belong to the chosen company of his sons and daughters. Faith is the beginning and the foundation of human salvation, the cornerstone and root of every justification (...).

What is this faith? It is a ray of light emanating from the throne of God and descending to illumine the darkness in which the miserable children of Adam are groping. Faith is a second creation, thanks to which human beings, fallen from their dignity, get back up from their nothingness and become once again strong enough to arrive at the Creator. If nothing else, faith is the life of mankind, just as the lack of faith spells its death (...).

What is this faith? Despite all the research and all the studies that have gone into elevating human beings, faith is the only thing that can still heal our wounds, the only thing that can turn our littleness into greatness, because, through faith, the human mind can range through time and eternity and our thought pass from the smallest grain of sand to the immensity of the uncreated Being.⁵³

“Religion is not a philosophical system”

However, religion (...) is not a series of speculative truths meant just to enrich the intellect. Religion is not a philosophical system. It is not a body of ideas and nothing more. But since religion emanates directly from God -- who is at once the first truth, the supreme good, infinite beauty, intrinsic holiness, the center and source of all perfections -- religion necessarily tends to ennoble and,

⁵³*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1884, Piacenza 1884, pp.6-7.*

in some way, divinize all human faculties, directing them to their last end. For the intellect, religion is an unerring light that dispels the darkness brought on by ignorance and error and reveals the treasures of divine wisdom. For the will, religion is a heavenly rapture that lifts the will beyond the realm of limited and ephemeral goods and fills it with love for the infinite beauty of the supreme and eternal good. For conscience, religion is the unerring rule that keeps conscience from the false maxims put forward by pride and depravity and brings it into agreement with the dictates of God's eternal law (...).

In a word, religion means the order, harmony, peace, and perfection of the whole man, be it in relation to God, to one's fellowman, or to one's very self: an image and pledge of the exhilarating order, harmony, peace and perfection prepared for him in heaven.⁵⁴

"What would a person be without faith?"

Faith! Faith brings us closer to God and reveals his mysteries to us. Faith enlightens and elevates our mind. Faith ennobles our feelings. Faith fills our souls with the balm of heavenly consolations, with the courage and power we need to fight the battles of life. What would a person be without faith? Without faith, a person would know nothing about supernatural truth, about holiness, would not be able to do anything good and virtuous, worthy of eternal reward (...). Without faith, a person is lost.

It is faith that unerringly reveals to us our origin, our fall, our rebirth in Christ, our immortal destiny. It points out to us all the means for achieving our eternal destiny, like the sacraments, prayer and good deeds. It makes us look on all people as our brothers and sisters. And, in all the events of this life, be they joyful or sad, it makes us see the gentle hand of God disposing all things for our good.⁵⁵

"Human beings seek only infinite perfection and infinite good"

Created by God and for God, man's heart cannot be perfect except in God and with God. And since perfection is the natural state, the goal toward which all beings tend, the human heart, too, has an inborn, necessary, and indestructible inclination to be united with God, to be fully satisfied in God and to become one with him: "You made us for you, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." Even in this life, man desires, seeks, and wants only God. So he looks for him in the things around him. He rushes to whatever may contain a spark of good, as if it were an emanation of the infinite good. He always disdains present goods and constantly yearns for those to come because they exhibit the mark of infinity. Just as, in everything he claims to know, man always tends to the eternal Truth, in the same way, in everything he claims to love, he is drawn to the eternal Good, writes St. Dionysius.⁵⁶

"When a person possesses God, what else does he need?"

⁵⁴*Cattolici di nome e cattolici di fatto*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁵Omelia di Epifania, 1.898, (AGS 3016/3).

⁵⁶*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1881*, Piacenza 1881, pp. 23-34,

God is strictly and essentially love. He who abides in love, abides in God and God in him because God and love are one and the same thing: "God is love; whoever abides in love abides in God and God in him."

"When a person possesses God, what else does he need? For God is our peace." Above all, this person possesses peace, namely that stillness of the affections, that serenity of spirit which is so gentle, so sweet, and so indescribable that -- to quote the Apostle -- this peace surpasses all earthly sweetness: "the peace that surpasses all understanding." This enjoyment of the wayfaring soul, this state of tranquillity full of trust, this repose full of consolation, this harmony full of sweetness, this peace full of love is truly the most beautiful foretaste, the most faithful image of heavenly bliss, since, according to St. Augustine's profound words, in peace lies our happiness (...).

O peace of the soul: the real treasure, consolation and delight of the person possessing it! O peace of the soul, which begins in the intellect by faith in the word of God and descends into the heart by possession of divine love! O peace of the soul, which one can never understand if he has not tasted it! O peace! Where, O where, can we find you here on earth outside the faith?⁵⁷

"The mysteries of the faith send out lights and shadows"

We need faith for our present state, just as one who wants to look at the sun must use smoked glass to keep from being blinded. We need faith because, since God is infinite and we are finite, faith must reach where our reason cannot. Faith is to reason what the telescope is to our weak sight. If you look up to the skies on a clear night, you see an infinite number of stars. But where the eye cannot make out anything, the telescope discovers new worlds and unknown wonders. In the same way, we know little or nothing about the great problems of life. It is faith that reveals to us the supernatural world, where every problem finds its natural and exhaustive solution. It is faith that enlightens the mind and teaches us about our existence and our future destiny. Rather than lessening our faith, the shadows of mystery will increase it (...).

Though in themselves the mysteries of faith are impenetrable, they are nonetheless bursting with indescribable splendor. Like the column that led the People of God in the desert, the mysteries send forth lights and shadows. Look at Bethlehem once again. A God who becomes a crying infant! in a stable! What shadows! what mysteries! But, at the same time, what bursts of light! What a glorious profusion of wonders! Everything had been prophesied. The time, the place and the manner of all these events had been recorded in our holy books many centuries before. And now the heavens rejoice, multitudes of heavenly spirits, hovering on their golden wings, sing the song of glory, while heavenly splendors dispel the thick midnight darkness, light up the rough walls of the huts and illuminate the desert and the shepherds. The star appears in the East. Wise men and kings follow the shepherds in paying homage and adoration. Around the cradle of Christianity heaven and earth, angels and men, the past, the present and the future form an immense diadem of light, which makes our faith supremely glorious and reasonable.⁵⁸

b) THE RESPONSE TO GOD'S GIFT

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁵⁸Omelia di Epifania, 1905 (AGS 3016/3).

“Faith is the source of all holiness”

You know that faith is the source, the foundation, the root of all justification, hence the source of all holiness: “the just man lives by faith.” Hence, all the saints became saints only because they lived by faith and according to its teachings. In a word, only because they lived by faith and the dictates of faith did the saints, in the eternal scheme of God’s manifold grace, become people who spent themselves in apostolic labors and produced marvelous works; people who prayed, did penance and performed sacrifices; people who in all conditions of life were angels in the flesh, glorious mirrors of the most beautiful virtues; men and women who were dead to the world, alive only to the Lord’s grace; human beings who cared little about the present life but were always solicitous for the future life: “The saints conquered kingdoms by faith, lived lives of holiness, and attained the promises.”⁵⁹

“The just man lives by faith”

Illuminated by this divine light, Christians are able to understand the real purpose of the present life and their future destiny infinitely better than do the most renowned sages. They judge human affairs, their duties to God, to their fellows and to themselves in a way that runs altogether counter to the perceptions of their senses, yet in a light that is infinitely superior to the light of human reason. Just as with their senses they can see, touch, and feel material and sensible things, in the same way, with infused faith, they see, touch and feel future and heavenly things: “The just man lives by faith.”

They believe: and their intellect begins to understand and contemplate the truths they believe in better than if they were to see them with bodily eyes. They hope: and their hopes become concrete, real, and substantial so that their spirits cling to these hopes with all the power at their command. They love: and their hearts are a flame destroying every uncertainty, a blaze rising up to heaven. They hardly notice the things of earth. They sense only their God, and in God they find their life. They think, talk and work with their God. They suffer, struggle and die for their God: “The just man lives by faith.”⁶⁰

“Faith inspires many humble yet great virtues”

Like a radiant star, faith rises above the earth and illuminates it from one end to the other with a stupendous brilliance (...).

It is faith that impels the missionary to abandon homeland, family, friends, honors and riches, to cross stormy seas and torrid deserts, to penetrate into the most forsaken places, into the most uncivilized and wild areas, in search of natives to first civilize and then to Christianize. The missionary does this with only one hope: to crown a life of apostolic work and toil, of privation and crosses, with a martyr’s death.

It is faith that inspires countless virgins to sacrifice their youth and their comforts, to dedicate themselves to educating the daughters of the poor, and to assist people in prisons and hospitals and those on the battlefield with their charity and words of comfort.

⁵⁹ Omelia di Ognisanti, 1876, (AGS 3016/8).

⁶⁰ *Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1884*, Piacenza 1884, pp. 12-13.

It is faith that stimulates many humble yet great virtues, unknown to the world but known to God. These virtues beautify the sanctuary of the family and preserve the family's holiness, as well as its unity, harmony and peace. Finally, faith encourages countless men and women of all ages and social classes to stand firm against the most appalling scandals and not to fear the scorn of the worldly, the sarcasm of unbelievers, the persecution of the wicked or danger to one's life, when it comes to safeguarding purity, preserving the faith or proclaiming Jesus Christ before the world.⁶¹

"If only I could sanctify myself and sanctify others"

Although I am making my Spiritual Exercises, I feel I should sit down at once to express my heartfelt thanks to you for your kind remembrance. You touched me deeply with the gracious sentiments you expressed to me for the 27th anniversary of my consecration as Bishop of Piacenza. This has been a long period laden with crosses and afflictions: gifts from the hand of God, who rules his shepherds with a Providence that is utterly mysterious. Oh, if I could only sanctify myself and sanctify others!⁶²

"I get scared at my most wretched unworthiness"

Today is the anniversary of my consecration. My God, have pity on this poor bishop! Poor me, how many years I have lost! This is the 18th. I get scared at my most wretched unworthiness. I must begin from scratch. I must make myself less unworthy of my divine episcopal dignity. I must rise to new heights. I must make myself worthy. I must divinize myself. "After God, the bishop is an earthly God." My God, "now I begin" with your divine help. I renew the resolutions of my Spiritual Exercises. O my Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a poor sinner.⁶³

"I offer myself to him by a holy life"

"To present him to the Lord." Together with Joseph, the Blessed Virgin Mary brings Jesus to the temple to offer him to the eternal Father in the name of the whole human race. What thoughts and sentiments did Mary have as she made this solemn offering? And St. Joseph? Jesus offers himself for humanity and for me, so that I might offer myself to him with a holy life.

Today is the day of the great offering: offer up the most holy humanity of Jesus Christ to the Father and offer yourself up with it. "Through him, in him and with him."

O my Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a poor sinner.⁶⁴

"Nothing is more natural than the supernatural"

⁶¹Omelia di Epifania, 1905, (AGS 3016/3).

⁶²Lett. alla duchessa C. Fogliani Pallavicino, Jan. 29, 1903 (AGS 3025/14).

⁶³Meditation note for Jan. 30, 1893 (AGS 3027/1).

⁶⁴Id., Feb. 2, 1893.

Nothing is more natural than the supernatural.⁶⁵

“In all his actions a bishop must be moved by the Holy Spirit”

In all his actions a bishop must be moved by the Holy Spirit, the secret driving force of the most holy humanity of Jesus Christ.

A bishop must do violence to himself in order to become holy.

A bishop must be a virgin, a martyr and a confessor.

I must be a virgin for my purity of life. Woe to the man “who performs iniquity in the land of the saints, for he shall not see the glory of the Lord!” Let me die a thousand deaths rather than sully the lofty dignity of my priestly character with a sin of the flesh!

I must be a confessor for my constant zeal, for my relentless labors in the sacred ministry.

I must be a martyr, one who patiently bears the crosses, the tribulations, the slander, the tediousness of meetings, etc.

I must always be serious, above reproach, modest, gentle yet strong, generous and noble in all things.

I must elevate, ennoble, purify, and divinize myself.

“You will make progress to the degree to which you do violence to yourself”.⁶⁶

“I promise”

1. A half hour meditation every day: at least 20 minutes. On days of visitation, trips or major feasts, at least 10 minutes. I oblige myself to this under pain of mortal sin. Without binding myself by vow, I promise to perform the following acts of piety:
2. Daily spiritual reading.
3. Visit to the Blessed Sacrament: at least one.
4. The recitation of the rosary.
5. The *Angelus*, morning, noon and night.
6. Morning prayers and the examination of conscience in the evening, as well as after the midday *Angelus*.
7. Before the main activities, such as meetings, etc., to renew my intention to do all things for God’s glory.

Every week

Confession, but, for goodness sake, well done, well done!... I need another confessor. The one I have is a holy priest, I’m sure, but he doesn’t correct me. I’ll choose another one.

I must pray and decide on this.

Maybe God wants this sacrifice so as to give me the grace I have sought for so long.

Every month

⁶⁵Test. IV ad 26 of the Diocesan Informative Process.

⁶⁶*Resolutions*, Aug. 24, 1894 (AGS 3027/1). These are resolutions Scalabrini jotted down at the end of his monthly days of recollection or of his annual Spiritual Exercises.

A day of recollection on the second Sunday of every month. Two meditations on the last things and two spiritual readings. If possible, I must spend the rest of the day in prayer, as if I were to die that very night.

I must make the day of recollection. I must make it well, diligently.

It is my salvation!

If I want to, I can. My God, help me.

Particular resolutions I must observe “under pain of damnation”:

1. Quickness in banning all impure thoughts.... Otherwise I’ll perish.... I’ll perish.
2. Rigorous custody of the eyes: what is nothing for others would be fatal to me.
3. I must recite the Divine Office as well as I can, applying it every day for some special need. Every night I must examine myself on how I recited it. Every month a meditation on “*digne, attente, devote*”!... How much time I have wasted...
4. Preparation before Mass and thanksgiving after Holy Mass. Oh, if I could first make my meditation ! What preparation! Come on! Get up early. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me!

“Do this and you shall live.”

5. I must be at home with the practice of ejaculatory prayers. I must say them often.... often....
6. “Let me be intoxicated by the cross!...” God trains us with tribulations, humiliations, sufferings, and with the monotony of the ministry and of audiences. All this preserves us, enlightens us, and makes us grow up. So I must love crosses. I must clasp my pectoral cross to my heart and repeat often: Let me be intoxicated by the cross!...
7. I must have a deep and true devotion to my dear, my most gentle Mother Mary.⁶⁷

“I resolve”

I resolve:

1. to make an hour, more or less, of meditation, including preparation for Mass.
2. to perform every day the practices of piety promised during my Spiritual Exercises and to make frequent use of ejaculatory prayers. My God, my love, my all, help me! Most Holy Mary assumed into heaven, my holy patrons, I recommend myself to you.
3. to recite my Divine Office as well as I can: “*digne, attente, devote*”. to recite Tierce, Sext and None, Vespers and Compline in thanksgiving for Holy Mass: Matins and Lauds as a preparation for Holy Mass. I must always have some particular intention....
5. I will be at home with ejaculatory prayers.
6. I will repeat often, “Let me be intoxicated by the cross,” as I clasp my pectoral cross to my heart. Humiliations, disappointments, offenses, and bitter disillusionments are part of God’s plans.... I will never be without them, nor am I without them at this moment.... Blessed are you, my God! I must have courage in the Cross of Jesus Christ!

⁶⁷Id., Aug. 24, 1893.

7. Constant and tender devotion to Our Lady. She is my mother and will obtain everything for me if I am really and sincerely devoted to her!
8. On days when I am a little more free, I shall make a study of the more common psalms. I shall jot down on special slips of paper, to be kept in my breviary, their meaning, inspiration and prophetic purpose, etc.
I shall begin with the Little Hours. Every day one psalm! How many blessings I will draw down upon myself and my diocese if I recite the Divine Office like a saint!
9. Meditate often on the fact that the sin of a bishop is that “mystery of iniquity,” for which “there is no redemption.”
It’s enough to make my blood freeze!
My God, have mercy on me!
10. At least on my days of recollection, I shall reread these notes and reflect on them....⁶⁸

“*May the Holy Spirit dwell in me, rule me and guide me*”

1. The Holy Spirit was the secret moving force of the most sacred humanity of Jesus Christ: “he was led by the Spirit.”
The Holy Spirit filled the soul of Jesus Christ with those transports of purest, ineffable, and divine joy of which the Gospel speaks.
The Holy Spirit must dwell in me, rule me and guide me: “without your power there is nothing.” He must be the secret moving force of my every action, especially during these Spiritual Exercises. “Come, come, come Holy Spirit!”
2. Since God created me, I must serve him. God’s creation continues in his conservation; hence my servitude is indestructible. The angels and the saints are servants of God. The apostles take pride in being servants of Jesus Christ: “I am your servant.” So I must give myself to the service of God *ex toto corde*.

How foolish is the bishop who does not give himself *ex toto corde* to the service of God purely, simply, without secondary motives: “Save me, O Lord!”

How happy is the person who gives himself wholly to the service of God. He experiences intense joys! My God, help me! “Come, O come, Holy Spirit!”

3. I must have internal holiness. Jesus Christ is the only Priest: the priesthood is one and eternal. Every priest and, even more so, every bishop is the principal agent of Christ’s priesthood. Hence, “be ye perfect.” It is a command.
What must I do? I must at all times and in everything imitate Jesus Christ.
I must think like him, talk like him, work like him, live like him. O Jesus, help me.
I must settle my accounts well in confession every eight days.
I put all this under the special protection of Our Lady of Grace.⁶⁹

“*The interior life is necessary*”

The administration of a diocese is a holy thing, of course. It comes from the supernatural and leads back to it. But we are so distracted! Every day I realize ever more vividly that, to carry the episcopal burden of the exterior life without falling, the interior life is necessary because in it alone does one find consolation, strength, inner joy, light, sustaining peace, the “hidden manna.” O yes, I

⁶⁸Id., Feb. 23, 1901.

⁶⁹Id., Aug. 19, 1894.

feel these things, I talk about them. But when it comes down to concrete deeds and fidelity to God, I am as far away as earth is from heaven. You don't talk about these things; but you, of course, do them. Blessed are you.⁷⁰

"This is my one ambition"

The things I aspire to are to do good, and to do all the good I can. This is my one ambition.⁷¹

c.) PRAYER NOURISHES FAITH

"Prayer is God poured into our hearts"

Without doubt, prayer is the most noble, the most glorious function a human being can perform in this world. Prayer confers on us a sublime grandeur. Not only does prayer put us in touch with all that is true, beautiful and holy in heaven and on earth, but it also makes us enjoy God's friendship, God's most tender effusions, God's most intimate secrets. Prayer is God coming down to us when invoked; it is God poured forth, infused into our hearts, to use St. Augustine's beautiful expression; it is God, our Creator, our Father, our Redeemer, our friend, our brother, who sees us and listens to us, who smiles graciously at our homage and our love.⁷²

"When we pray, the whole universe prays in us and with us"

In the midst of this hushed and silent universe, a tongue with which to bless the Lord was missing, a heart with which to love him. When God created human beings, he gave them speech and wanted all nature to find, in them, a voice that could be a canticle of adoration and thanksgiving. This voice rising up to God in the name of the whole universe -- of which human beings are, as it were, the spokespersons and representatives -- is precisely the voice of prayer.

Yes, dearly beloved, when we pray, it is the whole universe that prays in us and with us, the whole universe, of which we are a compendium. In us and with us, all creatures, with a borrowed voice and soul, praise, bless, thank, glorify and exalt him who brought them out of nothingness: "Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord."⁷³

"Will the human being alone be silent in the midst of such sublime harmony?"

As soon as the sun sheds its rays on the wilting flower in the morning, the flower opens its calyx and, with a charming movement, rises toward that benevolent celestial body as if to express to it, in its own way, its joy and gratitude. The grass that pushes up, the drop that falls, the wind that blows,

⁷⁰Letter to Mons. N. Bruni, 1901 (AGS 3021/17).

⁷¹Letter to the Prefect of Piacenza, s.d. (AGS 3025/6).

⁷²*La preghiera*, Piacenza 1905, p. 24.

⁷³*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

the bird that flies, the sea that roars, the star that twinkles, in a word, creation is -- in the language of the Holy Books -- simply an immense canticle of benediction and praise to the supreme Maker. And shall the human being, the king of creation, who has received everything from the hand of God -- sovereignty, power, intelligence and life -- shall the human being alone be silent in the midst of such sublime harmony? Will he end up being the most ungrateful of all creatures, given that he is the most privileged? Since he was placed so near the throne of the Almighty -- and this without any prior merit of his own -- should he not be the first to acknowledge his supreme dominion? Will he not command his head to bow, his tongue to pour out praises, his whole being to prostrate itself and give God the homage and submission due to him? Yes, dearly beloved, also our body, which is the masterpiece of creation and has been destined for glory together with the soul, also our body, I repeat, following its inner instincts, should, in its own way, glorify the supreme Creator. "My heart and also my flesh exult in the living God," the Prophet exclaims. Jesus Christ himself, as man, prayed to his Father on bended knee and with head bowed to the ground.⁷⁴

"Prayer is the bond of the whole community"

Prayer makes a person greater than he is, transfigures him, elevates him, divinizes him. In the history of souls, nothing is more common than conversions granted because of the prayer of saints. Prayer turned Saul the persecutor into an apostle. How many Augustines are children of the prayers and tears of their mothers!

Prayer is what binds the whole community together. Though the distances separating us from each other may be enormous and the barriers keeping us apart insurmountable, prayer, nonetheless, has the power to draw everybody together, to unite all things. It is prayer that joins the living with each other and the living with the departed. It is prayer that unites the earthly family with the heavenly one, that creates among the Church Militant, Church Suffering and Church Triumphant that ebb and flow of supplications and intercessions that theologians call the "Communion of Saints." Notwithstanding obstacles, prayer sets up an electric current of sorts that moves from brothers and sisters to brothers and sisters and, passing through the heart of God, the center and hearth of love, unites, one might say, all hearts into one single heart, all families into one single family.⁷⁵

"The Word of God himself prayed"

Since the Word of God became man to teach us not only by precept but also by example, he himself prayed to the Father, he who was one thing with the Father, he to whom the Father had given power over all things. In the desert, he was absorbed in prayer. On the mountain, he prayed all by himself, watching through the whole night. He prayed at the tomb of Lazarus and at the entrance to Jerusalem. He prayed before beginning his mission. He prayed in the temple, in the Cenacle, in the Garden of Gethsemani, and on Calvary. He prayed until his very last breath in order to snatch from eternal torments humanity which, in his person, trembled with fear, sweat blood and fell under the blows of death (...).

Therefore, St. Cyprian exclaims, if Jesus, the Saint of saints, prayed, with much more reason should sinners pray. If the Head prays, how can the members not pray? And if the divine Teacher felt such a great need to pray, how can his followers not feel the same way?

⁷⁴*Santificazione della festa*, Piacenza 1903, pp. 11-12.

⁷⁵*La preghiera*, Piacenza 1905, pp. 23-24.

Dearly beloved, the example of Holy Mother Church should also convince us of the need to pray. One might say that her whole life, like her Founder's, is one continuous prayer. She prays every day, at all hours of the day. She prays for herself. She prays for her children struggling in this world. She prays for her children who have left this life and are suffering in Purgatory. She prays for the conversion of sinners, for the perseverance of the just, for the final victory of the dying, and for the grace of eternal salvation for all. She prays for the uprooting of errors and for the triumph of truth and justice. Day and night her churches ring out with the sound of prayer.⁷⁶

“Even in heaven the Church prays”

The Catholic Church prays not only here on earth but also in heaven. A pious and learned writer says: I have never recited the Litany of the Saints or heard others reciting it without admiring the mysterious depths and the sublime heights of the great law of prayer. We soar on the wings of faith and enter the glorious sanctuary of the Lord. There we look around with tearful eyes and on bended knee we pray: Holy Mary, pray for us; holy angels and archangels, pray for us; holy apostles, pray for us; holy patriarchs and prophets, pray for us; holy martyrs, holy confessors, holy virgins, pray for us; all the saints of heaven, pray for us. So, in heaven there is prayer: everybody prays. The virgins pray, the confessors pray, the martyrs, the apostles, the prophets and the patriarchs pray, all brothers and sisters of ours who preceded us on the road to a blessed eternity. There is more! The angels and archangels, the thrones and dominations, the principalities and powers, the cherubim and seraphim, all the angelic choirs also pray. What more can we say? The Queen of the angels and saints, the coredeptrix of the human race, the Blessed Virgin Mary, also prays. And you, O my Jesus, you too pray, even in heaven. You pray with your voice, with the scars of your wounds and with the august display of your glorified humanity. You live forever at the right hand of the Father to pray unceasingly for us: “He lives forever to make intercession for them.”⁷⁷

“People speak and God listens; they command and God obeys”

In a word, what is prayer? Prayer is the lifting of the spirit to God, the source of life. In the marvelous give-and-take that exists between human beings and their Maker, prayer is the mysterious bridge uniting the two sides. Prayer gives wings to our soul, lifts it up above this valley of tears, and brings it into the bosom of the divinity. The body is on earth but the soul is in heaven. People speak and God listens. They command and God grants their requests. Let us say it boldly: people command and God obeys. “He does the will of those who fear him and he listens to their prayers.”⁷⁸

“Who can stand up to God? Prayer”

In heaven, this conversation is called praise, ecstasy, love, beatitude, and eternal happiness. On earth, it is a combination of all this, and we call it prayer. Hence, prayer on earth is a foretaste of immortal life.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 17-18.

It is precisely from this contact with the Divinity that people draw their strength. Two things I admire in heaven and on earth: in heaven, the power of the Creator; on earth, the power of prayer. A human being can be as weak as you wish. But if he prays, he becomes strong with the very power of God: "there is nothing more powerful than a man who prays." Listen to the Apostle: I can do everything, he says, absolutely everything: "*Omnia possum.*" How so? I can do everything with prayer. I can do everything in him who -- whenever I invoke him and pray to him -- strengthens me, comforts me, and consoles me. "I can do everything in him who gives me strength."

When prayer is humble, it not only equals but, I would dare say, surpasses the very power of God: "God is omnipotent," the Prophet says, "and who can stand up against him?" Prayer, I answer.⁷⁹

"The heavenly lightning rods"

As they watch the appalling increase of crime, many people are wondering why the Lord is being so patient and does not send down his thunderbolts. Dearly beloved, raise your eyes to the heights of the spiritual world. There you will find the heavenly lightning rods. Lightning comes crashing down with a roar, but, on the brink of exploding, finds itself harnessed and channeled into electric wires, quite surprised to see its force smothered in an instant. Let us set aside the metaphors: you have seen good people praying, God's ministers praying, many souls, secluded from the world, praying. Here is the answer to the mystery: those people are humanity's vanguards. They are the voluntary victims that, with their sighs and prayers, made even more precious by penance, appease the justice of God and help put back the avenging sword into the sheathe. If only we could pierce the mysterious depths of God, we would be amazed at seeing what an important place the prayer of good people has in the plan of divine Providence and what a beneficial influence prayer has in the life of nations and on the fate of empires.⁸⁰

"No one is dispensed from the law of prayer"

Yes, pray! No one is dispensed from this law of prayer. If you are god-fearing, pray that you remain so. If you are sinners, pray that you rise from this pitiful state. You all must pray to be saved, since it is written: "The prayer of the just man can do much." Pray with humility, trust, and perseverance. Pray in your home, pray in church. Pray especially that holy and sublime prayer that Jesus Christ himself taught us, the prayer in which we ask our Father who is in heaven for the glorification of his name, for the coming of his kingdom, for the fulfillment of his will, for our daily bread, for the forgiveness of our trespasses, for protection and help in every one of our needs.⁸¹

"For us prayer is an innate, instinctive, and irresistible need"

God is the supreme and wise author of all things, and everything is in his hands. Who could deny this without forfeiting his very reason? "In him we live and move and have our being," the Apostle tells us. He has given us existence and preserves it at every moment. So, if our life here on earth is his gift, if we do not belong to ourselves but to God, it is clear that we owe him the eternal homage

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 26.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp.31-32.

⁸¹Ibid., pp.32-33.

of our gratitude, the offering of our subjection, the tribute of our praise, the worship and adoration of our hearts, the sacrifice of our whole self. Sacrifice is prayer, worship is prayer, praise is prayer, thanksgiving is prayer (...).

For us rational creatures, prayer is an innate, instinctive, and irresistible need.⁸²

“The person who prays well lives well”

The person who prays well lives well, says St. Augustine: *Recte novit vivere, qui recte novit orare*. Prayer is the credentials of the true believer. Prayer is the complete profession of Christianity. Prayer incorporates in itself the exercise of all the highest virtues: the exercise of faith, hope, love, humility, sorrow, adoration, and submission to the will of God. And, as such, prayer will always have its reward. When prayer lifts up our hearts to God, it detaches us from the deceptive goods of this miserable life. In this way, it nourishes the life of the spirit in us, accustoms us to the things of eternity and gives us, here on earth, a foretaste of the joy and peace of the elect.

Prayer is the light, the warmth, the nourishment, the consolation, the life of the human soul. The soul suffers and weakens if it does not breathe this air of heaven. St. John Chrysostom says that, just as a fish out of water struggles and dies, in the same way does the soul die if it is deprived of this vital element, namely God’s grace which a person breathes during prayer.⁸³

“Whoever does not pray has no soul”

Whoever does not pray has no soul. He either does not understand or does not have feelings or does not love.

Prayer is the source of good and sometimes great thoughts. Ask believers: in prayer they found the insights of faith. Ask the saints: in prayer they found the help of grace. Ask the geniuses: in prayer they found the insights of science.⁸⁴

“God’s plans will infallibly come true”

Dearly beloved, do not get discouraged by the fact that evils linger on. For an all-powerful God nothing is hard, and in his hands everything serves his purposes. Even the towering and imposing giants that human pride raised up were dashed to the ground by God with no effort at all. But we must pray, we must pray constantly and trustingly to obtain the victory of the Church and of its illustrious Head. If miracles are necessary, God will perform them.

The early Church prayed trustingly and unceasingly when the Prince of the Apostles was in jail. Because of the trusting and persevering prayer of the Christians, an angel was sent to Peter. The angel woke Peter up from sleep, broke the chains with which he was bound, and said to him: Wake

⁸²Ibid., pp. 5-7.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 18-19.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 20.

up and come after me. Whereupon the angel brought him out of jail to the immense consolation of everyone.

At the beginning of this century, when the Church was immersed in great tribulation because of the sad events afflicting her Head, she prayed with confidence and constancy. But when everything seemed desperate and when godless people, with diabolical glee, were about to strike up the victory song and were preparing the grave in which to bury the Church of Jesus Christ, behold, as if by magic, all this formidable power came crashing down. Pius VII went back to his beloved Rome to sit peacefully on the glorious throne of Peter. The Pope returned to Rome in the midst of the acclamations of jubilant peoples and of the indescribable joy of the people of Piacenza, who so touched the venerable old man that he kept praising the piety and faith of your ancestors, especially of the aristocracy.

Even today, the situation is deplorable: the faith is bitterly attacked by its enemies, religion is mocked, the day of the Lord and the sacred period of Lent is desecrated (...).

You can see for yourselves that the Church is drained of all human resources, that the rabble, throbbing with frenzy, and the wicked in their diabolical secret meetings continue to wage war against it. But if all human resources have disappeared and if the Church no longer has arms with which to defend herself, she still has a weapon that never loses its power, namely, prayer. This is our weapon, this is our glory.⁸⁵

d) HISTORY SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH

“Divine Providence weaves the links of this chain”

It is a law of the philosophy of history that great events of humanity are not only the effect of events that came before them but are also the cause of events that come after them.

In a word, we have here that chain of cause and effect that is none other than the principle of causality in the historical order. Divine Providence has woven the links of this chain and directs them toward the ends It has in mind.

It follows that to want to do away with the great realities of our day, which are only the result of the preceding ones, and to do away with them either by doing nothing or by a systematic *a priori* opposition does not make sense, to say the least. If Napoleon I had wanted to bring France back to the times of Louis XVI or of Clovis, he would surely not have been Consul or Emperor.

If, on the contrary, without overlooking what the times have produced, we distinguish between what is good and what is evil in them and try to bring humanity back to the laws of morality and justice with the arguments that once before converted the world, then we might reasonably hope that the events making history will be purified of the dross mixed in with them and be channeled toward the true good of humanity.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Discourse for the priestly jubilee of Leo XIII, 1887, (AGS 3017/6).

⁸⁶*Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, pp. 22-23. The pamphlet, inspired and reviewed by Leo XIII, reveals the basis for Scalabrini's so-called "transigence": knowing how to adapt to the changing times, knowing how to "read the signs of the times," seeing

“The secret of the patience of the cross”

When we see the weeds growing luxuriantly in the field of the great father of the family, we are more frightened than the apostles on Lake Genesareth at the onset of a storm. Like the servants in the parable, we would like to uproot the weeds at once so that the wheat might not suffer. We are afraid God’s plan will be destroyed and the ungodly will triumph. How we deceive ourselves with our futile fears! Everything is in God’s hands: this is a truth of faith. God is the primary cause and human beings the secondary causes, albeit intelligent and free. But secondary causes would not be free if they could not abandon God’s plan and follow another. God could stop these people and punish them on the spot. If God does not do so, St. Augustine gives us a brilliant reason why he does not, a reason that is entirely worthy of God’s goodness: “evil people live either so that they might amend; or they live so that, because of them, good people might become better.” Human efforts can never thwart the plan of God. We can be sure that God lets people operate as long as they do not thwart his divine plan of victory for the Church and help it instead. Yet, as soon as people obstruct this plan, God, in the twinkling of an eye, changes scene with the mysterious means he holds in his hands; and, in an instant, Balaam becomes a prophet at the service of God. How many happenings in the world look accidental and yet are dispositions prepared by God, who, when we least expect it, knocks down and overturns all the castles in the air built by people, who considered them eternal (...). God knows when to build and when to destroy. At the right time he builds and he destroys.⁸⁷

“The moments of his grace are not always the moments of our impatience”

Absolute master and sovereign giver of his graces, he showers them on us from the heights of the sacred mountain of Zion, whenever and howsoever he wishes. We need only stand at the foot of the mountain, humbly and patiently accepting them from his generous and munificent hands. He is our father and loves us with immense love. He cannot but be moved by the misfortunes of his children. When he does not answer our request at once, it is because the moments of his grace are not always the moments of our impatience. But, with the munificence of his gifts, he will surely make up for the delay that made us weep and sigh. So nothing should uproot confidence and perseverance from our heart, no matter how long God seems to be delaying his help.

We must show that, if God wants to test our faith, we are ready to stand the test with generosity; that we put blind trust in the infallible promise of Jesus Christ himself, who said the powers of hell will never be able to prevail against the Church -- “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” -- that, come what may, the Church will triumph and that this triumph will be at once the fruit and reward of our confidence and prayer. Indeed, he who trusts unflinchingly in God and is anchored to heaven hopes against hope itself. When Christ wants, he will command the winds and the sea and, at once, the storm will subside and there will be a great calm: “and a great calm came over the sea.”⁸⁸

“salvation history” in irreversible historical facts, like the unification of Italy, (*see* Biography, pp. 571-620)

⁸⁷Discourse for the Silver Jubilee of Leo XIII, 1887 (AGS 3017/6).

⁸⁸Ibid.

“Men of little faith, why are you afraid?”

So, the triumph of the ungodly should in no way dishearten good people, those, I mean, who are faithful to Christ and the Church, because God’s way of dealing with the Church is always so infinitely wise, in as much as he never separates the present from the future and from eternity. Even his seeming abandonment of the Church is simply an act of his love. Hence, the Church’s life is a life of immortal hope, a hope that can never be dashed. Foolish indeed are those who try to attract to themselves men of science, men of power and wealth, as well as the proletarian masses, in order to exploit science, power, wealth and even the use of force itself to tear down the edifice built by Christ on earth. They are almost ready to congratulate themselves over their success. How foolish these people are. But equally foolish are those who in the midst of the ebb and flow of countless human events get angry, become disillusioned and almost lose confidence in divine Providence! O men of little faith! Why are you afraid? A clay vase, struck by an iron rod, shatters into a thousand pieces: this is the image the Prophet uses to show the ease with which God destroys the enemies of his work. No, do not be afraid. Glory and ignominy, pain and joy, anxiety and peace, life and death, curse and blessing, everything is in God’s hands. He rebuked the sea and all was calm. Social cataclysms, that turn nations upside down and throw kingdoms into disarray, are themselves subject to him. He has the power to stop them and, when he wishes, turn them around in favor of the elect.⁸⁹

“Society does not realize that it is working to perfect itself for the Kingdom of God”

We now see society agonizing to produce a new order of things, if I may put it this way. This poor society does not realize that it is somehow working to perfect itself for the kingdom of the God-Man. It does not realize it is working to pave the way for the Church’s universal victory and help fulfill the unfailing prophecy of Jesus Christ: “have confidence; I have conquered the world!” Yes, venerable brothers and beloved people, just as the material greatness of the Roman Empire was ordained by God to prepare the way for the religious greatness of the Empire of Christ, in the same way, the frenzy of modern progress and all the efforts of our century, its discoveries, its plans, its undertakings, are all ordained by divine Providence for the absolute triumph of his elect, scattered all over the earth: “everything for the elect” (2 Cor 4:15) (...).

So, venerable brothers and beloved people, let us raise our spirits in the midst of our afflictions. Let us expand our hearts more and more. Let us hope, but let our hope be calm and patient. Let us hope without letting up. The faithful servant who is waiting for his master is not at fault if his master happens to be late in coming. If, in his adorable designs, God is late in answering us, we must redouble our confidence and rely on the ineffable truth of God’s promises, disregarding the judgment of human beings, and surrender ourselves to a boundless trust, disregarding the skepticism of the world.⁹⁰

“The road to true freedom, true civilization, true progress”

The obstacles that still spring up to challenge God’s plan will gradually disappear, and the day will come when all nations will understand where their true greatness lies. These nations will feel the need to go back to the Father, and they will go back! What a great day that will be, gentlemen! What a fantastic day that will be when myriads of people, speaking all kinds of languages with all

⁸⁹*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1877, Piacenza 1877, pp. 10-11.*

⁹⁰*Ibid., pp. 15-17.*

kinds of accents -- as happened at the great Council of Piacenza -- will raise a canticle of thanksgiving and praise to God Almighty. The sun of truth will radiate with greater splendor than ever, and the rainbow of peace -- as an eloquent speaker once put it -- will arch over the earth with all its most gorgeous colors. It will be like a triumphal arch, under which the Church, the great reconciler, will pass in triumph, drawing the modern world to itself. Then society, having become Christian once again, will continue in peace and justice on the road to true freedom, true civilization, and true progress.⁹¹

“In America ... there is a special plan of Divine Providence”

As you know, God’s great plan is to save all people through his Church, the marvelous creation of his infinite love, his house, his city, his kingdom. Now, gentlemen, the breathtaking goal, the constant dream, the first and highest ideal of Columbus, was to extend the boundaries of this kingdom by calling new peoples to the light of truth and having them taste the benefits of redemption (...).

When God chooses to do something great, he undoubtedly shows his intentions by the means and instruments he chooses for the purpose. He wanted and still wants to do something great for America and with America. In fact, he chose to organize her in such a way that no other continent could match her for vastness, magnificence and riches. There you have boundless plains, endless and luxuriant prairies, gigantic forests teeming with enormous trees, mountains whose verdant peaks seem to touch heaven, rivers so wide and deep that they flow without ever stopping from one ocean to the other, all kinds of temperatures and all sorts of climates, all types of cultivation and all kinds of agriculture, all kinds of precious goods and all kinds of minerals. In a word, here in one place are found all the gifts God has divided up among the various parts of the world.

When God decides to open up this vast continent to evangelization, what does he do? He sends what is finest in humanity: he sends heroes and saints, starting with our own Columbus and on down to the last martyr drenching the soil of New England; down to the sons of the venerable John Bosco, who, every day, with their sweat, harvest exuberant fruits of religion and civilization.

This is not all. On those young nations God lavishes with prodigality not only the gift of material progress but also the blessings of social well-being. How is this all happening, gentlemen? It is happening at the very moment that Asia and Africa are at the height of barbarity for having chosen to withdraw from the salutary influence of the Gospel; at the very moment when Europe, led astray by evil doctrines, is trying to throw off the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ, to live without God. Anyone can see in this care on God’s part, in this predilection, in this largess permeating every facet of America, a special design of divine Providence, insuring that this continent has everything it needs to accept the overabundant population of all races and provide them with all the prosperity and happiness possible here on earth. At the same time, God wants to insure that this continent has everything it needs to be able to rejuvenate the world at the very moment the world is experiencing decadence. God is thus opening up to the divine fecundity of his Church an immense field, where she will be amply compensated for the betrayal and abandonment of the nations that refuse to live of her life.

Anyone can clearly see this plan of God. While the world, gentlemen, is bedazzled by its progress, while men and women pride themselves on their conquest of the material world and rule over nature like its lords, disemboweling the earth, harnessing the lightning, digging canals for the waters of the

⁹¹Discourse for the 8th Centennial of the first Crusade, Apr. 21, 1895 (AGS 3018/26).

oceans to mingle, eliminating distances; while nations grow and renew themselves and races mingle, spread or die out; in the midst of the hustle and bustle of these multitudinous activities and not without them, a much grander, nobler and more sublime work is coming into being: the union in God through Jesus Christ of all people of good will. God's servants who work on earth for his purposes are numerous in all periods of history. But, during great eras of social renewal, there are more of these people unconsciously working under his orders and for his glory than we can see or imagine. You must be clear on this point, gentlemen: humanity's supreme purpose is not the conquest of matter through a more or less advanced science, nor the forging of peoples who, from time to time, embody the genius of power, literature, science, government or riches. No, the purpose is to gather all people into one in God through Jesus Christ.

In fact, God has done and does everything for his Word, Jesus Christ. Hence, everything he has done for the new American continent he has done for his Christ. Christ has done everything for his Church. America, therefore, can be called the heritage of Christ. It is the promised land of the Church.

If people will not obstruct God's plan, the time will come, gentlemen, when all nations will have on that continent numerous communities, rich, law-abiding, God-fearing, prosperous communities. While preserving their own national heritage, they will be politically and religiously united. This land of blessings will foster inspiration, develop principles, and unleash new, mysterious forces that will revitalize the New World, teaching it the economy of true fraternity, true equality, true liberty, and true progress. Then, I am sure, Christ's great promise will be fulfilled: there shall be but one flock and one shepherd.⁹²

"Gathering all people into one family"

God wants it! This was the cry of Pope Urban II. This is the cry of his worthy successor Pope Leo XIII. God wants it! He wants nations to remember they are Christian. God wants reason to be reconciled with faith, nature with grace, earth with heaven, the works of creatures with the rights of the Creator. God wants labor and capital, freedom and authority, equality and order, fraternity and paternity, conservatism and progress to recognize each other and help each other in harmonious counterpoint. In a word, God wants all elements of civilization -- sciences, letters, arts, industry, every legitimate interest, every legitimate aspiration -- to find encouragement, guidance, help, nobility, and divine consecration in religion, in the Church and in the papacy.

In our days, as in those of the Crusades, we find the Pope sitting erect on his throne, surrounded by the veneration and affection of hundreds of different peoples. At that time, his name was Urban II; today his name is Leo XIII. But, really, he has only one name: his name is *Pope*. From his lips come the words that heal nations. At all times, his power is the same: a power that is generous and beneficial to all. He watches over our century, which is coming to an end, just as he watched over the last years of the 11th century. At that time, to save society from Islam which was threatening it, the Pope rose before the popular masses and here launched the first Crusade. Today, to save our civil family from the socialism threatening it, the Pope gets in touch directly with the Christian masses and promulgates a crusade against the subversive sects, a crusade in favor of the workers, and, lastly, a crusade that sums up and crowns all the others, the holy crusade to gather all people into one family. God wants it! And, without doubt, the will of God will be fulfilled.⁹³

⁹²Address for the 8th Centennial of Christopher Columbus, Dec. 1, 1892 (AGS 3018/21).

⁹³Address for the 8th Centennial of the First Crusade (AGS 3018/26). The Crusade was proclaimed by Urban II in Piacenza in 1095.

“Jesus Christ is the real progress”

The Catholic religion is most perfect in its dogmas and its moral teaching. It does not need to add or change anything. It stands firm with a sublime immutability. In the Catholic religion is found the way, the truth, and the life. Every step of civilization taken on this way is a real blessing. Outside of it there is no civilization, only barbarism. But you must know, my beloved children, that religion is immutable, not immobile. So you can well understand what a gross calumny the children of the world raise against religion when they say it does not encourage humanity in the pursuit of modern progress. To these people I will say: if progress is real, if it is wise and Christian, the Catholic religion not only encourages it but takes the lead in promoting it.

Our Catholic religion, you see, has a 2000-year-old history. It makes common cause with your programs by setting up schools and educating the common people. It makes common cause with your educational efforts by educating children in a Christian way. It makes common cause with your industries by castigating idleness and preaching the need for work. It makes common cause with your arts by erecting churches and mausoleums. It makes common cause with your bravery by motivating and blessing the genius of war.

There is no question that immobility denotes death, that it enslaves and benumbs. Immobility is a corpse lying in the tomb. But this is not the nature of the Catholic religion, which is immutable, for immutability goes hand in hand with free activity. Immutability coexists with God, who is the most active of all beings, because, dearly beloved, whereas nothingness is indeed immobile, God, who is the fullness of being, is immutable: “I am the Lord and do not change.”

Progress in the arts, progress in the sciences, progress in industry, no, this is not the progress our Catholic religion condemns. In fact, our religion considers it a crime to oppose this kind of progress, in which she sees the hand that created all things. The kind of progress to which our religion is eternally hostile is any increase in crime, in blasphemy, in thefts, in suicides, in error, in dissension, in licentiousness, in impiety, in egoism; in a word, progress in godlessness (...).

Real progress is not a showy display of new roads, new machines or new systems. All this is the ornament, the exterior veneer of civilization. But this is not civilization, it is not progress. The real progress of a people consists in its education. But authentic education, education that civilizes all aspects of life, consists primarily in the development of the intellectual and moral faculties and in the development of the heart and formation of the spirit; in the development of the heart, so that it may cherish goodness; in the cultivation of the spirit, so that it may prevail against matter (...).

Jesus Christ is the author of progress. Indeed, real progress has no purpose other than Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ, living in human beings; Jesus Christ embodying himself in humanity and embodying humanity in himself; Jesus Christ gradually extending and lifting himself in space and time; Jesus Christ the center of all harmony that is restored, all beauty that regains its freshness, all greatness that becomes greater. Everything that is most true, everything that is most holy, everything that is perfect must come forth from and go back to him, for Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, as well as the link that joins the two.⁹⁴

e) FAITH AND REASON ARE TWO SISTERS

⁹⁴*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1879, Piacenza 1879, pp. 30-35.*

“Faith and reason are two daughters of the same heavenly Father”

Faith is indeed superior to reason. But it will never happen that one will contradict the other, that what is true for one is not true for the other, or that they will meddle in each other’s field of work. The truth is that anyone who presumes to have found this conflict has either misunderstood the faith because he has no clear idea of its teachings or because he has perverted his reason with his own sophisms. Anyone who thinks he has found this conflict has either misunderstood faith, by not really having a clear idea of what it has really taught, or denatured reason by accepting his own sophisms as sound reasoning. How could it be otherwise if both lights emanate from the same source? Faith and reason are two daughters of the same heavenly Father, two brooks from one and the same Truth, two rays from one and the same Light. Faith and reason are like two sisters who, on the journey through this dark world, join hands, take turns to come to each other’s side, and support each other in a perfect and unbreakable union. With its teachings, faith enlightens and ennoble reason, while reason, with its legitimate studies and investigations, throws light on the truth of the faith. With its resources, reason proclaims the marvels of the faith while, with its mysteries, faith not only becomes part and parcel of reason but becomes also its crown, its triumph and its apotheosis.⁹⁵

“Faith is not afraid of discussion; it is afraid of ignorance”

No, faith is not afraid of discussion. It is not afraid of the light. But it is afraid of ignorance. It is afraid of shallow and simplistic science, of that false science that has always contributed the largest contingent to the ranks of the unbelievers and unfortunately does so even in our day. Let me ask you: how many people today feel the need to add a serious and deep study of religion to the catechetical notions they picked up in their youth? Who reads the books of the ancient or modern apologists that draw proofs from reason on behalf of religion, books that illustrate the sublime analogies and beauty of religion or rebut the objections and calumnies to which religion is subjected? At best, these folks may know the titles of those books. Are we to be surprised if even people of great skill and talent do not know, in matters of faith, what children know? They may know everything, if you will, about philosophy, mathematics, history, and literature but know nothing about the most important matter of all, namely, the science of religion. Or they may have some fragmentary religious knowledge, mixed with errors and vulgar prejudices, fragmentary knowledge they pick up from cynical, irreligious newspapers, from fashionable books, from novels that distort and confuse everything, from slanderous and dishonest history books, from shameful shows and theatrical performances, from high schools and universities where teachers, all too often unbelievers, ridicule religion with their barbs and witticisms.⁹⁶

A very serious obligation to work for the triumph of faith and science”

Most Holy Father,

The Committee set up in Piacenza under the honorary presidency of the Ordinary to encourage Italians to support the International Scientific Congress, which Catholic scholars will hold in August of next year in Fribourg, Switzerland, respectfully submits to you a copy of the circular letter the

⁹⁵*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1881, Piacenza 1881. pp. 15-16.*

⁹⁶Omelia di Epifania, 1905 (AGS 3016/3)

Committee is planning to distribute among Italian scholars. Holy Father, the Committee requests your blessing on its efforts to ensure that Italians will take part in numbers worthy of their country, which, blessed with the seat of the infallible Teacher of the Faith, has a very serious obligation to work for the triumph of faith and science.

Your Holiness, please bless the Italian Committee and the undersigned, your devoted sons and daughters,

+ John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, Honorary President
Alberto Barberis, C.M., President.⁹⁷

“The role of science in calling people’s attention to God”

In September of 1894, for the third time an event of the greatest importance for religion and science took place.

Catholic scholars from all nations, Belgians and French in larger numbers, Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Swiss, Spaniards, and Americans, with some representatives from Italy, met in Brussels in a congress of Christian wisdom in full view of Church and civil society (...).

All sciences found an honorable place at that congress: religious and apologetic disciplines, first of all, followed by the philosophical disciplines, social and juridical sciences, historical and philological studies, mathematical, physical and natural disciplines. In this comprehensive encyclopedia of knowledge there was even room for the ornament of Christian esthetics.

All this treasure of many-splendored scientific knowledge and amicable discussions, collected in the nine volumes of the Proceedings of the Congress -- not just as a record of the advances made -- is bound to produce fruit. If just one learned person, who is able to harmonize science and faith in himself, lends honor and defense to religion and society, we can be sure that a numerous and select assembly of believing scholars and thinkers from every country in the world will force a world perverted by a cynical and antichristian science to at least respect a religion under whose energizing rays all the flowers of human knowledge come alive. In fact, not content with the marvelous conquests of science in the material order and tormented by the need to rise to the ultimate problems of life, many of the most brilliant minds will find satisfaction in lifting up their minds and hearts and in contemplating the harmonious and reassuring solutions that human science provides through the light of faith.

In the meantime, the unceasing and contemporaneous work in all branches of the great scientific tree is brought together and coordinated at these worldwide meetings of scholars, accumulating copious material of all kinds with which to erect, even more beautifully, the edifice of Catholic Apologetics. This will compel speculative reason and positive observation, in the wake of an impartial and rigorous analysis, to pay homage to religion and to raise the hymn of science to the truth of Christianity. Thanks to the truth of Christianity, all truths will find warranty, splendor and harmonious interaction in God: “All things that come from God are related to each other and to God himself” (St. Thomas).

The favorable experiences of the past and these blessed and auspicious expectations for the future are, in themselves, a powerful reason for the undersigned to work might and main in Italy for the

⁹⁷Letter to Leo XIII, June 1896 (ASV-SS, Rub. 43/1896, Prot. N. 31372).

preparation of the 4th International Scientific Congress of Catholics, scheduled for August, 1897, in Fribourg, Switzerland. In fact, the Permanent Committee of the International Scientific Congresses has recently appointed them as the *Italian Organizing Committee*.

But there are also other important reasons for working to this end: the honor and glory of our country. For a host of reasons -- which I will not list here -- at the Brussels Congress, out of 2500 supporters, our country could come up with only 74 Italians, of whom only two personally took part in the various sessions (...).

+ John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza, Honorary President

A. Barberis, professor at the Alberoni College, member of the Permanent Committee for the International Scientific Congresses of Catholics, president of the Italian Committee, Piacenza

Baron Demateis	Mons. Carlo Brera
Dr. G. Toniolo	Theologian L. Biginelli
Dr. Luigi Olivi	P.G. Giovanozzi
Mons. L. Brevedan	P. De Martinis
Count Ed. Soderini	P.I. Torregrossa. ⁹⁸

“The great work of the revival of Thomistic philosophy”

In my conversation with Your Eminence, which pleased me so much, we talked about the *Divus Thomas* and about the work of Abbot Luigi Francardi. Since you must have received the various issues of *Divus Thomas* by now, I am taking the liberty of asking you, Most Eminent Prince, to give me your professional opinion of it. This periodical was founded with the intention of cooperating in the great work of reviving Thomistic philosophy begun by our glorious Holy Father. It meets with general favor, is sought after abroad and has a fine number of subscribers among scholars, including lay ones. A Rosminian told me the other day: reading *Divus Thomas* has convinced me that Rosmini is not St. Thomas.

I am anxious therefore that this periodical prosper for the benefit of the good cause. And this is why your Eminence must do me the favor, which I ask also in the name of the editor, of giving me your honest opinion of the periodical. For we are all willing to retract, to explain or to amend any expression that is not clearly in accord with the teachings of the Angelic Doctor (...).

I am preparing a decree that will establish the Association of St. Thomas and introduce the teachings of the *Summa contra Gentes*, as well as the other works. I hope, in this way, to pave the way for an authentic academy, not a sham or litigious one, and to revive the former Theological Guild of St. Thomas, which has a gorgeous chapel dedicated to the saint. The Guild also has excellent bylaws, praised by the Holy See itself. I believe that a return to true principles will be one of the most splendid glories of the pontificate of our Holy Father. I also believe that, despite the stormy controversies -- which are slowing down rather than fostering the lofty goals of the Holy Father -- and despite the partisan attitude of those who perhaps have never seen the cover of a book by St. Thomas (these things are to be expected among human beings), the Pope will achieve his noble

⁹⁸Circular letter for the International Scientific Congress of Catholics in Fribourg, Switzerland, 1897 - June 1, 1897.

purpose and thus ensure an illustrious place for himself in the series of St. Peter's successors. If you have the occasion, please tell this great Pontiff of my esteem for him and ask him to bless me.⁹⁹

The Church always puts to good use the lofty intellectual work of her sons and daughters.

I don't entirely share your fears of the biblical questions being debated. Jesus Christ is the one who rules the Church. However, the Church always puts to good use the lofty intellectual work of her sons and daughters. Of course, we must be very vigilant lest anyone, under any circumstance, attack the holy Ark. And we will be vigilant.¹⁰⁰

3. THE IMAGES OF CHRIST

Mary glorifies the Most Holy Trinity. Being associated with Christ, she is figure, prophecy and mother of the Church. Mary Immaculate is reborn humanity returning to the arms of God. Mary assumed into heaven is the mediatrix between heaven and earth. The Virgin Mary is the mother of consolation and of mercy. She is our mother if we live like her children. Her life, which we meditate upon in the rosary, is the model of the Christian life.

The saints are prodigies of divine grace, men and women of faith and of obedience to the saving will of God. By believing in God and obeying him, we can all become saints, just like them. Devotion to the saints means being faithful to the faith they have passed on to us. We cannot forget the tribulations our forefathers and mothers went through to beget us to God. We trust in them because they are God's friends and ours.

The poor are the living and eloquent image of Christ, who was born poor and died naked on the cross. The poor are his privileged friends, the pupil of his eyes. We cannot be Christ's friends unless we are friends of his friends. If we deeply love the poor, the least, the unfortunate, much will be forgiven us. If we love poverty, we love Christ who espoused it.

a) MARY

"She glorified God and she, in turn, was glorified by God.

The person who glorifies God will, in turn, be glorified by God, says the Lord. And who, more than Mary, glorified God on this earth? She glorified God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

She glorified God the Father when, by her consent to the Incarnation of the Word, she made it possible for God the Father to see his domain expanded and his power increased, as he beheld among his subjects a subject of infinite perfection. And, in truth, since, in his humanity, Christ is

⁹⁹Letter to Cardinal Giuseppe Pecci, 1881 (AGS 3020/3).

¹⁰⁰Letter to G. Bonomelli (Carteggio S.B., pp. 383-384). Bonomelli had expressed "fears" over the tendency of biblical criticism evidenced especially in the early writings of Loisy.

inferior to the Father, the Father, in a certain way, became the God of God; and this he became through Mary.

She glorified God the Son when his infinite love -- which in God's eternal designs caused him to sacrifice himself for humanity -- could be satisfied only when Mary appeared on the scene. If he was glorified by his temporal birth, he was, in fact, glorified in the very flesh he took from Mary.

She glorified God the Holy Spirit when, as soon as she consented to the designs of the Most High, the Divine Paraclete descended to unite, within her, the Redeemer's most holy soul with his most sacred body. Thus, having hypostatically united that adorable humanity with the nature and person of the Divine Word, the Holy Spirit acquired *ad extra* the fecundity he does not have *ad intra*, as well as a certain precedence over the most sacred humanity of Christ.

Mary, therefore, had to be glorified in the heavens by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. She had to be glorified not with one but with a triple crown.¹⁰¹

"Mary, figure of the Church"

In the words of St. Ambrose, the whole life of Mary, the mysteries that took place in her, the graces that adorned her, the blessings distributed through her, were a figure, an image, a prophecy, so to speak, of the Catholic Church: "Mary bore in herself the figure of the Church." In fact, we cannot deny that Mary's existence is tied directly to that of Christ and that it shares much more in the destiny of Christ than in that of the human race. Now, then, look at the nature of the Catholic Church and you will see that, like Mary, she forms one sole thing with Christ, lives of his Spirit, seeks his glory and loves him with a most perfect love. The Eagle of Doctors said that the flesh of Christ is the very flesh of Mary: *caro Christi, caro Mariae*. One could not elucidate with clearer truth and greater precision the Gospel statement: "of whom Jesus was born."

Now, who cherishes and defends the virginal flesh of Mary and makes it known to people? Is it not the Catholic Church? You will notice that, through the power of Christ, the divine maternity is made present and extended in all the Sacraments of which the Church is minister. In everything you will see the power of Christ's blood. You will understand that this blood was given us by Mary and is applied to us through the ministry of the Catholic Church. What a beautiful and clear correlation between the mother and the spouse of Christ! The Scriptures all speak of the Redeemer and, as a consequence, speak of the Virgin, of which he was born, and of the Church, through whom he still lives on earth until the end of time. This union between Christ, the Virgin and the Church is so intimate that one cannot separate them. When you read -- from the first to the last page of the Holy Books -- about the woman's Son who saves the world, you are also reading about the triumph of the Virgin Mary and, with her, about the triumph of the Church.¹⁰²

"Mother of the Church"

Who can describe with what ecstatic fervor, passionate love and persevering prayer Mary turned to the divine Paraclete in the Cenacle, beseeching him to pour himself out in the fullness of his gifts on these firstfruits of the faith, as well as on all future believers, and to be their light, their counselor,

¹⁰¹Homily for the Assumption, 1881 (AGS 3017/1).

¹⁰²Id., 1992.

their guide, and their solace for all ages to come? At the same time, who can doubt that the divine Spirit lovingly accepted and gladly granted the supplications of Mary, this spouse of his, adorned with every virtue, embellished with every gift, so beloved in his eyes, so powerful over his heart? Who will not conclude with me that Mary played a most important part in the marvelous effects produced by the Holy Spirit among men and women at his coming and that we truly owe a debt of gratitude for them also to the Virgin Mary?

Consider that, with her example, she helped immeasurably to stir up even in the Apostles those excellent dispositions that were to serve as an invitation to a richer outpouring of the Spirit.

Yes, in the eyes of the Apostles, Mary was a sacred treasure, a venerable person. In her they saw instilled the spirit of their divine Master. In her they saw Jesus himself mirrored, Jesus himself somehow personified. They looked at her as the rule of all their actions, as the model of their lives. I would say, moreover, that they would depend on her will in all things .

On the other hand, during all the days she spent with the Apostles in the Cenacle, with what frequency, enthusiasm, and rapture must Mary have talked to them about the sublime excellence of the Spirit they were to receive, about the importance of his mission, the preeminence of his gifts and the need to dispose themselves to receive him worthily! Imagine what an impression these words of hers -- so precious because of her authority, so efficacious because of her example -- must have made on the Apostles and how her words must have inspired them to purify their hearts, enkindle their desires, and quicken their supplications, in a word, to prepare themselves for a more copious sharing in the divine Spirit! (...).

It is precisely on Pentecost Day that Mary began to exercise on earth the spiritual motherhood to which she had been raised at the foot of the Cross.

In fact, at Nazareth the Holy Spirit consecrated Mary Mother of God, while in the Cenacle he invested her as Mother of the Church. As Mother of the Head, she also had to be mother of the members.¹⁰³

“Mary represents reborn humanity”

I would never finish, dearly beloved, if I were to list all the extraordinary blessings the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception has brought to earth. Let me just say this: look at the peace and serenity of the Church in the midst of the present struggle! War is all around her but not within her. The weeds have been separated from the chosen wheat. False Catholics, having removed their masks, have shown their true colors. Now the Church enjoys the peace that had been foretold for so long. In fact, the Church’s noblest peace does not consist in a letup from the battles to which her Divine Spouse has sent her -- hence her title *Militant* -- but especially in remaining the repository of truth and justice against the thousand enemies surrounding her. Her peace consists in unity of thought and in the knowledge of the truth in complete accord with the highest of all Authorities. Has not this peace been achieved, despite the many ups and downs of history? Yes, the Church does now enjoy that true, spiritual, and eternal peace which the angels proclaimed to the world at the birth of Christ and which Christ himself bequeathed to his disciples: that peace, in a word, that is the establishment and spread of the kingdom of God in the midst of the world (...).

¹⁰³Homily for Pentecost, 1900 (AGS 3016/6).

I challenge anyone to show me another period when the protection of Mary was as manifest and tangible as in our age or when the internal peace of the Church was as marvelous as after the definition of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. From the grotto of Lourdes has not the Holy Virgin confirmed with her own lips and in the clearest way the most sublime attribute of the pontifical ministry, namely, Infallibility, when she said: "I am the Immaculate Conception?" Is it not because of her that so many poor dupes have opened their eyes to the truth and that the loveliest and most fragrant flowers from the parched fields of Protestantism are gradually being transplanted in the mystical flower-beds of the one true Church of Jesus Christ? (...).

Just as the Incarnation was the outpouring of God's mercy and love upon a world that had entirely deserted him, in the same way Mary Immaculate, in the 19th century, represents a reborn humanity returning to the arms of its God. In the 19th century, Mary Immaculate represents the delightful array of all the loveliest virtues which -- like at the Savior's coming -- are moving across the face of the earth to take possession of it at the very moment when vices of all kinds are inundating it. Humility overcomes pride, love replaces egoism, purity defends seduced innocence.

In the 19th century, Mary Immaculate represents complete victory of the spirit over the flesh. She represents freedom from crime, degradation and slavery; the proclamation of the dignity, nobility and greatness of human nature. For the 19th century, Mary Immaculate constitutes the most gentle solace of the poor and the afflicted. Wholly innocent, she was not subject to the pain due to sin. Yet she suffered poverty, humiliation and the most excruciating torments, thus becoming the Queen of Martyrs! In the 19th century, Mary Immaculate represents for the rich a wholesome reminder not to be attached to the goods of the earth but to those of heaven and to perform works of Christian charity for the poor of Jesus Christ. Though she was the Mother of God and was loved by him above all other creatures put together, she received no riches other than the riches of heaven! In the 19th century, Mary Immaculate entreats good people to treasure grace most highly and pleads with sinners to abandon a life of sin. Finally, in the 19th century, Mary Immaculate is the rainbow of peace invoked in family disputes, in the turmoil of dreadful upheavals, in moments of fears and threats of even more terrible evils!¹⁰⁴

"The loving Mediatrix between God and the 19th century"

Our age deifies human reason, proclaiming that man has never needed Redemption because he has never fallen. Our age refuses to confess the disorder that interiorly degrades it. Our age rejects the sacred dogmas of our most holy Religion and its divine Mysteries. Hence, for our age, Jesus Christ is not the merciful Savior who redeems heaven and earth by his Blood but, at most, a great philosopher, on whom people have bestowed divine attributes. For our age, the earth is not the way leading to the happiness of paradise but the paradise of happiness. For our age, matter is not a ladder by which we climb more easily to the knowledge of God but the ultimate goal of our hopes. Our age's only preoccupation is to subdue and transform matter, to see nothing, accept nothing and hope in nothing but matter. As a result, while distances in the world of nature are daily diminishing through the telegraph and the steamship, those of the world of grace are steadily increasing. While the electric light dimly illuminates the darkness of night, the gentle and serene light of faith is fading in civil society.

Dearly beloved, who is going to heal this horrible wound of our miserable age? Who is going to lead this prodigal son back to his father's house? The one who will mediate peace and pardon

¹⁰⁴*In commemoration of the first great Jubilee of the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Piacenza 1879, pp. 25-28.*

between nature and grace, between God and the 19th century, is the loving Mediatrix; she who is the most beautiful miracle of nature, the most perfect work of grace; she in whose very person nature and grace, the natural and the supernatural, science and faith, come together and intertwine in a most perfect and stupendous way; in a word, she who alone can be called the Immaculate One (...).

The dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception is the most decisive condemnation of modern unbelief. It is the most solemn affirmation of the supernatural order and of all those truths that pertain to the supernatural order.

If we believe Mary was conceived without original sin, we cannot but profess the dogma of Creation, of Redemption, and of Sanctification, because belief in her Immaculate Conception is the same as confessing that the divine Father created Mary's soul in a wholly perfect state, that the divine Word ransomed her in a way wholly different from the way he ransomed the children of Adam, and that the Holy Spirit endowed her with his incomparable gifts. If we believe Mary was conceived without original sin, we cannot but glorify God's Goodness, which set her apart from the corrupt mass of the whole human race; God's Wisdom, which chose her, the second Eve, as the means to repair the harm done to human nature by the first Eve; and God's Power, which overwhelmed Lucifer in the most glorious way. If we believe Mary was immune from original sin, we cannot but profess God's utter freedom vis-à-vis everything outside himself, as well as his absolute dominion over nature, and we cannot but pay homage to the infinite Holiness of God, the implacable enemy of all sin. Finally, if we believe Mary was immune from the primeval fall, we cannot but profess full submission of intellect and heart to the Catholic Church, which proposes the Immaculate One for our belief.¹⁰⁵

"The Age of the Immaculate One"

True, our age has had different titles. Some call it the Age of Enlightenment and Progress, others the age of chemical and mathematical sciences, others the age of discussion and freedom. We will call it the Age of the Immaculate One. Yes, some day her other titles might be questioned, might be forgotten; not this one. Dearly beloved, in what other age, more than in ours, was there, or could there be, such a universal, enthusiastic and passionate love for the Immaculate Mother of God?¹⁰⁶

"Mother of consolation"

We repay love with love. What more tender and active love is there than the love Mary has for us? Mary is our Mother. What would happen if the truth that Mary is our Mother were fully understood, a truth that for twenty centuries has sufficed to dry so many tears, soothe so much pain, and make so many hearts throb! Mary is Jesus' mother because she conceived him in her womb. She is our mother because she conceived us in her heart. She is Jesus' mother by nature, our mother by adoption. As mother of the Head, she is mother of all the members. As mother of the Redeemer, she is also mother of the redeemed because she begot the Redeemer to the life of time for the sole purpose of begetting human beings to the life of eternity. Mary is our mother, so much so that precisely for this reason is she mother of God: "for us men ... by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary and became man." Mary is our mother; and lest anyone have the slightest doubt about this truth, Jesus himself assures us of it in his own words from the height of the Cross as

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 7-11.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 20.

he is about to breathe his last, that is to say, at the most solemn moment of his mortal life: “Behold your mother.”

We call her mother of mercy, which is tantamount to saying mother of consolation. It is her queenly title: “Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy.” She asks only one thing -- to pour all the riches of her motherly heart upon our *miserias*. Misery is ignorance and error, the source of our deviations. Misery is temptation, a mysterious agony of our spiritual forces. Misery is death, the death of grace, the degradation of our nature, and the enslavement of our freedom. Misery is anguish of spirit; it is distress of the heart. Misery is the privation of the necessary things of life; it is sickness and infirmity of the body. Misery is persecution by the wicked, the unjust oppression of the weak and the wretched. Now, for all these miseries we find the remedy in the heart of Mary. We can ask our mother in heaven for anything and expect everything from her: light, strength, forgiveness, encouragement, comfort, help, protection, well-being: “Mother of consolation, cause of our joy.”¹⁰⁷

“Let us live as Mary lived”

Mary took her seat on the throne of the divinity. Yet, though Mother of God, she would never have achieved these heights without merits. It was her merits and her virtues that raised her to such glory, and only merit and virtue will also lead us to heaven. Let us live as Mary lived. Let us imitate Mary to the degree of grace God grants us. After her example, let us ask God, through the intercession of such an august Lady, to be fervent in prayer, humble in our words and dispositions, resigned to the will of God in our tribulations, full of love for God and of sincere charity toward all, always willing to render good for evil to everyone, zealous for the glory of God and the triumph of the Church and its infallible Head, hard-working and ready, as faith demands, to seal with our very blood the great truths God has taught us in his mercy.¹⁰⁸

“Devotion to the Most Holy Virgin must be sound”

Remember that devotion to the Most Holy Virgin must be sound. In other words, it must not be one of those superficial and shallow devotions that amount to a few external practices. Instead, devotion to her should lead you to purify your soul from defects and enrich it with virtues. Before we can turn an uncultivated piece of land into a delightful flower garden, we must first uproot the underbrush and weeds from it and then plant the choicest shrubs and flowers. This is also how sound devotion works. You will undoubtedly have to make some sacrifices. But, in the end, you will succeed because, seeing how hard you are struggling and laboring to please her, the Blessed Virgin will generously help you in all the assaults that your passions and the devil himself will mount against you. In such encounters, turn to her with all your heart and protest to her that you would rather die than offend her divine son. Rest assured: victory will be yours (...).

Your desire to please the Blessed Mother should encourage you to adorn your soul with her virtues. If you love her, you will not find it hard because love impels one to imitate the person loved and makes lover and loved one alike. Fix your eyes on Mary’s virtues. Watch how she acts and try to reproduce her virtues in yourselves (...).

¹⁰⁷Address on the occasion of the crowning of Our Lady of Consolation in Bedonia, July 7, 1889 (AGS 3017/2).

¹⁰⁸Homily for the Assumption, 1887 (AGS 3017/17).

If you happen to be in church, think of Mary in the Temple; if at home, think of Mary at Nazareth; if at table, think of Mary at the wedding feast of Cana. If you think of her, you can imitate her virtues in every one of your actions.¹⁰⁹

“Be devoted to the Rosary”

We must not be surprised if, in all ages, extraordinary favors were obtained and smashing victories achieved through the Rosary. People famous for noble birth, learning, prestige, and holiness, pontiffs, bishops, princes, commanders-in-chief, warriors, magistrates, lawyers, doctors, masters in the arts and sciences and writers made the Rosary their dearest delight. The Rosary has become the devotion of all times, places, conditions, ages, and tongues, the queen of devotions, the universal devotion. The Supreme Pontiffs have enriched the Rosary with so many indulgences, privileges, and favors (...)

Let us recite it daily in the company of many others, as if -- in Tertullian’s words -- we were laying siege in close ranks to the throne of God to do him loving violence. We, too, would behold the marvel witnessed by St. Augustine: people’s prayers rising and God’s mercies descending.

Let us then be devoted to the Rosary, dearly beloved. Love it the way our ancestors did. To you parents, above all, I say: every night hold classes of Christian wisdom in your homes by means of the Rosary. See to it that, as your children meditate on these mysteries and repeat the prayers, they are reminded of how much God, Jesus Christ, and Mary love them. Let them learn that, for our sakes, God is the all-giving love, Jesus Christ is the sacrificial love, and Mary is the assisting love. With so many seducing voices drawing them to earth, may there be a powerful one to lift their hearts to the love of heaven.¹¹⁰

“Come together every evening to say the Rosary”

Come together every evening, all together, parents and children, to say the Rosary before the beloved and venerable picture of the Holy Family, as your ancestors did. Oh, the prayer that blends the trembling voice of the elder with the innocent babble of the child! The prayer of the whole family before that picture will rise like sweet incense to the very throne of God and turn into a rainfall of God’s choicest graces. Jesus himself assures us that where two or three are gathered in common prayer to ask some favor of the heavenly Father in his name, he himself will be in their midst. If this is true, will Jesus not be in the midst of the Christian family when it all comes together to pray? Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Savior’s promise will never pass away. We can be sure that from such a devotional practice there will flow into every member of the family light for the mind, warmth for the heart, and strength for the will. In a short time -- once the pernicious effects stemming from neglect of God and his law have passed away -- family life will blossom in overflowing peace and contribute powerfully to the welfare of civil society itself.¹¹¹

“Ask her to teach me love for God”

¹⁰⁹“Closing of the Month of May,” 1870 (AGS 3017/2).

¹¹⁰“The Holy Rosary,” Oct. 7, 1894 (AGS 3017/2).

¹¹¹*The Christian Family*, Piacenza 1894, p. 22.

You mean you are not coming down anymore this year? For your penance, you will pay a visit to our dearest Mother for me, all for me, because I need it so much! Ask her to teach me love for God, love for the Cross, holy abandonment to the will of God, death to the world and to my own heart -- to all things. Should you obtain this grace for me, how happy I would be.¹¹²

b) THE SAINTS

“The saints are the wonders of God’s grace”

Just as the works of creation sing the glories of God, author of nature, so also the works of sanctification glorify God, author of grace. Hence, all the splendor radiating from the virtues of the saints reflects God’s glory who performed such great marvels in the saints. What are the saints if not the miracles of God’s grace? A person who has almost nothing left in himself of our corrupt humanity; who through the practice of Christian self-denial was able to subdue the concupiscence of the flesh, to blunt the impulses of greed, to check the fever of pride; who has given a new course, a new direction, as it were, to his carnal and earthly instincts, so as to live only by spiritual and heavenly instincts; who has remade himself or herself completely and, through a more generous, purer and more perfect charity, lives only of God, for God and with God -- this, says St. Augustine, is a much greater miracle than the miracle of bringing the dead back to life. This miracle cannot be the work of human beings. It is God’s work alone. Only God who made man can remake him and -- on the ruins of the old man, identified with sinful Adam -- can build the new man, who becomes completely one with Jesus Christ.¹¹³

“Let us look at the faith of the saints”

The saints are great in the kingdom of God because of the works they performed in faith and through faith here on earth. Hence, more than anything else, the saints all proclaim to us the glories of our faith: the faith that is the treasure of family life, the faith that rekindles the love of children for their parents and brings all things to perfection and holiness. The saints proclaim to us the glories of the faith that gently and delicately binds together all people and things of the world: the faith that keeps us wide-awake for the great day of judgment by reminding us, with their example, that here on earth the life of a Christian is a life of warfare, that here on earth we are soldiers fighting hard battles to win everlasting bliss. We are presently in the midst of the fire purifying us of our dross. Pilgrims on our way to the fatherland, we are constantly besieged along the way by powerful and ruthless enemies. If the fatiguing labor of the battle weakens us, if the flame of purification is burning us, if the journey is tiring us out, let us fix our eyes on the crown of victory, let us fix our eyes on the faith of the saints. Better yet, let us fix our eyes on the faith we ourselves profess and our souls will be lifted up.¹¹⁴

¹¹²Letter to the rector of the Seminary and Shrine of Bedonia, Sept. 13, 1892 (Archives of the Seminary of Bedonia).

¹¹³Homily for All Saints Day, 1883 (AGS 3016/8).

¹¹⁴Id., 1876.

“Miracles and extraordinary gifts do not make saints”

People often have the mistaken idea that to reach sanctity a person must be marked by extraordinary gifts or be distinguished for brilliant deeds. No, my children, no. To be saints, you don't have to predict the future like the prophets, nor perform prodigies like the miracle-workers, nor go forth to preach the Gospel to the barbarians like the Apostles, nor shed your blood like the martyrs. None of this. When the rich man of the Gospel asked Jesus Christ what he should do to be saved, the divine Master answered at once: If you want to attain eternal life, keep the commandments: *serva mandata*. This sums up the whole Christian life. Faithfully keeping the laws of God and fulfilling the duties of one's state of life: this is the secret. Many people attained sanctity just by following this path. Not all the saints have performed dazzling deeds. Not all of them were geniuses in word or deed. Not all of them were outstanding for extraordinary learning. Many saints were unknown to the world and never left the obscurity of their state of life. They just lived common, ordinary lives. Mary herself was never known for extraordinary gifts, nor do we read in Scripture that she ever performed a miracle during her earthly life. But this did not keep people from considering her the holiest of all creatures. So, miracles and extraordinary gifts do not make saints, not even the greatest saints; virtue does (...).

Many of the saints we venerate today never left the circle of family life. Nevertheless, within the family they constantly endeavored to carry out the duties of their state of life. They were always careful to give dignity to the ordinary tasks of their daily life by a right intention and always acted for supernatural reasons.¹¹⁵

“Why can we not do what they did?”

An almost infinite number of people of every kind have become saints before us. Why can we not do what they did? To remove all difficulties, we must often lift our eyes to heaven and remember that all the labors and struggles we might have to bear can never match the greatness of the reward. “The sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed in us.” A labor of short duration will gain us an eternity of eternal bliss, “for this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

So, when we look at the saints whose triumphs we celebrate today, we must take heart at the thought that holiness is not really that hard. With a God who comforts us, with a God who takes us by the hand and fills us with strength, how can we find it hard to walk the path of our eternal salvation? And if you are still afraid, think about the saints we are honoring today. They were once our brothers and sisters here on earth and were bound to us by faith, country, blood, and acquaintance-ship. During their lifetime they were full of vibrant love and ardent zeal for their fellow human beings. Now that their charity has been brought to perfection and fulfillment in heaven, can they be less interested in the sanctification and well-being of us, their brothers and sisters? If we could only see how intensely the saints intercede for us before the throne of God today and always, we would understand at once that ordinary sanctity, after all, is not as difficult as most people think; that indeed sanctity is possible and hence obligatory for all people and for each one of us, called as we are to become saints on earth, so as to reign with the saints in heaven.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵Id., 1898.

¹¹⁶Id., 1878.

“Let us live like Christians and we will become saints”

A saint is nothing more than a perfect Christian. So let us live like Christians and we will become saints. What formed the most illustrious saints, or better, the only saints the Church recognizes as such, is not extraordinary gifts, radiant appearances, spectacular miracles, visions and ecstasies, but the fidelity and exactness with which they constantly fulfilled the duties of their state of life, all for the glory of God. This is the true, the essential mark of sanctity. This is what we ought to focus on if we want to share in the glory of the saints.¹¹⁷

“The power of the martyrs before God has always been great”

The martyrs were always an object of special veneration in the Church of Jesus Christ. From the times of the Apostles, she looked upon the mortal remains of the martyrs as permeated with God’s life, as something holy and sacred, and on their tombs she was wont to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries. In fact, what is more honorable, more religious, more fitting than to offer the Blood of Jesus Christ over the body and the mortal remains of his followers who have shed their blood for him? How pleased Jesus Christ must be to mingle his sacrifice, as it were, with that of his martyrs, who are one and the same victim with him?

Hence, the power of the martyrs before God has always been great. The bodily members and relics of these marvelous men and women who lived the life of Jesus Christ more than their own, who were incorporated into him by the spirit of sanctification and were one sole body and almost the same existence with him -- these bodily members and relics, through their powerful blessing, will protect and help those who confidently have recourse to these martyrs and entrust themselves to their powerful support (...).

Everything is granted through their prayers, everything is bestowed through their merits. Reigning as they do with Christ, they pour out the choicest blessings upon the whole world. St. Augustine assures us that, by virtue of the relics of the martyrs, the miracles of the apostolic times are renewed before all the nations. The martyrs have given witness to God by their blood, and through their intercession God grants the faithful graces and miracles.¹¹⁸

“The sacred emblems of the holy Church of Piacenza”

On my visits to the churches of this city and diocese, I confess that God filled my heart with consolation and joy whenever I came across those inexhaustible, life-giving springs from which blessings flow to the Christian people and from which a very pleasing scent emanates. I refer to the sacred relics of the saints, those illustrious witnesses of faith and love, with whose relics our merciful Lord has deigned to enrich this holy Church of Piacenza (...).

In my report to this illustrious and venerable Congregation, I will confine myself to some remarks on the identification of the mortal remains of the glorious martyr of Christ, Antoninus, of the Theban Legion, principal patron of this holy Church of Piacenza, and of St. Victor, its first bishop. I carried out the identification on May 30 and 31, 1878, after I had been encouraged to do so by Cardinal

¹¹⁷Id., 1882.

¹¹⁸*For the solemn identification of the relics of Saints Antoninus and Victor, Piacenza 1880, pp. 9-10.*

Domenico Bartolini, a great authority in this matter -- who, on his way back to Rome in October, 1877, was my guest for a while -- and following a conversation I had on the subject with our present Holy Father Leo XIII (...).

You can well imagine with what spiritual joy and elation I beheld those sacred pledges, more precious than gold and jewels, which graciously protect and defend this holy Church of Piacenza.

I then began to realize how much we need the intercession of these saints with whom we have a certain familiarity; how important it is that, moved by our special veneration and cult, they implore for me and my beloved children the fortitude in the faith that is so necessary in our times for Christians to be victorious. My great desire was to stir up in my flock that devotion to these particular saints which had nourished the faith and sanctity of their forefathers and mothers. How should I bring this about?

I concluded that I had to do just one thing to inflame my children with devotion to their bountiful Patron (Antoninus) and their benevolent Father (Victor). I had to make known their achievements, their tombs, their relics, and devotion to them through timely and learned studies illustrating in an accurate and scholarly way the monuments and documents regarding them and then to present all this to my sons and daughters for their consideration. The next thing I had to do was to arrange the bones of Saints Antoninus and Victor in such a way that, on certain solemnities or at the approach of some calamity, they could be publicly displayed to the faithful for their veneration.¹¹⁹

“I had the privilege of seeing their sacred remains with my very eyes”

Two years ago I had the immense joy of concluding the Sacred Pastoral Visitation in the illustrious Basilica of St. Antoninus. On that occasion, I directed that the large marble urn under the slab of the main altar of that church be opened for the purpose of identifying the relics of Saints Antoninus and Victor which were allegedly buried there.

For many centuries that urn had not been opened. And although, on the outside, the urn bore unmistakable signs of the treasures it contained, still, serious doubts had arisen around them.

So you can imagine how overjoyed I was when I had the privilege of seeing their sacred remains with my very eyes. How moved I was when I was able to kiss the ampulla containing the relics of the precious blood Antoninus had shed to witness to his faith!

It is truly providential that this very precious glass was preserved in one piece in the midst of the devastation to which the Basilica of the holy Patron -- situated for many centuries outside the city walls -- was often subjected as a result of barbarian invasions, fires and wars, But what is even more providential -- something we must be truly thankful for -- is that the glorious blood of Antoninus, collected inside this glass, has been preserved after so many centuries in such a condition as to offer, even in our day, absolute proof of its primordial nature, whereas, in similar cases, science could offer only a certain degree of probability.

Let us rejoice, dearly beloved, let us exult! Piacenza can indeed boast of many famous, precious monuments, which are real art treasures. But certainly none of them is more precious in the eyes of

¹¹⁹Second “ad limina” report, Dec. 11, 1879 (Episcopal Archives of Piacenza) (translation from the Latin).

faith than this glorious blood. None of them is more illustrious than the mortal remains of Antoninus and Victor.¹²⁰

“Fathers and teachers in the faith”

These are the glorious mortal remains of those who were our fathers and teachers in the faith, the remains that once shed live blood, the blessed remains in whose shadow so many people desired to live out their lives. With confidence our ancestors would run to kneel before these mortal remains, dearly beloved. Before these mortal remains they would place their gifts, and from them they would come away with the most extraordinary favors. From them the Gregorys, the Savinos, the Mauros, the Fulcos, the Gerardos, the Albert Prandonis, the Paolo Buralis of Arezzo, the Philip Suzanis, the Opilios, the Gelasios, the Raimondos, the Contardos, the Francas and so many others drew solace in their tribulations and the strength and courage to keep moving forward on the road to heaven. These sacred remains were the pivot, as it were, around which revolved the private and public life of the citizens, especially in the Middle Ages. Around these remains the people gathered when their homeland was in grave danger, and from them they received protection and help. Every year the representatives of the community, the colleges, and the confraternities would come together in a body to place their gifts before the sacred remains. Before these mortal remains the people would come to discuss community affairs. Near these remains they would deposit public documents and in their presence would hang their victory trophies.¹²¹

“Do not forget the sufferings borne by our forefathers and mothers”

I would say that this venerable Basilica, this illustrious monument of our forefathers' faith is an everlasting memorial of the birth of Christianity among us. I hope this Basilica reminds you of the faith of the days of old. Never forget what Antoninus did and what he suffered to beget us to the gospel. Never forget the sufferings our forefathers and mothers bore and the dangers they faced to acquire and preserve for you the rights and title of children of God (...).

In this faith, which will lead you to salvation, you must stand firm, as you are in fact doing, knowing that God is faithful. Your faith must not be a sterile faith, a dead faith, but a faith animated by charity; that is to say, a faith followed by the noble entourage of other virtues, a faith that produces good works. When that happens, St. Antoninus will look down with pride on you; and you, in turn, can rest assured that in him you have a protector who will fulfill your every request. Under the protection of this Martyr, under the aegis of this powerful advocate, you will walk securely and peacefully in the midst of the dangers, assaults, difficulties, and sorrows of this wretched life, which is a valley of tears and a bitter warfare, until that most blessed day of final victory and eternal repose will dawn even for us.¹²²

“I begot you in Christ Jesus through my preaching of the gospel”

¹²⁰*For the solemn identification of the relics of Saints Antoninus and Victor, Piacenza 1880, pp.5-7.*

¹²¹*Ibid., pp. 22-23. The saints mentioned here are Piacentini or saints who lived in Piacenza.*

¹²²*Discourse on the Feast of St. Antoninus, 1889 (AGS 3017/5).*

I begot you in Christ Jesus through my preaching of the gospel: *in Christo Jesu per Evangelium vos genui*, the Apostle St. Paul wrote to the faithful of Corinth. From his venerable tomb, our holy bishop and father Savino addresses these beautiful words to us every day, but especially on this day dedicated to his glories (...).

He is a saint who belongs wholly to us, one who has the closest bonds with us. Though he was born in Rome, Divine Providence deigned to give him as a gift to us, as a gift to our land. It was among us that his sanctity blossomed. This city of ours was the arena of his glorious achievements, of his heroic virtues (...).

Our Piacenza is indebted to him for the greatest of all gifts, for it was he who brought the light of the gospel to our forefathers and mothers, who, for the most part, were still lying in the shadows of death and in the darkness of paganism. He was the one who destroyed idolatry still rampant among us. In a word, he was our father in the faith. From his venerable tomb he repeats to us today and will repeat to the end of time: People of Piacenza, I begot you in Christ Jesus through my preaching of the gospel.¹²³

c) THE POOR

“The poor are the living, the speaking images of Jesus Christ”

What is a poor person in the eyes of the world? He is a pariah, the reject of nature, who seems to have slipped past divine Providence, a miserable person dragging along through mud and dust, a wretched burden, a useless weight on society and nothing more. For four thousand years this was the idea society had of the poor person. So, poverty was considered a shameful stain, a punishment from God, a curse that could only befall those who are evil. But finally the uncreated Wisdom, the Teacher of all teachers, came to give us an entirely different outlook. First by example and then in speech, first by deed and then by word, he begins to extol poverty and to extol it in his own person, starting with the crib. Yes, Jesus Christ, heir to the kingdom and throne of David, is born; the King of kings, the Lord of Lords, the long prophesied, promised, and desired Messiah has finally come. But where? But how? In what disposition? (...).

He came in the humblest spirit, in the greatest poverty. For his birthplace, the Word of God chose Bethlehem, the least of the towns of Judah! He who could have chosen as his mother the richest and noblest among all Jewish women calls to this sublime honor the wife of a simple craftsman, a woman hidden in the shadows of poverty. For his place of birth, he chooses a hovel, open to the inclement weather of the season, a hovel so poor that for a crib it can offer him only a manger and a little straw. In a word, my dear poor people, by his birth Jesus freely chooses your condition above all others. By this preference he has set poverty free from every taint of shame. In fact, he has made poverty honorable, sacred, and worthy of the greatest respect in the eyes of all people.

What can be more precious here on earth, more noble, and more deserving of esteem than what a God esteems and honors? When a king wants to bestow a title on a poor daughter of the people and have her honored by everybody, what does he do? He goes looking for her among the obscure class of people where she is hidden; he makes her his spouse; he invites her to take her seat on his own throne; he puts a crown on her head and a scepter in her hand. This is what Jesus did with poverty

¹²³Discourse on the Feast of St. Savino (AGS 3017/4).

when he chose her to be his inseparable companion from the crib to the tomb. From that day on, poverty began to receive queenly honors among Christians. From that day on, the poor began to be considered -- as in fact they are -- the living, speaking images of Jesus Christ on earth (...).

One could say, in the beautiful words of St. John Chrysostom, that the poor are like many refracted rays that, put together, make up the person of Jesus, whose majestic and somber figure awed the prophets of old contemplating him from the heights of time.

Yes, dearly beloved, the poor are living, speaking images of Jesus Christ. The gospel itself assures us of this truth. In fact, Christ said: what you do to the least you do unto me, which implies an identity of person and destiny. Hence the tender and sublime words of the holy Fathers. "When you see a poor person," says St. John Chrysostom, among others, "imagine you see the body and the altar of Jesus Christ. Bow in reverence and offer your sacrifice. The Divinity has two altars. One is an eternal and invisible altar, on which we adoringly offer our homage. But when we help the poor, we place our offering on the visible altar of the Divinity." "Do not stop at the surface," St. Clement of Alexandria adds, "but look deep inside: you will discover the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit dwelling unseen in the poor person." So here we see the poor raised to the dignity of image, altar and temple of the Divinity. It is the gospel that reveals to the profane eyes of the flesh this rehabilitation of the poor, a rehabilitation begun in the great sacrament of love, namely, the mysterious descent of Him who, though rich, became poor: *Egenus factus est*.¹²⁴

"These are his most cherished friends"

Scripture tells us that Jesus went about doing good (Acts 10:38). He was meek, mild, and kind. He does not seek his own glory but the good of people. He is the father of the poor, the strength of the weak, the consoler of the afflicted. He undergoes fatigue, hunger, thirst, slander, scorn, and insult. He suffers at the hands of everyone, including those of his own people. But he does not mind it. The love blazing in his heart animates him; love spurs him on; love makes everything seem easy and light to him. He follows only the impulses of his heart. His every word is an act of kindness; his every step brings solace; his every action confers a blessing; his every miracle bestows a grace. Everywhere we see him surrounded by the poor and the sick, by publicans and little children. These are his most cherished friends. He pours out all his blessings upon them and then sends them all home consoled.

He clothed himself with our humanity so as to be able to experience intense compassion and be able to suffer in his own person the afflictions, miseries, and sorrows of those he loves so passionately. If he sees some misfortune, his heart is troubled. He weeps and is distressed. He is anxious to remove the anguish, dry the tears, soothe the pain, and take away every and all grief.¹²⁵

"The poor person is the pupil of God's eye"

Oh, the poor! They do not have many goods of this earth, but they are nonetheless rich in the goods of heaven. Of course, they are often bothersome, discontented, and ungrateful. But on their foreheads there always shines the mark of their divine sonship, and on the door of their miserable hovels

¹²⁴Homily for Christmas, 1879 (3016/1).

¹²⁵*Pastoral Letter (...)* for the Holy Lent of 1878, Piacenza 1878, pp. 9-10.

we find written in golden letters: “What you did for one of these least ones you did for me.” The poor person is the pupil of God’s eye, and what we do for the poor person we do for God himself.¹²⁶

“The Church was built on twelve poor men”

Who, then, are the ministers of God who will be chosen to establish the Church in the world? Perhaps people who are conspicuous for their fame, riches, power, nobility or learning? That is surely how human prudence would have acted. But divine wisdom does not work that way: “God chose the lowly and the despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something.” In creating his Church, God followed the same steps he took for the creation of the world. This immense machine we call the universe, those millions of stars that whirl around over our heads, this globe of earth and water which we inhabit, everything was drawn out of nothingness. Everything is resting on nothingness. Everything is propped up and supported by what? By total emptiness and nothingness! “He suspended the earth over the void.” Now, dearly beloved, what could be more exhilarating than to realize that the world is the direct handiwork of God’s infinite power? And what could be more exhilarating than to realize that the Church, this gigantic and marvelous institution, is the handiwork of the same infinite power and that she comes forth from nothingness and is floating in a sea of nothingness? For we see that she was founded on twelve men, the apostles, who had no power, no prestige, no protection; who belonged to the most despised class of people in the Orient; who were so poor, weak, timid, crude, and ignorant as to border on nothingness because of their ineptitude.¹²⁷

“The world still believes in charity”

One day, the immortal Pius IX, who -- if I may say so -- had an instinct for discerning and appreciating the workings of divine Providence, addressed to some of your colleagues these memorable words never to be forgotten: “O my children, my children, I consecrate you knights of Jesus Christ. The world no longer believes in sermons or in the priesthood. But it still believes in charity. Preach the truth with charity; go out and conquer the world with love for the poor” (...).

Jesus Christ abided with the founders of your society. They abided in charity. They abided in God and God in them: “he who abides in charity abides in God and God in him.” Their work, blessed by heaven, spread far and wide; and the number of knights destined for the conquest of the world increased (...).

Charity, this denizen of heaven comes down among us to bring hearts together, to allay anxiety, to gladden disheartened spirits, to bless families with the purest joys and to keep peace in civil society. Charity, the most precious gift God could have bestowed on his creatures, is destined for glorious victories through your organization. By preaching the truth with charity, you will dispel many prejudices, even where a priest’s word is not welcome. You will help the poor who have no faith understand that, if they have a brother in you, it is because they have a common father in heaven. You will make known the divine nature of Christ and of his religion to the most foolish and wayward.¹²⁸

¹²⁶Address to a charitable organization (3018/18).

¹²⁷Homily for Pentecost, 1902 (AGS 3016/6).

¹²⁸For the 90th anniversary of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, June 3, 1890 (AGS 3018/9)

“Charity has spread far and wide during this century”

Gentlemen, you cannot imagine how happy I am whenever I can be with you. You are a small group, but a very select one, in as much as your group has to do with the sacred exercise of the noblest of all virtues, charity. I know you and am proud of you in the Lord. Or better yet, God himself knows you, God who accompanies you with his blessings and is preparing a well-deserved reward for you. Permit your Father and Shepherd, who loves you as his dearest children, as his brothers and sisters, nay, as his beloved old friends -- permit him to address a few words of encouragement to you, urging you to continue your sublime and glorious work undauntedly despite the difficulties you have to contend with along the way. I personally have great confidence, unlimited confidence, in the exercise of charity. When I think of the terrible evils afflicting Church and society, a cloud of sadness overshadows me and moves me to tears. But, when this happens, I take refuge in hope. I am confident, I am really confident that the sky will soon clear up again and that God will bless our dreams because acts of charity are never forgotten, because charity has been poured forth upon our century in so many ways. Charity has filled our century. Charity rules our century, holds sway over it. The sins of the 19th century are indeed many and grievous! Who can count them? But who can count the works of charity that have been proliferating during the 19th century? Gentlemen, when I think of all this, my mind goes back to Christ’s consoling words to Mary Magdalene: “many sins are forgiven her because she loved much”: *dimissa sunt ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum*.¹²⁹

“Charity alone is truly the daughter of heaven”

Philanthropy is beautiful: it is assistance set aside for the poor on the basis of the humanitarian principles of equality. The dole is beautiful: it is assistance set aside and given to the unfortunate in the interest of the public good, so as to remove from society the distressing aspect of poverty and the occasion of inevitable disorders. But charity is even more beautiful because charity alone is truly “the daughter of heaven.” Charity has the principles of philanthropy and the purposes of the dole. But to philanthropy and the dole charity adds a more compelling motive: the thought that when we help a person we are helping God’s very image and that we do so at God’s command and out of love for him. Philanthropy is born in the mind of the philosopher. And occasionally, from the heights of theory, namely, of an idea, it manages to come down to practice, to the work of the will. The dole does get down to the work. But, though very noble and generous, the dole always has a certain note of restraint or moderation and usually acts only in view of the evil to be removed and in proportion to it. Charity alone is heroic. Charity has inexhaustible initiative, does not seek recompense, faces and removes obstacles, and almost finds them attractive; she loves sacrifice and never gives up.¹³⁰

“Suffering is the scepter of great souls”

Suffering is the scepter of great souls. It is the key to the eternal city, the royal road to our heavenly home. So, be of good cheer, dearly beloved. If God keeps you in your sufferings and you bear them

¹²⁹Address to a charitable organization, (AGS 3018/18).

¹³⁰Discourse for the dedication of the monument to Mandelli, June 23, 1889 (AGS 3018/10),

with Christian resignation, you are on the right road to salvation and will some day reign with the saints in heaven.

Yes, poverty is a heavy cross, but through it we attain heaven. Blessed are the poor, the divine Teacher infallibly teaches us today: “Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

To live always in sickness, in pain, in troubles is often enough to bring tears to our eyes. But rejoice because “blessed are those who weep, for they shall be consoled.” To suffer unjust persecutions makes us all suffer, but blessed are those who suffer for justice’ sake because theirs is the eternal reward: “blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Insult, mockery, ridicule, and slander devastate us. Yes, I can understand human weakness, but I am upset with our lack of faith. Instead, Jesus Christ tells us today: “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad” -- *beati estis cum maledixerint vobis homines et persecuti vos fuerint et dixerint omne malum adversus vos, mentientes, propter me: gaudete et exultate in illa die.* Oh, how wrong we are, my dearly beloved, when we complain about our crosses, our afflictions, our adversities! If we look at Jesus who lived in lifelong poverty, suffering and contempt and then died on the wood of the cross, if we look often at the Queen of Martyrs, if we look at the saints, we will cherish our tribulations. At least we will bear them with resignation.¹³¹

“Poor I came to Piacenza and poor I shall leave it”

Being of sound mind and body, I hereby make my last will and testament.

I thank the Most Holy Trinity for having granted me the grace of the priesthood and the episcopacy. Prostrate before God’s infinite greatness, I, with a broken and contrite heart, ask pardon for all the offenses I have committed with my infidelities against the august character impressed upon my soul.

Poor I came to Piacenza and poor I shall leave it for the next world. The little that really belongs to me is enough to pay the bills for my funeral, which I want very modest, save for the requirements of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in which I was baptized and in which I intend to die. I forbid any funeral eulogy.¹³²

“Would it be strange for a bishop to die on the straw?”

Would it be strange for a bishop to die on the straw when Our Lord was born on the straw and died on the Cross?¹³³

“I was able to procure bread for a large number of unfortunate people”

This past winter, my city and diocese were hard hit by a dreadful famine. I was determined to help all these miserable people. With God’s help, I was able to collect 250,000 lire, mostly from public

¹³¹Homily for the Feast of All Saints, 1879 (AGS 3016/18).

¹³²Unpublished private last will and testament (AGS 3001/2).

¹³³Informational Diocesan Process, 11th ex officio witness ad 26.

institutions and from private people. With this money I had the means to procure bread for a large number of unfortunate people. It was a real triumph for our religion. As usual, the newspapers exaggerated the situation. Six members of Parliament from my diocese, together with two senators, also from my diocese, informed King Umberto of what I had done; and the king conveyed his thanks to me, his admiration, etc. I put the whole thing out of my mind: I didn't think anybody was interested in what I was doing. But after setting up the institution for the deaf-mutes and doing other charitable deeds, the usual exaggerations started up again, to my displeasure, because I like to be left in peace. A few days ago, an important person came to see me at the king's behest to convey the king's congratulations to me and tell me His Royal Highness wanted to give me some public honor. The gentleman was ready for all my objections. He told me that the Decree in question would be based only on my works of charity, that other bishops had received medals for their efforts in the cholera epidemic, that this was being done on the king's own initiative, that such recognition would be useful in my work for the Church, and that it was a question of one of the highest honors (I believe he mentioned the Order of the Most Holy Annunciation).

I answered respectfully but firmly that the conditions imposed on Holy Mother Church in Italy and the situation of the Holy Apostolic See and of the Holy Father were such as not to permit a bishop to accept any honor whatsoever, even that of the Annunciation, without defiling his episcopal dignity and character. I asked the marquis to relay the reasons for my refusal and convey my sense of gratitude for the kindness shown me. I dismissed him with courtesy and kindness and told him that maybe I would write directly to the person who had sent him. So, this is my problem, Your Eminence: should I write to him? If I should, I would like to write a letter in which I would first offer my thanks and explain the reasons for my refusal. Then I would lay before him the countless bloody outrages perpetrated, even in our day, on the Church, on the Holy See and on the Holy Father, urging His Majesty respectfully but frankly that he put an end to these evils to the extent that he can, that this was the reward the whole episcopate of the Kingdom would like to receive from him, etc. I would like, in the proper manner, to tell the king certain harsh truths. But I don't know what to do and I don't want to ask just anybody's advice on this matter, since it is so delicate.

Your Eminence, if you think I should not write the letter, send me your calling card with the word "negative" on it. But if you think I should write it, put the word "affirmative" on it. You can tell me your reasons when I have the joy of seeing you in Rome.¹³⁴

¹³⁴Letter to Cardinal Jacobini, Oct. 21, 1880 (ASV-SS, Rub. 283/1880, fasc. 1, Prot. N, 42777). During the winter of 1879-1880, the bishop deprived himself of everything and distributed 3000 meals a day to the people suffering from the famine (see the Biography, pp. 433-439). By not accepting the honor of Knight of the Annunciation, he was giving up a substantial pension.

PART TWO

MAN OF THE CHURCH AND FOR THE CHURCH



Scalabrini's ecclesiology must be understood in light of the theology of his times. This theology was enshrined in the two constitutions of Vatican Council I, which in embryo already contained many of the ideas of Vatican Council II. But these ideas had not been adequately expressed in Vatican Council I because of its forced interruption.

From the many pages Bishop Scalabrini dedicated to the Church we will choose the points he took from the ecclesiology of his day as guiding principles for his own life and work as a bishop. In his basically vertical ecclesiology, the following points clearly stand out: his idea of the Church as the extension of Christ's Incarnation, as a continuation of Christ's earthly life, as Christ's permanent revelation among men, as the family of God, as the body of Christ, and as the Communion of Saints.

These elements shed light on Scalabrini's "passion" for the Church, for the Church Universal -- for which he feels an all-embracing solicitude -- and for the local Church, which he loves as a spouse, jealously defending her from external ("extra-hierarchical") interference. This ecclesial "passion" is predicated on a concept of episcopacy that is theological rather than juridical: the bishop is the mediator of grace.

In line with the teaching of Vatican Council I, Scalabrini focuses on the Pope's "prerogatives" -- his primacy and his infallibility -- with the love and pride of a son who feels his father's glory as his own and with the faith of the Christian who, in the person of the Pope, glorifies Christ. This faith and love translate into a filial love that is neither servile nor obsequious.

Scalabrini "is conscious of being a bishop" and claims the divine authority of this office, an authority that takes the "Bishop of our souls" as the model. This authority is service, fatherhood, dedication, responsibility and coresponsibility "for the glory of God and the salvation of souls," in the "interest of Jesus Christ and his Church." This same sacramental nature of the Church is expressed in the hierarchy: the "hierarchical principle" guarantees the transmission of grace through the channels instituted by Christ, namely, Pope, bishop, and priest.

Lay people are more beneficiaries than protagonists. But they, too, are priests and apostles, the bishop's and the priest's mediators before the world, just as the bishop is the mediator of God and the Pope before priests and lay people.

Bishop Scalabrini had a reason for defending the doctrine of "mediatorship," that is to say, that the bishop is the sole legitimate mediator between the Pope and the faithful -- a doctrine that has been reinterpreted in our day. He wants to affirm and defend the principle, then practically challenged by the "intransigent" movement, that, in the field of conscience, the only competent legislator and judge for the universal Church is the Pope and, for the local Church, the bishop in communion with the Pope.

Membership in, and union with, the Church, namely, with the whole body of Christians, ecclesiastical and lay, is not the result of mere "subservience" but is something fully realized through the "threefold union of faith, communion and submission," that is to say, through a union "of faith, charity, and obedience" with the Pope and the Church. This union, in turn, ensures the members' union of life and grace with the Head, Christ.



1. THE CHURCH

The Church is the extension of the Incarnation down through the centuries, the continuation of the Redeemer's work, the portrait of Christ, the prolongation of Pentecost, the body of Christ.

The Church is a mother. We must love her as a mother and abandon ourselves into her arms with filial trust.

The Church is holy in her teachings, her sacraments, and her laws. She is the mother of holiness and the communion of saints.

The Church is one in faith, communion, government, and means of salvation. She is the family of God, the city of God. She is one but she is also diversified. Not to recognize the variety of her charisms and functions is an attack on her unity. She is one in charity based on truth, truth that must not be betrayed or hushed up.

The Church is the infallible teacher, unchanging in her fidelity to the deposit of the faith, dynamic in her fidelity to the Spirit. As spouse of the Lamb, she is a Queen, who, even at the price of one's life and at the sacrifice of one's ideas, must be obeyed if one wishes to obey Christ. But charity is her law, love is her life. He who does not love and does not forgive is not in the Church.

a) CONTINUATION OF THE INCARNATION

“The Church is the extension of the Incarnation down through the centuries”

Someone put it so well when he said that the Church is the extension of the Incarnation down through the centuries. Just as in Christ the humanity and divinity, though distinct, are nonetheless intimately united and inseparable, in the same way the Church, which represents him and carries on his work and produces the same supernatural fruits, is divine and human at one and the same time. Let me put it more clearly. Though in her purpose and goal the Church is a spiritual society aiming at the sanctification and eternal salvation of souls, nonetheless she has also a material, visible, and external side, especially in view of the members composing it, namely the people, who, after all, are not pure spirits but beings made up of body and soul.

Just as the saving mission of the Man-God -- though directed to the ransom and eternal salvation of souls -- took place in the bodily and sensible forms of the incarnation, preaching, passion, death and resurrection, in the same way Christ wanted to tie the acts of his religion and the ordinary means of sanctification, like worship, magisterium and sacraments, to material and sensible forms. So, in this religious society we discern a spiritual element, which we call the soul. It is this soul that vivifies, animates, and holds sway over all the mystical members and puts them into communication with their divine Head and among themselves, bringing about that blessed exchange of merits and spiritual riches that we call the Communion of Saints. This Communion of Saints embraces all the just, all the friends of God, not just those who are still pilgrims in this world but also those who have crossed the threshold of eternity and have already arrived at their homeland, as well as those who are temporarily detained in Purgatory as a final expiation

for their faults. To this dimension belongs everything that is internal and spiritual to the Church: faith, charity, hope, the gifts of grace, the charisms, the fruits of the divine Spirit and all the heavenly treasures that have accrued to her through the merits of Christ the Redeemer and those of his servants.

The other dimension -- which is tantamount to the body of the Church -- comprises everything that is visible and external in the Church's organization of her members, in her worship and teaching ministry, as well as in her external order and governance. Just as these two essential dimensions that make up the Church are, like body and soul, inseparably united; in the same way, through charity, there should prevail among the members of the Church such harmony and coordination of functions as to project the image of unity which characterizes the human body and which the Apostle describes in these words: "the head Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love." [1]

"The Church is the true image of her founder"

The life of the Church emanates directly from a divine principle, which animates and directs her human organism, the assembly of the faithful, where this life takes shape and form. This principle exalts her to a society whose nature is altogether different from that of other societies because she is an earthly-heavenly society, hence a true picture of her founder, at once God and Man. So the Church can almost be called the living incarnation of Christ on earth, the continuation of his mortal life, Jesus Christ poured out and bestowed in all his fullness. In fact, basically, the life of the Church is the Spirit of God, as the Apostle tells us: "Many though we are, we are one body in Christ. One and the same Spirit produces all these things." [2]

"The Church is the enduring continuation of the work of the Redeemer"

The Church, as the enduring continuation of the work of the Redeemer and Sanctifier of souls on earth, is the depository and dispenser of the sacraments. Hence, it is the Church which, as it were, has the keys to this channel. It is the Church which, through her sacraments, draws sanctifying grace from the bosom of God and makes it flow, like a river, into the Christian soul (Is 44:3). What a priceless gift Jesus Christ bestowed on us when he founded his Church here on earth and allowed us to grow up in her. In fact, it is only within her that he pours out his charisms. The Church is the object of his pleasure, the pupil of his eye, the throb of his heart, his only dove, his perfect one, at once his spouse and his sister (Song of Songs). She came forth from his side and is crimsoned with his divine blood; she is holy; she is immaculate (Eph 6:25). O Church, O Church, how beloved you are to Jesus! How fortunate we are to be your children! In the Church we find whatever we need to achieve eternal salvation. Outside of her, there is only darkness, desolation and death. [3]

"Jesus Christ has portrayed himself in his Church"

God left an imprint of his glory on the universe he had created. Especially in created man -- the head of creation -- God depicted the living image of his very being. Jesus Christ has portrayed himself in his Church. He made the world of souls after his own image and gave this world of souls unity because he is one, holiness because he is holy, authority because he is the Lord, universality because he is the God of immensity, perpetuity because he is the eternal God. Just as, in creating the stars and planets, he put into operation the force of attraction that makes all of them gravitate toward a common center, in the same way, when creating the Church, he poured out his grace, that is to say, a spiritual law of attraction that also makes souls gravitate toward him who is the common center of intelligent beings, namely, God. Into his Church he put his grace, that mysterious force that imparts movement and life to her.[\[4\]](#)

“The destiny of God and the Church are inseparable”

The destiny of God and his spouse are inseparable. What happens in the physical and material body of Jesus Christ is an image of what happens and will always happen in the spiritual and mystical body, which is the Church. The body of Christ was subjected to abuse, scourges and blows. Often enough, the Church, too, is subjected to abuse, scourges and blows. Jesus Christ's body hung from a cross, agonized on it, died, and was buried. Often the Church, too, is crucified, agonizes and seems to be dying. But wait. Jesus Christ comes forth from the tomb in glory. He comes forth immortal, incapable of suffering. He comes forth from the very tomb where his enemies thought they had buried him forever. And from the very tomb where her modern enemies think they have buried the Catholic Church forever, she comes forth stronger, more glorious, and more beautiful than ever.[\[5\]](#)

“The Church is a prolonged Pentecost”

The Church, which had her beginnings at Pentecost, is a prolonged Pentecost down through the ages, one might say. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit, she speaks out authoritatively to all, preaches the same truth to all, and enjoins the same precepts on all. Some humbly bow their heads, revere and obey, while others make fun of her and boast they do not believe in her. How do we explain this difference? Why do so many, many people, especially in our day, soil their tongues and their pens with preposterous errors and blasphemies and lose the faith? The reason is very simple: they have soiled their hearts. Here is the infallible verdict of Jesus Christ (...): “the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil.” Unbelief springs from the corruption of the heart.[\[6\]](#)

“We are one body in Jesus Christ”

We are one body in Jesus Christ. Just as in the human body not every member performs the same function, in the same way not every member of the Church exercises the same office. In the human body there is one head which, placed on high, overlooks all the other members, directs and guides them, and rules over them. In the Church, the mystical body of Jesus Christ, there is (...) the Supreme Pontiff, the visible head of this great body, who exercises supreme and universal governance over all the members, who, in him, are united with each other. Then we have the bishops. Though subordinate to the Roman Pontiff, they are, nevertheless, supreme rulers of that part of the Catholic fold which the universal Shepherd has entrusted to their care. One might call them the eyes of this body. Then we have the priests and other lesser ministers who, we might say, are the arms of the body. Finally, we have all the faithful, who are the fullness and complement of the body.

In this way, a chain is formed which starts with the Pope and reaches, in an orderly and hierarchical way, down to the last little peasant, who, while laboriously plowing his fields, will -- if he has the spirit of Jesus Christ -- feel united in faith, charity and obedience with the Pope and the Church, just as we ourselves feel united. I very much want you to often savor this thought, which is so marvelously beautiful and stirring! How beautiful and inspiring is the sight of this immense family of believers dispersed throughout the world, all confessing the same creed, cherishing the same hopes, enjoying the same sacraments, believing in the same priesthood, offering the same Sacrifice, obeying the same law, listening to the same voice of the common Father (...).

Beloved sons and daughters, when you assemble in church on holy days to take part in the divine mysteries, are you not thrilled at the thought that you are in communion with the whole world; that you are sons and daughters of the same mother, who calls everybody, without distinction of birth, rank or upbringing, to earn, through good works, the same eternal bliss? Are you not thrilled to know that you are in loving communion not only with the Church fighting the glorious battles of the Lord here on earth but also with the Church singing the song of victory in heaven? Are you not thrilled to know that the things you believe in are the very same things all generations have believed in throughout all the centuries? (...).

Hail, one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church! You are our teacher, our queen, and our mother. You are the mystical body of Jesus Christ living through the centuries. From you comes our salvation, glory, peace, joy, bliss, and life. We will listen to you, our teacher. We will obey you, our sovereign. We will love you, our mother. We will come to your help and defend you, O body of which we are members. [\[7\]](#)

b) OUR MOTHER

“Let us look at our Mother’s countenance”

We are sons and daughters of the Catholic Church. Should not this thought alone stir us? Let us look at our Mother’s countenance and be ashamed we have done so little for her

till now.

Who is she? She is the fruit of a miracle. In fact, she is a miracle herself, a stupendous miracle in her origin, a singular miracle in her growth, a permanent miracle in her duration. As a matter of fact, how was she born? She was born, one might say, by dint of miracles, without the slightest human help, nay despite the efforts of all hell raging around the crib, despite immense and incredible obstacles that could not be overcome by created powers alone. She is sustained solely by the arm of God. Despite all the powers, all the prejudices, all the passions, all the errors of the world -- all of which have joined forces against her -- despite persecutions of every kind inflicted on her by barbarity, cunning, and pride, the Church, like lightning that flashes from east to west, spreads spectacularly and extends to the farthest corners of the world. In the midst of the most ferocious assaults, in the midst of the most vicious attacks, she advances peacefully and serenely. She walks majestically across the countless centuries. She stands tall and straight. She does not surrender. She has kept herself incorrupt and gloriously triumphs over enemies of all kinds (...).

This is a chain of indescribable miracles, miracles that make us see with our own eyes that the Eternal One is acting here, Christ's power is at work here, God's force, might and omnipotence are active here and that all this power is communicated and imparted to the Church and incarnated in the Church. We should bow and reverence this immortal Queen of the ages, this immaculate Spouse of Christ, this Lady, sovereign of all kingdoms, ages, and peoples. We should be proud to belong to her and to work for her glory.[\[8\]](#)

“The Church is truly our Mother”

My dear sons and daughters, fix deeply in your mind the great saying of St. Cyprian: “He who does not have the Church as a mother cannot have God as a father.”

The Church is truly our mother, beloved brothers and sisters of mine. This is not an oratorical expression. It is an eminently dogmatic teaching.

Between us and God stand our parents and the series of our forefathers and mothers, through whom we are united to the first man, Adam. Likewise, writes a great man, in the supernatural order of faith and grace, between us and Jesus Christ stands a mother, who is a virgin, namely the Church. Through the uninterrupted series of spiritual generations she goes back to the apostles and to Jesus Christ. Just as the wave of natural life flows from God to all creation through the necessary mediation of our parents according to the flesh, in the same way, the wave of divine, supernatural life flows from Christ to all believers through the equally necessary mediation of the Church. She is his Spouse and therefore our mother. She was chosen to nurse us with the milk of her teaching, to bring us up in the spiritual life of grace, to enrich us with all the treasures of heaven, and to lead us to the fullness of the stature of Christ.[\[9\]](#)

“Let us love this Mother”

Let us love this mother! We must not forget that whoever does not love the Church is outside the love of Jesus Christ and therefore outside the only love that can ennoble us, exalt us, and make us love properly everything that is worthy of love in the universe. Let us love the Church living and present in our days, the Church that speaks through her august Head and her bishops, that lives and suffers for us, that prays and hopes with us. Let us love her as the most precious and cherished thing in the world after Jesus Christ. Let us love her like our family, like our mother, who is at once most beautiful and most loving. Let us love her as the one who best reflects and expresses in herself the infinite beauty and goodness of God who is our whole love. Let us trustingly abandon ourselves into the arms of this mother. "My mother told me so," exclaims the child; and with these words he goes confidently on his way. Each one of us should say the same thing: "The Church has spoken and that is enough!" [\[10\]](#)

"We shall always love you with the love of sons and daughters"

Hail, O Catholic Church! O daughter of heaven! How beautiful are your tabernacles! How luminous your ways! Mother of saints, image of the heavenly city, eternal preserver of the incorruptible Blood, hail! You love us with the love of a mother, and we will always love you with the love of sons and daughters. Like our brothers and sisters who have already earned their palm of victory, we too will make every effort to sanctify ourselves on this our earthly pilgrimage so as not to be unworthy of you. We will docilely follow your teachings and always stand at your side, knowing well that outside you there is no salvation. We will fight with you on earth in the hope of being victorious with you in heaven through the merits of Jesus Christ our God, to whom be honor, wisdom, dominion, thanksgiving, benediction, power, might and glory forever and ever. Amen. [\[11\]](#)

c) THE CHURCH IS HOLY

"The Church is holy"

The greatest work of God the Father is Jesus Christ, and the greatest work of Jesus Christ is his Church. He acquired and purified her with his blood, sanctified her with his spirit, and enriched her with his merits so as to present her to his Father without spot or wrinkle and have her reign with him forever in heaven. The Church, therefore, is holy in her Author, who is the source and font of all holiness. She is holy in the sacraments, the channels from which all graces derive. She is holy in her unbloody Sacrifice, by which a pure oblation is offered to the name of God. She is holy in her worship, which is so majestic and beautiful that it inspires the liveliest faith, the deepest respect, and the most tender piety, a worship that transcends logic and speaks powerfully even to the hearts of the unorthodox.

The Church is also holy in her teachings, because her main concern is to preserve them incorrupt, just as she received them from her Founder, so that, through these teachings, she might heal spiritual infirmities and dissipate the darkness shrouding the minds of peo-

ple; so that, with these teachings, she might incite her sons and daughters to good works and inspire them to the practice of voluntary poverty, a more perfect obedience, an angelic virginity, and an austere and penitent life, instilling in them the courage needed for sacrifice and martyrdom.

The Church is holy in her sons and daughters because the Savior “gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good” (...). Come and look for yourselves. Those untold millions of generous martyrs, of solitary penitents, of chaste virgins, of heroes of all kinds; those countless shepherds and priests burning with holy zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, rushing off even to distant lands where the sword of persecution is being wielded or deadly diseases are reaping victims; those innumerable religious whose virtues, austerity of life, spirit of solitude, prayer, zeal, charity, and detachment from earthly things are admired by their very enemies; those numberless good people, ignored by the world but known and loved by Him who searches hearts -- all these people are sons and daughters of the Catholic Church. Being holy in herself and holy in all her things, the Church will never cease to nurture within herself giants of holiness, giants worthy of the supreme honor of the altars and, in this way, to be “the inexhaustible source of all good things.”[\[12\]](#)

“The Church is the mother of holiness”

Holiness is the inseparable and distinctive attribute of the true Church. God is holiness by nature. Hence the Church, which comes from God, must bear the mark of holiness. St. Augustine says that the Catholic Church is holy, indeed that she is the mother of holiness: *sanctitatis mater* (...).

A source of holiness is, first of all, the truths the Catholic Church teaches us. Her teachings are not mere theories but eternal principles, from which flow countless moral consequences that divinize our nature, as it were (...). A God who is just and infinitely merciful, the immortality of the soul, atonement for sin through penance, forgiveness of offenses, patience, charity, humility, and so on, these are all teachings that have helped mold countless upright and illustrious heroes in all ages.

A source of holiness is found in the sacraments, which the Church administers to us with the tenderness of a mother. She administers Baptism to wipe away the stains of our physical origin; Confirmation to make us stronger in fighting the battles of the Lord; Penance as a means to atone for our sins; the Eucharist to communicate the very Author of holiness to us; the sacrament of Matrimony to sanctify the family; Sacred Orders to perpetuate, here below, the priesthood of Jesus Christ; Extreme Unction to pour heaven's consolations down upon our bed of pain.

A source of holiness is offered in the precepts she enjoins on us. They are full of indulgence and kindness. Through them this gentle mother guides us through the dangers of the world to the port of salvation. She does everything she can to make us happy in this life and in the next. She commands us to love God with our whole heart, to direct to him -- as to our last end -- all our thoughts, our affections, our works, all that we are and all that we can do, and to love our neighbor as ourselves with the love that comes from God. Finally, she urges us to imitate Jesus Crucified, our Lord, the sublime model of resignation, fortitude and glory, so that, crucified with him to the vanity of this world, we may share both his sufferings and his joys.

A source of holiness is the Communion of Saints, fruit of that perfect love that binds together Church Militant, Church Suffering and Church Triumphant and, out of them, forms one body of which Jesus Christ is the head. Thus we share in the merits of the just ones who are still pilgrims here on earth, as well as in the glory of the heavenly citizens.

“Show us anything honorable that religion does not give rise to or does not inspire “

Show us anything honorable that the Catholic religion does not give rise to or does not inspire. Friendship perhaps? Yes, but only the Catholic religion can give us true and faithful friends. Gratitude maybe? Yes, but only the Catholic religion fashions a truly good heart and seasons social life with pure joy. Marriage perhaps? Yes, but is it not true that, by raising marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, the Catholic religion has made marriage stable and holy and wants it to reflect the image of the union between Christ and his Church? Social responsibilities maybe? Yes, but is it not the gospel that commands us to be humble, gentle, kind, meek, patient, and charitable? Courage maybe? Yes, but who are the heroes that can stand next to those the Catholic religion takes pride in? Good governance perhaps? Oh, if nations, republics and kingdoms could be governed only by the precepts of the gospel, you would not find corruption, injustice, slander, ambition, hatred, theft, murder, sacrilege, and rebellion.[\[14\]](#)

“The treasury of the Church is the Communion of Saints”

The Communion of the Saints, namely the common treasury of graces and merits found in the Church, is due principally to its Head (...). So, it is to Jesus Christ that the Church owes the lavish supply of its goods. Oh, I am no longer amazed that this reserve fund is inexhaustible and infinite. The blood of Jesus Christ, this adorable blood -- one drop of which would have been enough to redeem the world -- his tears, his prayers, his life, his works, his labors, and his sufferings: all these make up the treasury of the Church and keep supplying it. It is a chain of merits that extends from one end of the earth to the other. It is a river of graces that flows incessantly through humanity and makes it fruitful (...).

Even though the life of the members derives, above all, from the Head, we must not think that the members themselves do not contribute to this life. In fact, the Apostle says: “God has so constructed the body ... that the members may have the same concern for one another, so that their surplus may also supply your needs.”

Now, if this applies to the natural body of human beings, to the body of a family, to the body of a city, should this not apply also to the Church, which is the body of Jesus Christ, the family of the elect, the City of God?

Let us look at the vast army of saints, who were once on this earth and now live triumphantly in heaven. How much suffering, how many prayers, how many sacrifices have flowed like streams into the infinite ocean of the merits of Jesus Christ, which make up the treasury of the Church.

In this treasury I see not just the superabundant satisfactory and intercessory merits of Christ but also those of the Virgin and the saints. I see the blood of the martyrs, the austerity of the hermits, the zeal of the Apostles, the faith of the confessors, and the palms of the virgins. Your own good works, the very prayers you offered up to God today with your Bishop are there. By virtue of the Communion of Saints, our prayer leaves this church, flies on the wings of angels, crosses the oceans, and goes straight to the heart of

our distant brothers and sisters, to our impenitent brothers and sisters, to our separated brothers and sisters. Our prayer brings them the balm of consolation, the grace of repentance, the gift of perseverance. The Communion of Saints reaches everywhere. Through it, there are no limits of time or space.[\[15\]](#)

“How consoling, how beautiful is this dogma of the Communion of Saints”

Do you not hear the sobs coming up from the depths? “Have pity on me, at least you, my friends!” Have pity on me, at least you who were once my friends (...). These are cries of pain and lamentation. It is the cry of a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, a daughter, a wife, a cry rising up to us from the prison of expiation, pleading for our suffrages, because not even suffering can destroy the Communion of Saints. Why should the Communion of Saints be broken by the expiation of the righteous? Do they not belong to the body of Jesus Christ, just like us? Are they not living members of the family of the elect and of the city of God? So, why should they not share in the common treasury of the Church, in our satisfaction for sin, in our sacrifices, in our help?

How truly consoling, how truly beautiful is this dogma of the Communion of Saints! Heaven prays, earth prays, purgatory prays. Thus purgatory, earth, heaven, the Church Suffering, the Church Militant, the Church Triumphant, all assist each other and are united in a mutual exchange of supplications and merits. From purgatory prayer rises up to earth. From earth it soars to Heaven. There, echoed by the saints, it obtains relief, light, and peace. Purgatory prays for us. Heaven prays for us. And, in the midst of our joys and sorrows, we poor exiles and pilgrims pray to Heaven.

It is through us that the cry of those souls in prison arrives at the throne of God. From up there, the bounteous mercy of God flows down over the earth and from earth, like a heavenly dew, descends on Purgatory where it falls on lips burning in expiatory flames.[\[16\]](#)

d) THE CHURCH IS ONE

“Unity in faith, unity in communion”

The true Church of Jesus Christ, prefigured in the Old Testament by Noah’s Ark and by Mount Zion and referred to as the vineyard, the field, the ship, the sheepfold, the house, the army, the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, must bear on its brow the resplendent note of unity. Just as there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, in the same way there must be unity of belief in those who belong to the Church. Just as Jesus Christ died to gather into one the dispersed children of God, in the same way there must be unity of love, unity of communion. The profession of the same doctrine -- namely unity in faith -- and total submission to the same Head, representing God -- namely unity in communion -- was the divine Savior’s last thought as he fervently prayed to the Father for his present and future followers, “so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us.” This was the twofold unity the Apostle inculcated, when

he said: “Strive to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.”[\[17\]](#)

“Unity of faith, unity of governance, unity of the sacraments”

Since God is one and truth is one, the Church, too, must be one. Unity, in fact, is the first note to shine on the brow of Christ’s Church. Unity of faith, unity of governance, unity of sacraments, the kind of unity Christ himself fashioned! Unity of faith: because all the members making up the Church must believe in the same truths and profess the same doctrines under pain of ceasing to be Catholics. Hence, no freedom of thought, no whim of private interpretation, no interference of the individual in what has to do with the faith.

Unity of governance: Christ’s Church forms a single immense family, a well-knit body, a real society, arranged and organized with an interior and exterior organism, perfect in every aspect. Hence, over each diocese we find a bishop, who is its father, its shepherd, and its teacher. Over all the bishops we find the Pope, who is the foundation, the head, and the sovereign of all. Everything centers on the Pope and everything comes down from the Pope to the faithful with such a marvelous ebb and flow of life that even unbelievers are amazed at all this and are compelled to admire the marvelous structure and the amazing unity of that glorious hierarchical society.

Unity of sacraments, because in Christ’s Church all not only use the same sacraments but use them in basically the same way. All pray with the same words, all offer God the same sacrifice of praise, the same spotless oblation, which, according to prophecy, was to be offered in the whole world from the rising of the sun to its setting.[\[18\]](#)

“The Church is the body of Christ, a family, a city”

The Apostle teaches us that the Church is the body of Jesus Christ. Now, the members of a body are united with each other in a continuous exchange of reciprocal services. Each member supports and helps the other, and together all share the same goods, namely energy, health, movement, and life. If a member stopped contributing to the general well-being or stopped drawing from this common source, it would, by that very fact, become powerless and stop living. Hence, one cannot say: “I don’t need you,” because all the members, the head as well as the hands, the hands as well as the feet, contribute to the beauty, to the harmony of the whole.

The Church is a family. Now, all the members of a family are united with each other in a similar way. The weaker one leans on the stronger one, the stronger one defends the weaker one. Each member’s good name, good fortune and good health redound on everyone and form a common reserve. The father’s authority is passed on to mother and children. The mother’s love is shared with the father and the children, while the children’s innocence is reflected on their parents. The gain of one becomes the gain of the other; the poverty of one, the poverty of the other; the disgrace of one, the disgrace of the other; the glory of one, the glory of the other. When one member of the family suffers, all the others suffer with him. When one is happy, all the others are happy with him. So, the human family is like the human body, an exchange of mutual services and functions, in a reciprocal partnership of love.

The Church is a city, a city founded on the top of a high mountain. Now, even here, each

one's riches redound to the good of the others, and the abundance of some makes up for the poverty of the others. Some contribute to the common support by work, others look after the good administration of the enterprise. Each one has his own personal worth, his own private rights. But there is also a common treasury, in which all share according to their rights and their capacity. What marvelous harmony this is in which everything is intertwined, interconnected, correlated in a vast network of needs and benefits.[\[19\]](#)

“Variety does not harm its marvelous unity”

Look at this holy edifice, and you will see that variety does not harm its marvelous unity. Each stone has its own form, its own place, its own special purpose. Some stones are at the base, others at the very top. The more gorgeous and splendid ones adorn the sanctuary and the altar. Others, more common, but no less useful, are disseminated all over and form the main body of the building. Some stones are buried underground and are altogether unknown, but they hold up the weight of the whole building. Some are exposed to the gaze of people but are often such a trivial ornament that if they were to be removed, the temple would not be any less beautiful or any less solid.

This is a vivid image of society, of the family and of the Church, as God instituted them. In them, the individual must keep to his place and with simplicity accept the position in which God has put him, since God is the author of honors, distributor of dignities, and supreme arbiter of our destiny. A Christian's real joy is doing the will of God. St. Paul says that we are building on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone on which the whole well-constructed edifice rises and becomes the Lord's holy temple. On this cornerstone, you, too, have been erected into a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.

These stones (...) would not form a solid edifice if they did not adhere to each other with a certain order, if they did not, so to speak, stay together in peace and mutual love. In the same way, Christians can truly form the house of God only if they are intimately united by the bonds of love: “People build the house of the Lord only when they are held together by love.” (*Domum Domini non faciunt, nisi quando charitate compaginantur.*) Charity (...) is the precious mortar of the Christian society. The great law of attraction is what brings to perfection and reaffirms the mutual love we owe our brothers and sisters. It gives the human heart solidity and elasticity, filling it with power, compassion, and mercy.[\[20\]](#)

“Strong in truth, strong in love, strong in unity”

To all I say: be firm, be fearless, be immovable in supporting and defending the inviolable rights of the Church and its august Head. But, as Leo XIII admonishes, always do so with that moderation of manners and language that do not take away but add force to rights and truth and make the truth easily understood even by the most reluctant minds.

If we insist so much on this point, it is because in our times, unfortunately, so many people twist and ignore even the most elementary principles of Christianity. We cannot repeat these things too often. Hence, our fortitude must be made attractive through our prudence and charity; and, in turn, our prudence and charity must draw power from our fortitude: “Resist, steadfast in faith!”

Strong in truth, strong in love, strong also in unity: this is the fulfillment and the fruit of charity.

Unity! This was the last recommendation the Holy Father offered us in the warmest and most affectionate terms. This is also the recommendation that, in his name, I offer you with all the passion of my heart: unity! Unity of mind, unity of heart, unity of action. During these very troubled times we are going through, we can support each other only if we are united, if we stand together. There is no sacrifice of opinion we should not make in order to preserve this unity, in which alone lies the secret of victory.[\[21\]](#)

“A system of liberalism that is altogether new”

What can we say about certain people who, not satisfied with their role as subjects in the Church of God, believe they can also have a role in its governance?

It is on the basis of this insane pretension that they have been concocting a system of liberalism that is entirely new, all the more dangerous for its being clothed in a beautiful image. It is a pharisaical system that, unfortunately, manages to seduce so many simple souls and take possession of certain minds that are neither wicked nor mean. It is an anarchical system that ends up dividing our forces and sowing discord among the sons and daughters of the same father, among the members of the same family. It is a barbaric system that does not hesitate, when it can, to mortify immortal souls and kill off every germ of charity in the hearts of so many people (...).

The gravest dangers for the Church are not violent and barbaric persecutions, which the Church has been used to for centuries and which, thank God, she knows how to turn to her own advantage; nor discussions by enlightened minds and by science, because she knows she will come out victorious. Reason, history and God's promises are on her side. The most insidious and most dangerous enemies are the weaknesses of some of her own, as well as their insane pride, ambitious designs, and hypocritical wiles. In no way are their behavior and their actions in keeping with the spirit of true and perfect Catholics, which they claim to be. [\[22\]](#)

“Indifference to the more endearing virtues of Christianity”

Once more I must lift my voice against a new outbreak of this deadly system. Once again I must remind you that it is not at all in keeping with the true Catholic spirit for people to consume themselves in protestations of loyalty and devotion to the Pope, as these people do, while at the same time showing little respect for the bishops united with the Pope, undermining the bishops' governance in roundabout ways, or maliciously twisting their acts and intentions.

I denounce those who identify themselves, as it were, with the Holy See, proclaiming themselves its defenders, its only loyal sons and daughters, its only faithful spokespersons. I am troubled by those who condemn as disobedient to the Church certain people, even in positions of authority, who really are extremely devoted to it. I protest against those who claim an exclusive monopoly on Catholicism. They talk as if they were infallible teachers, condemning and anathematizing, in the name of Religion and Pope, all those who do not agree with their opinions or, all too often, with their

exaggerations and eccentricities (...).

I resent those who pretend they can solve the most difficult, the most intricate, the most delicate questions in the religious or religious-scientific field by more or less spontaneous plebiscites by people without authority and almost always without competence. I rebel against those who batch together otherwise highly respectable persons with the enemies of Religion, often accusing them of having broken the faith or having somehow perverted it simply because the latter have different opinions on matters that are purely political or still left free to the discussion of the learned by the wise moderation of the Holy See (...).

I am deeply grieved that some people do not see anything good, nay, just evil, in the thinking or activities of fellow human beings who disagree -- or are believed to disagree -- with their views (...). I am distressed by those who act indifferent to the most lovable virtues of Christianity and all but ridicule people who espouse these virtues and cherish them highly (...).

All this is in open contradiction to the spirit that should animate a sincere Catholic. Whoever does not understand this spirit, whoever does not experience it, has lost the sense of Christ.[\[23\]](#)

“Hierarchical unity is essential”

Not only dogmatic unity but also hierarchical unity pertains to the essential unity of the Church. Christ prayed to his Father that the faithful “be one, as I and the Father are one.”[\[24\]](#)

“Woe to him who dares break this chain”

In these days of anarchy, we cannot repeat often enough: we must be united! The people must be united with their pastors. The pastors and clergy must be united among themselves in the hierarchical order. And all -- clergy and people alike -- must be united with the bishop, who, in perfect union with the Pope, the Supreme Pontiff, is the link that binds you to the invisible Shepherd, Jesus Christ. This is the sacred chain we find in the Catholic Church. Woe to him who dares break this chain! Whoever detaches himself from the adjoining link becomes the sport of the wicked and the instrument of perdition for many.[\[25\]](#)

“The Church must always remain hierarchically ordered if she is to overcome”

A contentious spirit has always been a shameful thing, but it is all the more so today when we are surrounded by hostile and vicious enemies, eager to annihilate the Church and souls. “In the battle we are presently waging for matters of vital importance,” the

Holy Father said some time ago, “everybody should work together, with one mind and one heart, toward the one common goal, namely to protect the great interests of religion and society.”

We cannot expect to achieve this goal with the more or less passionate arguments of certain restless spirits, with the more or less subtle discussions on how best to marshal our forces, with a forced and external submission that still leaves mistrust, suspicion, and alienation in the depth of one’s heart. We cannot achieve this goal with rivalries, jealousies, exclusive and egoistical ways of acting. Nor can we achieve this goal with a harsh and callous zeal that mistakes the power of the sacred ministry for blind partisan violence and thinks it is honoring God by attacking people who may be absolutely upright and dedicated to the interests of the Church and its august Head, but whose dedication is without show, pretence, or human passions.

I will say over and over again: what will vindicate the rights of the Holy See and restore order to the Church and, with order, peace, is for people to observe hierarchical dependence, to abandon themselves humbly and trustingly, like sons and daughters, to the paternal authority governing them. Let me be even clearer: what we need is for people to submit their minds and hearts to their shepherds and, through them and with them, to the Shepherd of the Church who guides us all. Hence, the Church must always remain hierarchically ordered, if she is to be victorious. This is the secret of her power, this is the strategy for victory.[\[26\]](#)

“Even among dissident Churches the Catholic Church has sons and daughters”

We know that the ways of the Lord are not ours and that even among dissident Churches the Catholic Church has sons and daughters, sons and daughters at least in desire, if not in fact. They are generous souls that deserve to have been born within our unity and already belong to the Church through invisible and hidden bonds that only God knows (...).

Though separated from the body of the Church, they belong to its soul. When political interests will no longer need to preserve this wall of separation keeping the great European family apart; when the interests of earth disappear in the face of the interests of Heaven; when the great law of evangelical charity will be better understood and practiced by all, oh, then -- I and others do not hesitate to say so -- the universal Shepherd will discover, to his pleasant surprise, countless sheep that belonged to him in places where the eye of man could only see wolves. Then, people from the East and people from the West will embrace like brothers and sisters in the same Temple. The ancient *Te Deum* will reverberate through the great Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, while the immortal bones of Saints John Chrysostom and Gregory Nazianzen will exult with joy. Then, from all corners of the universe, the most distant and diverse peoples will converge on the center of unity, on Rome (...). I feel, nay, I am certain, that out of many families there will then emerge one family, out of many peoples one people, out of our humanity one fold under the guidance of one Shepherd.[\[27\]](#)

“The great unity toward which we are hastening”

The day has to come when justice and peace will kiss, when the sun of Christian civilization will once again shine on the world, when the social edifice will rest on an indestructible foundation.

It is up to us to hasten this day. How? By winning over our brothers and sisters to the truth by example more than by words, by openly professing our faith, by living in conformity with this faith and by convincing everybody that only from the Roman Pontificate can Italy hope for deliverance and true well-being. Of this many people are already convinced. Leaving aside all partisan rivalry, we must now all work together toward this holy and noble goal, prompted by the purest love for Church and country. Relying on the moral ideals found in society, we must help prepare a people that can be ruled in a paternal way and make the difficult task of governing easier for those in authority. We must, above all, have recourse to God in prayer, because we must never forget that “unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep vigil” (Ps 127).

Oh, yes, we must pray, dearly beloved. We must pray that the erring return to the faith, that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will spread ever more, and that the goals of his Vicar will be realized. We must pray and hope.

There is already in progress a return to right and sound ideas. Many are on this return journey or are acknowledging the need to do so. The disappointments and disillusionments of life have done a good job in shaking the multitudes. We can see with our own eyes that ungodliness, whatsoever its disguise, is pure and simple tyranny; that its promises are lies; that its fruits bring death. The most popular writers are taking back today what they arrogantly stated yesterday. Today, influential people are uttering, albeit timidly, noble words hardly ever heard in years past. Everything points to a slow but progressive evolution of ideas. Everything makes us think that society, nauseated by the filthy materialism corrupting and degrading it, is on its way to the longed-for renewal. Everything, as De Maistre used to say, foreshadows some sort of great unity, toward which we are hastening.

This is without doubt the unity foretold by the Gospel, the religious unity to be achieved through the Church, the unity that will make of the whole earth one fold and one Shepherd.

Dearly beloved, man tosses and turns, but God is leading him. I repeat: we must pray and hope. [\[28\]](#)

e) THE CHURCH IS A TEACHER

“The Church is an infallible teacher”

In its composition, the Catholic Church is the society of angels and faithful stretching across the centuries, coming down to earth in order to coalesce into a holy, universal, and eternal fellowship and then return with her children into the eternity whence it came. She is the assembly of the children of God, the army of the living God, his kingdom, his city, his throne, his tabernacle. She is that admirable society that has existed from the beginning of time. She appeared in shadows and figures with Adam, was foretold by the patriarchs, validated by Abraham, revealed by Moses and prophesied by Isaiah. In this her last age, she appears today in Jesus Christ as a society of people united in the profession of the same faith and in the sharing of the same sacraments, under the rule of her legitimate shepherds, primarily of the Roman Pontiff, the visible head, the supreme ruler, and the universal shepherd of this blessed assembly founded by the Man-God.

Since Christ deigned to entrust to her the deposit of revelation, namely, the entire body of truths regarding faith and morals -- which he himself had brought down from heaven so

that she could teach them to all generations with certainty and simplicity and without admixture of error -- she had to be endowed with the glorious attribute of infallible teacher so that, for all time to come, she would hand on the revealed truths just as she received them from his own divine lips (...).

Not to accept all the definitions of the Council with full and ready submission of mind and heart, without restrictions, compromises, hesitations or concessions means denying not just the particular truth one does not like but also the infallible magisterium, which asks us to believe in it. It means destroying Catholicism and mortally wounding society itself.

In fact, because of the Church's infallible magisterium Catholicism is divine, philosophy is led to the faith by it, the world is renewed, martyrdom becomes reasonable, the Councils are accepted and respected, heresies are destroyed, science and civilization become fruitful, morals are strengthened, peace of conscience is ensured and confirmed, all the fruits of sanctification are poured out abundantly on all peoples, the Church's permanence is assured and her unity is unbreakable. Take this glorious prerogative away from the Church and everything falls apart and goes to pieces, just as the faith has fallen apart and gone to pieces in those unfortunate souls who, in these latter times, have waged war on her holy and solemn definitions. [\[29\]](#)

“The teaching Church and the learning Church”

If God wants a unifying and guiding authority to reside in the priestly order, you must admit that in the Church there is a distinction of classes, offices, and powers. There is the superior and the subject, the shepherd and the flock, those who teach and those who are taught, those who feed and those who are fed. In a word, we have the Church that teaches and the Church that is taught, which, though distinct from each other, form one and the same Church.

To the first belong the successors of the Apostles, the bishops, especially the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, the Pope. To the second belong all the faithful. And what about the simple priests? Though on the one hand they seem to belong to the teaching Church since they administer the sacraments and teach the faithful, they really belong to the Church that is taught because they do not possess the fullness of the priesthood, have no jurisdiction whatever, and administer the sacraments and teach the faithful only in so far as they are authorized to do so by the bishops. [\[30\]](#)

“The Pope's infallibility is not detached from the faith of the Church”

The Pope is personally infallible, but his infallibility cannot be personal and apart in such wise that his faith is detached from the faith of the Church. The Church is a living body, not a corpse. No earthly power can strip her of her vital force because she is divine, and the life of God is reflected in her. The Pope is the head while the bishops are the members of the teaching and living body. If the Head could separate himself from the members, you would have a dead body; and the Church, despite the promises of Jesus Christ, would be destroyed.

The Pontiff, who in himself unites and concentrates the whole episcopate, can never find

himself alone and isolated when he teaches all the faithful in matters of faith and morals because the Holy Spirit, who assists the Head and keeps him from error, infuses and inspires submission, at least in a certain number of bishops, who, united with Peter, form the true Church (...).

The Pope is infallible, but his infallibility does not exempt him from studying, consulting, and relying on the bishops and the Councils. Infallibility comprises two well distinct parts: the divine part, which is the inspiration, the light which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, sheds

upon Peter's successor; and the human part, which comprises the resources of scholarship, the necessary research regarding Tradition and Scripture, and the choice of the best way to convey the truth to people.

Truth does not come down through new revelations nor through direct illumination. To the divine factor must be added the human factor, which explores the sacred deposit entrusted to the Church, a deposit contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments, in the writings of the Fathers, in the literary works of Religion, in the oral teaching and the living and enduring practices of the various Churches that are in communion with the Church of Rome, Mother and Teacher of all Churches. You must not imagine that there can be a definition without proper investigation. No, this is not possible. The Holy Spirit, on whose assistance infallibility is founded, cannot permit human negligence to lead the Church into error through the omission of the research and study needed to discover, illustrate, and promulgate the ancient truths with solemn and new definitions.

[\[31\]](#)

“Does the Church foster ignorance?”

We well know what some people say: the Church stifles talent and fosters ignorance! Can there be a more stupid and absurd accusation?

Does the Church foster ignorance, the very Church that fears nothing more than ignorance, that considers ignorance a fault and obliges everybody to the most diligent and unbiased pursuit of the truth? Since when has the truth become an obstacle to the flowering of the human mind?

The Church fosters ignorance! Can anyone be more ignorant of history than those who hurl this accusation against the Church? History loudly proclaims that indeed it was the Church that dissipated the darkness of the most inveterate superstitions and spurred humanity on to the paths of true civilization. It was the Church that opened before us new heavens and new earths, as it were, and, through its stimulating light, so elevated and strengthened our mortified human reason as to free it from all error (...).

Today, especially, when there is so much talk about education and some people are profusely spreading all kinds of nefarious teachings far and wide, who is concerned with keeping the eternal principles of truth and justice firmly in the hearts of the people? Who, if not the Catholic Church? Does not the Catholic Church, even today, send its missionaries into the remotest areas of the world and among the most primitive people to win them over to civilization, while at the same time winning them over to the cross? Does not the Catholic Church send her priests even into the most mountainous and poverty-stricken places, where, with little food and privations of every sort, they spend their days in the snow in winter and in inclement weather in summer so as to civilize and sanctify countless unfortunate people and bring them the consolations of heaven?

Yes, it is easy for the Catholic Church to be castigated by people who know the Church only enough to hold her up to contempt. She always was and always will be the only true

teacher of individuals and of nations because her divine Founder made her a teacher here on earth. She alone has the genius of keeping reason from the most shameful falls. She alone can ensure that beauty will be the splendid image of truth and holiness. She alone can bring human beings close to him who, by nature, is infinite Wisdom and Light. This, in fact, is the goal of all her activities. Hence, God cries out to us in the words of the Apostle: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light."[\[32\]](#)

"Alas for the Church of Rome had she been stricken with immobility"

As a universal and enduring society, the Church has received the power to adapt her laws to the needs of all times and places. Since the Church has to strictly follow the laws of Divine Providence governing humanity, for whose good she was predestined, it is necessary for her to observe the conditions of people, explore their needs, and satisfy their requirements within the purview of her mission. Alas for the Church of Rome if she had been stricken with immobility like the schismatic Church! From this fact one could draw a splendid proof of her divinity. The schismatic Church, in fact, changed the unchangeable element, namely the dogmatic one, and remained fixed in the changeable element. Instead, the Church of Rome has stood firm in the divine element like an indestructible tower. Nonetheless, she has been able to exhibit a vibrant youthfulness, an exuberant vitality, moving back and forth with the ebb and flow of human generations *circumdata varietate* (adorned with multi-splendored beauty).[\[33\]](#)

"Look up to heaven, suffer and be silent"

We have to be patient and put our trust in God's help alone. But don't think I'm discouraged. I'm working indirectly because I don't think it wise to do so directly. I consider opposition to that party a duty of my ministry. Nothing will keep me from fulfilling that duty with prudent firmness, *quantum Deus dederit*, although I've now lost confidence in human beings. Experience of the world, dear brother of mine, has made me change my mind about many, many things. I miss those days when, full of enthusiasm, I saw a perfect Church and looked at whatever had to do with the Church through rose-colored glasses. But changes came; and they, too, have a purpose. They detach me more and more from the things of this poor world and incline me to the particular program I once mentioned to you.[\[34\]](#)

Dear bishop, at least for a few weeks, we really need to forget the evils of the present hour. The Church seems to have turned into a Tower of Babel. Maybe our present times are among the saddest in the Church's history. Down there, they see the evil and sometimes deplore it in private. However, in public, they either do nothing or do things that seem to encourage the destroyers of the hierarchical order. Is it human prudence, at least? Is it weakness? Is it complicity? Is it fear of people that makes them cower and cringe? Only God knows. What I know is that no well-ordered society would tolerate such dirty tricks or such tricksters. We really need to look up to heaven, suffer, and be silent. "If you know how to be silent and suffer, at once and without any doubt you will see the help of the Lord coming down upon you."[\[35\]](#)

I think the following maxim contains much wisdom: "We should be completely at peace with whatever God allows to happen not only to us but to the Church as well and work on her behalf at God's bidding."[\[36\]](#)

f) THE CHURCH IS SOVEREIGN

“We must obey the Church because she is a sovereign”

We must listen to the Church because she is a teacher, and we must also obey her because she is a sovereign.

This sovereignty was not conferred on her by human beings but by God himself, the invisible and immortal king of the ages, creator and Lord of heaven and earth. Jesus once told his Apostles: “As the Father has sent me, so do I send you.” That is to say: I send you out with the same purpose, with the same power, with the same unlimited and boundless royal authority, with universal authority. So great is this authority that not only does it embrace the created universe; it reaches all the way to the throne of God. In fact, Jesus Christ added: “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” This means that whatever the Church chooses to decree in matters of faith and morals, whatever laws she considers necessary for eternal life, everything will be approved and confirmed in heaven where the very laws of God are written.

So, it follows that Catholics should consider every decision emanating from the Church as a command of God. Hence, whoever opposes these decisions, these commands of the Church, whoever challenges, resists, or defies these decisions, defies and resists God himself: “he who despises you despises me.”[\[37\]](#)

“Eager and sincere obedience”

The Apostle Paul wrote to the faithful of Corinth: “I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.” This, too, is the plea I address to you, my dearly beloved. But how could this perfect unanimity, this harmony be possible without obedience to the Church?

Obedience -- eager and sincere obedience -- is, as many others have said, the best sacrifice one can offer God because it is the holocaust of the most precious thing we possess, namely our will. Obedience is unerring because one may make a mistake in commanding, but the one who obeys never makes a mistake. Obedience is always meritorious because the obedient person multiplies victories and successes. Obedience is the principle of order, the source of peace and tranquility and the reason for the Church's power and beauty. Whoever obeys is crowned with glory because he becomes a companion of the saints, a companion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and an imitator of Christ, who became obedient unto death, even death on the cross.[\[38\]](#)

“It is absolutely necessary to obey one’s legitimate Shepherds”

To be a Christian and save one’s soul, it is not enough to be baptized. It is not enough to profess faith in Jesus Christ. It is not even enough to receive the sacraments themselves. It is also necessary, absolutely necessary, to obey one’s legitimate Shepherds: to obey the Pope, obey the bishop, obey those to whom the Pope and the bishop have entrusted the care of our souls. So, whoever does not obey the Pope, the bishop or the Catholic priest can be anything whatever but not a Christian, surely not a Catholic. He is a proud man, a hypocrite and nothing else. He is outside the Church: “Anyone who is not with the bishop is not in the Church,” says St. Cyprian whom we have quoted several times.[\[39\]](#)

“I am ready to sacrifice everything, even my life, rather than betray my duty”

Two years have already passed since the Spirit of the Lord sent me among you as bishop of your souls.

I can say that, ever since that day, you have become everything for me; and I have gotten to love you with the passion of a father. I tried, as best I could, to provide for your most urgent needs, even at the cost of sacrifices. I was always so happy to rush wherever I could dry tears and alleviate sufferings.

But your spiritual welfare was of even greater concern to me. I spared no effort, no sweat, no prayer as I urged you on to goodness, as I tried to help you keep the sacred deposit of the faith inviolate in your hearts.

In this diocese, I had to be the defender and custodian of Catholic principles. To achieve this end, what means did I not use? By word of mouth and in writing, I inculcated, above all, submission to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. I personally gave you the example by my unlimited and filial obedience to his orders, his words, his teachings, and even his desires because the Vicar of Jesus Christ has the word of truth; and he who listens to him listens to Jesus Christ himself.

If you recall, this was the program I offered you the very first time I had the joy of addressing you from the pulpit of our Cathedral. We must adhere to this program (...).

In the care of your souls, I have always abided by this principle, which is and always will be the foundation of the Church’s unity and power. I will continue to act this way in the future, whatever may happen. I am ready to sacrifice everything, even my life, rather than betray my duty.

Like a forward guard of the faith, I will continue, with God’s help, to defend among you the great principles of the Catholic faith against all attacks. Nor will I keep silent about the truth, even when speaking out will bring down on my head the hatred and hostility of some people, for I must please not human beings but God, who is the just judge of human actions.

What is my life? I have sacrificed it for you and am overjoyed at the thought of expending it for you. I know very well that the episcopal office is a martyrdom. The pectoral cross I wear keeps reminding me of this.[\[40\]](#)

“To fight to the very end for the cause of obedience”

If I did not feel strong enough to fight to the very end for the cause of obedience, I would not hesitate one second to ask the one who raised me to this most honorable See to let me give it up and retire to a monastery to weep over my weaknesses and sins.

So, I appeal to the Catholic sentiments of the vast majority of my sons and daughters and even to the good will of every honorable man and woman, whatever their persuasions. I ask them whether it is fair, reasonable, and decent to scorn one who refuses to betray his sacred trust and wishes to act honorably in his position, in the presence of God and of the Church. May God make me worthy of such a sacred trust. I am determined to carry it out, as I have done in the past, by summoning my helpers, namely, love, patience, long-suffering and meekness, by tempering force with sweetness, and by choosing, as much as possible, sweetness over force, because, like the Apostle Paul, I want to become all things to all so as to save all.

Dear friends, since my great obsession is the salvation of all, my prayers these days were, and will be, especially for those who -- certainly through no malice of their own but through thoughtlessness and passion -- heaped scorn and insults upon me. At any rate, I can assure you that, at the moment of my greatest anxiety, with the calm and tranquility of one who knows he has conscientiously done his duty, I overlooked their indignities, entrusting these people to God and blessing them with all my heart. I was deeply saddened by just one thing, namely, by the offenses committed against Jesus Christ in my humble person.

Venerable pastors, my dearest brothers in the ministry, please share these thoughts of mine with the people entrusted to your care. Tell them to pray for their bishop because he is in much need of God's help. Assure them he desires only to see them persevere in goodness. If they do these things, they will show their gratitude to him for the great sacrifice he made when he accepted to stand surety for them before God.[\[41\]](#)

g) LOVE IS THE LAW OF THE CHURCH

“The Church states and restates the great law of love”

The Church is our mother, a mother of such goodness that she appears as something utterly celestial. Her words and her deeds, as well as her laws, attest to her goodness. Just as the beloved disciple, toward the end of his life, could only repeat to the Christian assemblies these words: “Children, love one another,” in the same way the Church states and restates to her children the great law of love. Every time she teaches us the truth or spurs us on to virtue, every time she reminds us of God's commandments or enjoins his precepts on us, every time she makes us assist at the Eucharistic Sacrifice or promotes reception of the sacraments, every time she invites us to prayer or proposes the divine mysteries to our devotion, with every act of her ministry, she, in effect, repeats the same words: love God and love your neighbor. Love God with all your mind, with all your heart, and with all your strength; love your neighbor as yourselves, with the love that comes from God.

But she shows her maternal goodness not only in her laws but also in the way she applies them. Without in any way harming the basic unity of Christian practices, she takes into account times, places, and circumstances. She varies the rites of her worship and the austerity of her norms according to the character, the customs, and the habits of the people she rules. She forestalls unrest by tempering her discipline.[\[42\]](#)

“The Church loves: this is her whole life”

This disconsolate mother often has reason to be disappointed with her children, who sadden and distress her. Nevertheless, since she is a living institution, transcending time and space, she finds in herself the appropriate means to provide efficaciously for the salvation of her children even in the most unusual or most bizarre situations (...).

A marvelous bond connects all the members. This bond is charity. Woe to him who breaks this bond! The Church loves. This is her whole life. Made for human beings, she permeates all their institutions, guides and blesses all their successes, grieves with them over their failures, and helps correct them. She encourages their repentance, disposes them for amendment, and celebrates their return to God.

Unfortunately, our age is sick, as in fact are all the ages preceding it. We see that an impartial history is reducing to their just value the exaggerated praise of some ages, as well as the excessive condemnation of others. But tell me: what is a sick person's first remedy? Is it not perhaps the compassion, the goodness, and the attentions lavished on him with tender loving care? When a sick person sees these traits in the doctor, is it not true that he already feels on the road to recovery? Is it not true that he feels so attracted to this doctor that, even in the most painful surgery, the sick person himself is liable to assist the doctor? Hence, the great maxim of St. Gregory the Great: “Wounds that are to be treated must first be gently palpated.”[\[43\]](#)

“This spirit of wisdom and moderation, of meekness and charity”

In Christianity, this spirit of wisdom and moderation, of meekness and charity, was and always will be the characteristic of great souls. Where this spirit reigns, there dissension will necessarily disappear. There you will undoubtedly find order, harmony, and peace. With joy and, at the same time, with sadness we recall the glorious days when the harmony among all believers and their full and perfect submission to the divinely instituted hierarchical order gave the Church an image of eternal youth, to use St. Irenaeus' lovely expression. This image of the Church's eternal youth, together with the unsullied purity of her faith and morals, revealed her to the world as something divine.

The “one-heart-and-one-mind” attitude, which made our forefathers and mothers in the faith victorious over the darkness of idolatry and the fury of barbarians, will even today be the efficacious technique, perhaps the only one, for turning our present society back to the ideal of a Christian society.[\[44\]](#)

“Charity is the arbiter and mistress of our heart”

What is charity? Charity, this denizen come down from heaven among us to bring hearts together, to alleviate adversity, to lift up the disheartened, and to cheer troubled families with serene joys is the most precious gift God could bestow on his people. Charity makes the yoke so easy and the burden of law and life so light. Charity strews the arduous path of this our exile with occasional flowers. Charity is the balm for so many wounds, the relief of so many hearts. Charity, together with the first and greatest commandment of love for God, sets us poor pilgrims on the path leading to our homeland, at whose doorsteps faith and hope will leave us and where charity alone will enter and reign. Charity is the great law of Christianity. Charity must radiate from our whole person and be the arbiter and mistress of our heart. This charity calls for sacrifice from us, charity we cannot refuse our brothers and sisters lest we be guilty of unpardonable hardheartedness, lest, by our deeds, we give the lie to our title of Christian which we have every right to be proud of. [\[45\]](#)

2. THE POPE

The Church is founded on the rock of Peter, vicar of the love of the Crucified One, the “Holy Father,” to whom we owe filial devotion, consisting of filial love, reverence, openness, obedience, loyalty, and courage in the defense of his honor and his rights.

Christians are united with the Pope in heart, mind and spirit, convinced, as they are, that they can reach God only through Jesus Christ, that they cannot be with Jesus Christ if they are not with the Church, and that they do not belong to the Church if they are not in communion of faith and love with the Pope. He who listens to the Pope, listens to Christ: “our eternal salvation depends on our union with the Pope.”

a) THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE CHURCH

“The Tree of the Crucifix and the Hill of the Vatican “

Do you want to help in the salvation of society? I offer you two supports, both equally indestructible: *the Tree of the Crucifix and the Hill of the Vatican.*

THE TREE OF THE CRUCIFIX, which in every age gave us the Apostles for the spread of grace and the martyrs as witnesses of the faith. The Tree of the Crucifix, which dispelled the darkness of paganism with its light, gathering into one the dispersed peoples of the world and sanctifying them. The Tree of the Crucifix, which gave wisdom to children, strength to the weak, consolation to the heartbroken, heroism to virgins, resignation to the persecuted and downtrodden, and virtue to all. The Tree of the Crucifix, which recalled humanity to its noble origins and lifted woman from her degradation. The Tree of the Crucifix, which broke the chains of slavery and proclaimed

the freedom of God's children to all people. The Tree of the Crucifix, which abolished blood sacrifices and made death itself radiant with the glory of immortality.

THE HILL OF THE VATICAN, where sits the heir of the principality of Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the infallible teacher of the Church, the teacher of all the faithful, the center of Catholic unity, the conqueror of heresies, the foundation of all the Churches -- the glorious Leo XIII.

If we are united with the Crucifix, if we are united in mind, heart and spirit with the Pope and do so with courage, without reservations, without hesitation, we will not fail, either in life or in death, to reach our glorious goal; and God will be with us. [\[46\]](#)

“The Pope is the foundation stone of the Church”

The Pope! He is the most august and most venerable person on earth. He is the successor of the Apostles, the bishop of bishops, the infallible teacher of faith and morals, the final judge of all disputes, the center of Catholic unity, the supreme shepherd of souls, the foundation stone of the Church, the depository of the sacred keys, the deputy of God. In a word, he is Jesus Christ on earth continuing to teach and rule all believers.

Is the Pope teaching a truth? It is Jesus Christ who is teaching it. Is the Pope giving orders? It is Jesus Christ who is giving orders. Is the Pope condemning? It is Jesus Christ who is condemning. Is the Pope absolving? It is Jesus Christ who is absolving. [\[47\]](#)

“Who is the Pope?”

Our senses see in him just a man, a man like all other men. But our faith tells us that the Pope is the successor of Peter, Peter himself, I dare say, who continues to live in the person of his successors. Our faith tells us that the Pope has all the jurisdiction and authority which, as head of the Church, Peter himself had: “Peter continues and lives in his successors (...).”

He is the powerful voice that repeats to generation after generation the teachings of the Word made flesh. He is the impregnable rock of the faith, the visible foundation of the mystical Jerusalem, the indestructible stone of the divine edifice, the mouth of the Church, the shepherd of the Catholic flock, the supreme commander of the Christian army, the sovereign of the heavenly kingdom, the key-bearer of the house of God, the vigilant sentry of Israel, the pilot of the ship that knows no shipwreck (...).

There is no Church of Jesus Christ without the Pope. On the other hand, where the Pope is, there the Church is, as St. Ambrose puts it: *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia* -- “Where Peter is, there the Church is” -- because, in the words of St. Francis de Sales, “the Church and the Pope are one and the same thing (...).”

Who is the Pope? He is the infallible identity card, the touchstone for distinguishing at all times Catholics from heretics and schismatics. He is the center of Christian unity with whom the faithful all over the world must be in agreement. Take away this union with the center and you have confusion, chaos, and disorder (...).

Who is the Pope? He is the source of every priestly and episcopal power having to do with the guidance of souls. He is the instrumental cause creating, conserving, and spreading the Catholic Church. He is, as it were, the heart of the Christian world, the sun that radiates torrents of light and life upon this world (...).

Who is the Pope? More than anything else, he is a father, such a father that, after God, no one is more a father than he: *Nemo tam pater*. This is this great man's most beautiful title, the title the Pope is most proud of. Shortly before ascending into heaven, Jesus Christ solemnly bequeathed his authority to all the apostles together. But he wanted to bestow the affective and paternal dimension of it to one person especially, and this person was Peter. To all the apostles he said: "With the same authority with which the Father sent me, I send you." But to Peter alone he said: "If you love me, feed my lambs, feed my sheep." Jesus concentrated the love of his paternal authority in Peter so that from Peter, as from a bountiful spring, this love might spread to all the other apostles (...).

We give the Pope the sweet name of Father. We call him "Holy Father," "Most Blessed Father," precisely because he is the living image of Him who is holiness by nature and in whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth has its source.[\[48\]](#)

"Christ makes Peter the vicar of his love"

Proud of our title -- *Catholics* -- we repeat St. Ambrose's beautiful words: "The Church is consecrated in the faith and in the name of Peter". By divine institution, Peter is the visible head of the Church (...). As such, he is endowed *immediately* and *directly* with royal dignity and with the graces and prerogatives attached to that dignity. To a person who asked him for the sure way to reach Christ, a martyr of the early Church answered with one word: "Peter." He meant to say that only Peter can speak the words of truth, life, and salvation to you. Hold on to Peter with unyielding firmness if you want to avoid shipwreck (...).

The Savior made Peter vicar of his love for us. The banner Peter raises is the banner of God. In Peter we will find the blessings of heaven and the marvelous gifts of the holy keys. In him we will find the bond of charity, which unites us with Christ, with God.[\[49\]](#)

"Through the Pontiff one belongs to the Church; through the Church, to the Son of Mary; through the Son of Mary, to the true God"

The Roman Pontiff is the visible head and visible foundation on which Jesus built the immortal edifice of his Church, which now fills all times and ages. In the Cenacle, which is a figure of the Church, there was Peter, Prince of the Apostles and Vicar of Christ; there was Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Mother of Jesus. All this means that through the Pontiff one belongs to the Church; through the Church, to the Son of Mary; through the Son of Mary, to the true and living God, who gives himself to us through the Holy Spirit and awaits us in heaven where he will be our last end just as he was our first beginning. Without doubt, God, Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Catholic Church, and the Roman Pontiff are links in a mysterious chain binding together time and eternity. Woe, woe three times to him who breaks even one of these links.[\[50\]](#)

b) A FATHER TO BE LOVED

“To love you to the very end”

To obey and love you: this is our ambition, the sweetest consolation of our life. We shall do our best to persuade as many people as we can to obey and love you.[\[51\]](#)

We call heaven and earth to witness that we will try, with all our heart and soul, to keep and venerate your words as if they were the words of the Lord, your judgments as if they were the judgments of God, your definitions as if they were the decisions of Jesus Christ.[\[52\]](#)

Most Holy Father, it is always an honor and a joy to give our support to even the least of your desires. In our wretchedness, we can do very little. But that little is all for you, our tender Father, our infallible teacher, our living law.[\[53\]](#)

We will always take pride in the fact that, at all times and in all things, we think like him, judge like him, feel like him, suffer like him, and struggle with him and for him (...). We will consider ourselves fortunate if we can shed our blood and give our life for his cause, which is the cause of God.[\[54\]](#)

Together with my priests and my people, I hold fast to your throne because I know that through it and with it I am holding fast to Jesus Christ.[\[55\]](#)

The thoughts of our mind and the affections of our heart should focus on the Pope. Only in him, through him and with him can we all be one and advance like an army in battle array, sure of victory (...). Dearly beloved, we must not indulge in a homage that is mere sterile admiration. Let us love him. Yes, let us love the Pope. Let us venerate him. Let us find new ways to show him our devotion.[\[56\]](#)

“To inculcate a solid devotion to the Holy See”

I have earnestly desired to promote among my priests and all the people entrusted to me a deep, commendable and -- for our days -- necessary devotion to the Holy Roman See, center of unity and purest source of truth, and to you, the infallible doctor and teacher of faith and morals for the whole Church. So I have decided to respectfully ask Your Holiness to grant the whole diocese the privilege of celebrating the Office and Mass commemorating all the saintly Pontiffs as a double major feast every year, on the first free Sunday after the octave of the Holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, according to the indult already granted to the clergy of the City of Piacenza.

Most Holy Father, I request this favor for another reason: on that Sunday I intend to have all the pastors give a talk on the sublime prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff according to the last definitions promulgated by the Vatican Ecumenical Council, in the hope, indeed in the certainty, that the saintly Pontiffs, devoutly invoked and venerated on that day by the faithful, will obtain from God for the priests and people of Piacenza a true and solid devotion, reverence, and love for your Holy Apostolic See, the true and sole anchor of

hope and salvation for us and for all people. [\[57\]](#)

“Love for the Vicar of Jesus Christ”

Most Holy Father! May the divine Prince of Shepherds deign to lavish his choicest blessings on you. In the midst of the ebb and flow of human events in which you find yourself and in the midst of the many serious troubles pressing in on you from all sides, may he comfort you, keep you strong and healthy for many more years to come for his greater glory, for the honor and increase of Religion, for the defense and protection of the Church, for the consolation of the righteous, and for the confusion of the wicked. May he gladden you with the total victory of your cause, a victory that may be delayed but not denied. The sufferings of the Passion will be followed by the joys of the Resurrection.

Most Holy Father, I humbly offer you my personal best wishes and the best wishes and felicitations of my Missionaries working for our emigrants in the Americas, as well as the best wishes and felicitations of the emigrants themselves.

Through me, these poor people lay their humble offerings before you as a token of gratitude to you for all you have done for them thus far. At the same time, they ask your Apostolic Blessing on themselves and their families.

The Missionaries, too -- who make it a practice to awaken and keep alive love for the vicar of Jesus Christ in the communities of our poor emigrants -- ask you, Holy Father, for a special blessing, one that will draw down upon them renewed vitality and courage in the midst of their truly apostolic labors [\[58\]](#)

“Catholics do not go on pilgrimage to Rome for frivolous reasons”

One of the practices that in our days helps people display their faith more publicly and solemnly is the devout practice of making pilgrimages, especially to Rome, the venerable shrine of our faith, the center of Catholic unity, the holy place where he resides who takes the place of God on earth (...).

They go there to perform an act of religion, to visit the majestic monuments of their faith, to draw renewed strength and courage to fight the battles of the Lord (...). They go there to breathe within those walls the most pure air of Christian life; to enjoy, as it were, the rights of their common home; and, though living far away, to come together around the tomb of their forefathers as one great family. They go there to reveal to the world the life that ceaselessly flows through the Church and to give the lie to those who stupidly keep shouting that Catholicism has run its course, that the papacy is dead. Finally, they go to bear witness before God and man, in the most explicit and solemn way, to their devotion and affection for the Successor of Peter, the Prince of Shepherds, the infallible Teacher of faith and morals, to hear words of comfort and encouragement from him, and to receive his blessing. [\[59\]](#)

“Let their hatred be matched by our love for the common Father”

We must not be frightened by the furor and insults of the enemies of goodness. After the example of our divine Savior, who from the cross begged forgiveness for his executioners, we must pray for them, for they have become the executioners of the Church, which is their mother and ours. And we, magnanimous but unconquered, will give them the opposite example. Their hatred must be matched by our love for the common Father, their insults by our respect, their contempt for his word by our trust in it. We answer all their blasphemies, all their denials with an even more vigorous and spirited affirmation.

Yes, it is high time that we come into the open. We must lift our heads high, unfurl the flag of our holy works, speak frankly, and tell the whole world that we are with the Pope; that we are his faithful subjects, his obedient sons and daughters, his closest friends, his devout servants unto death; that we unconditionally support the Pope; that we believe in the teachings of the Pope; that we submit to all the Pope’s commands; and that we want to live and die in communion of faith with, of obedience to, and of love for, the Pope.

In fact, to profess we are with the Pope means professing that we are with the Church, of which he is head and supreme Shepherd; that we are with Christ, whose place he takes on earth; that we are with God because Christ is God, one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit.[\[60\]](#)

c) A FATHER TO BE OBEYED

“Solemn promises of loyalty and obedience”

On January 30 of this month, twenty-five years will have passed since Cardinal Franchi of blessed and happy memory consecrated me bishop of Piacenza (...).

The solemn promises of unlimited loyalty and obedience I made at that time to the Holy Apostolic See I here and now renew even more fervently and resolutely before Your Holiness as if I were before Jesus Christ, whose representative you are on earth.

At the feet of Your Holiness, I am pleased to open my heart, especially on this occasion. If I stop to look at the works I have accomplished in the midst of many difficulties, I have much reason to rejoice in the Lord. But if I descend into the secret recesses of my heart, I find much reason for remorse for so much good I have failed to do or have not done well. Most Holy Father, I can assure you of just one thing, namely, that in all things, I had in mind only the glory of God and the good of the souls entrusted to me. I plan to devote the little time the good God will grant me entirely to the Church, to the defense of its sacred rights, and to the work of uniting my beloved flock ever more closely with your august person.

These are my resolutions and intentions as I begin my Spiritual Exercises. Holy Father, deign to confirm these resolutions with your blessing, with one of those blessings that rekindle, reassure, and exalt the soul.[\[61\]](#)

“Holy Father, speak and it will be our joy to obey you”

Long live our Most Holy Father Pope Pius X.

Beloved brothers and my dearest sons and daughters, rather than considering the Pope’s personal qualities, we must consider the authority with which he is endowed, an authority that is supreme, universal, divine (...). So all of us -- bishop, priests and people -- united among ourselves by the bonds of charity and forming, as it were, one sole body, must draw close to this new leader with filial love. We must overwhelm him with our most sincere and loving reverence. We must tell him: Holy Father, speak and it will be our joy to obey you. Lead us and we will docilely follow you. Teach us and your teachings will be our constant, unchanging norm of behavior, knowing full well that you alone have words of eternal life, that he who is not with you is against Christ, and that our eternal salvation depends on our union with you. [\[62\]](#)

“We must make sure we do not scale down the greatness of the Catholic cause to the petty proportions of our private opinions”

We must make especially sure we do not scale down the greatness of the Catholic cause to the petty proportions of our private opinions. In all matters that could cause arguments among us, we must think as the Pope thinks and judge as he judges. Each of us must work for the cause of good, with the means and to the extent determined by the Pope in his wisdom, always working with that rectitude of intention, with that perfect union of mind and heart which alone can call down God’s blessings on our labors and make them fruitful for the holy goal the Supreme Pontiff sets before us. [\[63\]](#)

“Be always united in mind, heart and spirit with the Roman Pontiff”

You are the Father, we the children. You are the teacher, we the disciples. You are the head, we the followers. You are the shepherd, we the sheep. You are the tree, we the branches. Woe to the branch that detaches itself from the trunk! It is like the autumn leaf that falls from the tree and instantly shrivels up (...).

Be always united in mind, heart and spirit with the Roman Pontiff since we can go to God only through Jesus Christ. We can be united with Jesus Christ only through his Church. We can be in the Church only if we live in communion of faith and charity with the Roman Pontiff. Every Catholic must affirm in word and in deed, in private and in public, always and everywhere, the need for total obedience, for absolute obedience to what the Pope teaches or commands. We must be Catholics with an open and forthright profession of our Catholic faith in its entirety, without human regard, without reticence. [\[64\]](#)

“He who listens to his Vicar listens to Christ

Venerable brothers, I have complete confidence in the obedience of each one of you. For a long time I have known of your enlightened respect for, and sincere obedience to, your superiors. If I were not so sure of your habitual sense of moderation, I would be afraid of just one thing, namely, that those who never approved the condemned teachings would flaunt their victory, while those who in some way endorsed these teachings would think they were being unjustly castigated. There is no reason for the former to take pride in a victory: this would be foolish and unfair. They would be blowing their trumpets over an imaginary triumph because, in this display of the truth, it was not a brilliant human mind that won the day but the truth, nay, Christ himself. Surely only Christ wins when everybody obeys.

On the other hand, I do not understand why the others should somehow feel disgraced. Something similar happened even to some of the most celebrated people without their being discredited because of this. Besides, these priests of ours who in some way adhered to the teachings of Antonio Rosmini were ready to give them up at once at the slightest indication of the Church and would have already done so had the Church spoken before (...).

This being the case, there is no reason for anyone, out of arrogance and conceit, to despise or deride the others, while those who advocated the now condemned teachings should in no way feel mortified because, by renouncing the censured teachings, they have docilely accepted the judgment of the Apostolic See.

So, casting aside all animosity, all my priests should rejoice and be glad that the truth has finally been clarified. Those who never advocated the condemned teachings should be glad because their convictions have been properly vindicated, while the others who adhered to these teachings should be glad because they have been freed from all danger of error into which they were sliding.

Hence, there is no good reason for a true son of the Church to refuse submission. You must all accept this decree with reverence, bending your minds in obedience to Christ, knowing, as you do, that he who listens to his Vicar listens to Christ. Each of you must make his own the resolve of the celebrated Bishop Fénelon: “I prefer to die rather than defend or support directly or indirectly a teaching censured or condemned by the Apostolic See. My dignity, my good name, my glory and my boast now and forever is to submit internally and externally.

We must not conjure up distinctions. We have nothing to protect outside of a perfect obedience and humble submission of heart and word to Holy Mother Church. When, some day, those who come after us remember this long controversy, they will recognize, to the credit of our people, that on this occasion both priests and lay people sought only one glory, only one honor, namely, that of thinking, judging, censuring, and condemning what the Apostolic See thinks, judges, censures, and condemns. [\[65\]](#)

3. THE BISHOP

Within the great sacrament of the Church, the living sacrament is the bishop, the sign of

unity with Christ and the Pope. The Pope is the foundation of the Church, the bishops are her columns. The bishop is the "pontiff," the representative of a merciful and just God. His only concern is that of Christ, namely, the salvation of the world.

The bishop is the spouse of the Church, one of the unbreakable links in the chain of the Church hierarchy, the indispensable bridge between the Pope and the faithful of the diocese; a man endowed with authority from God, having received from the Spirit the fullness of sacred Orders, which is the fullness of love. In his life of total service to people, he is the father and the servant of all: servant of the truth, father of unity. He does not take sides, does not allow Christ's seamless garment to be torn. Instead, he fights with the weapon of love, a prerequisite for that unity that is held together by obedience.

As a sentinel chosen to keep watch over a local Church, he considers silence a crime. Since he is supposed to be solicitous for all the Churches, he has the right and the duty to speak out and enlighten even his superiors on local Church situations. He claims the autonomy of one whom the Holy Spirit has chosen to rule over the Church in communion with the Roman Pontiff.

a) I KNOW I AM A BISHOP

"With fear and trembling, I confide in his grace"

At the unexpected announcement of my elevation, I reflected upon the burden the episcopal office entailed, a formidable burden even for angels. Conscious as I was of all that I lacked, I wept and prayed to the God of all mercies, imploring him to exempt me from the holy duties of the episcopate, which are neither few nor light, for neither my talents nor my youth were equal to the awesome task, poor as I was in virtue and quite conscious of all my deficiencies.

But then, considering the authority of the holy Vicar of Jesus Christ, I realized that this was unmistakably the will of God. Trusting in the grace of him who gives strength to those on whom he confers the honors of office (St. Leo the Great, Sermo 1), with fear and trembling but with resignation I accepted the ministry placed on me, without trying to search into the hows and whys of the divine Goodness. I now had supreme confidence and trust that he who works in me both to desire and to work will surely strengthen, direct, and help me unceasingly.[\[66\]](#)

"Christ Jesus lives in the bishop as in a living sacrament"

Unworthy though I be, I am your bishop. Who has given me authority over you if not Jesus Christ, through the one who takes his place here on earth? Christ Jesus, as it were, lives in the bishop as in a living sacrament. The life of the bishop draws all its vigor from

this intimate union with Christ, the Prince of Shepherds, and with his visible representative, the Pope. It is only through this union that, within his diocese, the bishop has authority to teach, command, forgive, and punish. It is only through this union that the bishop preaches the gospel, administers all the sacraments, consecrates the ministers of God; that he is judge, teacher, pontiff, and legislator.

So, if the Church's authority is human in the means it uses, there is nothing human in the source from which it descends. Those who tell you what you must believe are indeed men, but they do not teach their own doctrine. They simply echo the teachings of the Word of God. What they set before your faith is precisely what they themselves, like you, must believe. When they command, they obey. No, they do not exercise dominion; rather they share with you the joy of their certitude.[\[67\]](#)

“The Bishop of our souls continues his ministry through the bishops”

St. Paul calls Jesus Christ “the great shepherd of the sheep” (Heb 13:20), and St. Peter refers to Jesus Christ as “the bishop of our souls.” (1 Pt 2:25) This Jesus Christ, made eternal priest by God the Father with an irrevocable oath (Ps 109:4), visibly exercised the pastoral ministry when, clothed in our humanity, he visited the peoples of the earth, illuminating those who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, pointing out to them the paths of peace, soaking with his sweat his mystical field, a field of grace and unceasing fruitfulness, a field prepared from the beginning of time, namely, the Catholic Church (...).

Through the bishops, successors of the Apostles, Jesus Christ continues to exercise his sublime ministry even in our day because the episcopate, one with Peter, is the continuation of our Savior's mission and life on earth. Hence, the episcopate is rightly called by the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Lib. II, 26), “an earthly Divinity.” St. Augustine would say that the episcopate is a reenactment of the high priesthood of Christ in time and space.[\[68\]](#)

“The Pope is the foundation, the bishops are the columns”

What is a bishop? In him our senses see only a human being, a human being like all the rest. But faith tells us that he is an angel appointed by God to guide us on the paths of righteousness. He is the high priest who represents the Christian people before God. He who is Pontiff for all eternity anointed him with his holy oil and enriched him with the sevenfold Spirit. Placing the gospel book into his hands, He said to him: Go! Go and teach people my heavenly doctrine. Go and sanctify them with the sacraments. Go and rule them with the power I communicate to you. “He appointed bishops to rule the Church of God.”

Through an uninterrupted succession, the bishop is united with those first chosen by Christ, with the Apostles, to whom the Savior said: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. Whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.” The bishop, then, continues on earth the saving work of Jesus Christ. He is the successor of the Apostles. He is the depositary, propagator, judge, defender, and guardian of the faith, in close union with the bishop of bishops, the Pope.

The Church is the living and sole temple of God. The Pope is its foundation; the bishops are its columns. The Church is a body of which the Pope is the visible head; the bishops are its noblest members. The Church is a ship of which the Pope is the captain; the bishops are its pilots. The Church is like a kingdom of which the Pope is the supreme leader; the bishops are its commanders. [\[69\]](#)

The mission of the bishop”

What is the bishop’s mission? Only one mission, a magnificent one, which sums up all the others, namely, to prepare the ways of the Lord in souls (...).

On earth people yearn for God, they need God, they thirst for God. In their hearts they nourish thoughts, desires, and feelings that have something infinite about them: thoughts, desires, and feelings that reach out to the infinite. Hence the unutterable groans of humanity and that immense emptiness that no created power can fill,

Now, the bishop is the crossing, the bridge which the God-made-man builds over this abyss to unite creature and creator, heaven and earth, God and man. This is the bishop’s mission. This is why, in the holy books and in the liturgy, the bishop is called pontiff: “Pontiff, that is to say, a bridge-builder” (St. Bernard).

In the spiritual kingdom, the bishop is God’s sentinel. That is why you see him sitting on a throne, whence he looks out with watchful eye. He is charged to give answer to the mysterious question that reaches him every morning from the heights of eternity: Sentinel, what have you discovered in the darkness of the night? *Custos, quid de nocte?* The darkness of the night, according to St. Augustine, is the errors, the prejudices, all those obstacles that keep God from entering the hearts of people. [\[70\]](#)

“Spouse of the Church”

He is the spouse of the Church, having been united to her at his consecration. In fact, on his finger he wears her mystical ring. She is the object of all his affections. Indeed, for a bishop, his diocese represents everything the world holds dearest: father, mother, children.

The crosier a bishop holds in his consecrated hands is not just the rod of justice but also the shepherd’s staff, on which he leans when he goes searching for the lost sheep. He has the mind, heart, and sentiments of a father. His fatherhood is a thousand times more sublime, more tender, more intimate than the fatherhood deriving from nature because a bishop’s fatherhood is more similar to the fatherhood of God.

Hence, a bishop feels deeply in his heart the joys as well as the sorrows of his children in Jesus Christ. He can truly say with the Apostle Paul: “Who among them is suffering, and I am not suffering?” (...).

So, the poor, the widows, the orphans, the wretched of all sorts are the bishop’s favorites. He tries, to the best of his abilities, to come to their help. [\[71\]](#)

There is nothing more difficult than the office of bishop”

There is nothing more difficult in this world, nothing more burdensome, nothing more dangerous than the office of bishop, says St. Augustine: *Nihil in hac vita difficilius, laboriosius, periculosius Episcopi officio.*

Indeed, to direct the priestly army and move it in battle array in the conquest of souls; to choose the right battlefield for this peaceful warfare against error and human passions; to assign to each soldier of Christ the place that fits his abilities; to distribute offices according to merit; to moderate the impatience of some and enkindle the fervor of others; to arouse enthusiasm in the apathetic; to encourage the valiant; to communicate the sacred fire of the apostolate to everyone; and, on the other hand, to be able to blend severity and compassion, the rigor of justice, and the tenderness of a father; to protect the flock from wolves, especially from the wolves that move around within the flock dressed in sheep's clothing; to enlarge one's heart so as to embrace all people; to ponder night and day the needs of his people; to watch jealously over their spiritual interests; to come up with abundant remedies for the various infirmities; to nourish his people by word and example; to pour himself out entirely for them, at every moment, without reservation, without expecting remuneration from people; to courageously defend the honor of the cross he wears on his chest, always ready to drench it with his blood rather than abandon it; finally, to be the center of holy teaching and sacred authority solely for the purpose of becoming a fireplace whence comes light, heat and life: this is the mission of a bishop.

[\[72\]](#)

“A bishop is not master of his own good name”

“Be strong and trust in the Lord.” At least defend your honor if you cannot defend the honor of those near and dear to you. Do not make easy promises nor accept conditions down there. Remember that not to defend yourself, at least before the Pope, can cause scandal rather than edification. Some people will say you are thereby admitting your guilt. I understand respect, obedience, reverence, and heroism; I understand everything. But a bishop is not master of his own honor as a private citizen is.

I am sure things will take care of themselves for you. But I repeat: defend yourself, with reverence, of course, but with all the energy you can muster. Defend yourself, defend yourself.[\[73\]](#)

“I know I am a bishop”

So, what should we do? Must we let ourselves be destroyed? Personally, we don't count, at least I don't. But what about the souls under our care, the Church, the interests of Jesus Christ? My God, what have we come to! Personally, I believe we should defend ourselves against these intrigues by showing episcopal moderation in all we do, by preserving leniency in our hearts, but being firm in what we say. We must defend ourselves publicly, too, but as far as possible without accusing anyone (...).

Poor archbishop! What humiliations! May God help and comfort him! I'm thinking seriously about writing a long letter to the Pope, a memorandum in which I intend to boldly vindicate the freedom of bishops. I want to tell him that, if the accusations are allowed to be publicly bandied about, he should not be surprised if he sees in print the letters I send to him in legitimate self-defense. I am sick and tired of having to go to puppets and connivers (...).

I know I am a bishop. I will be one without any ifs, ands and buts. I know it's like beating the air, but I don't care. If nothing else, I am providing documents for the Church history of these miserable times.[\[74\]](#)

“The interests of Jesus Christ and of the Church”

If the bishops do not realize the grave danger threatening the Church or if those who do understand it do not have the courage to confront the enemy, then the cause is doomed. I'm sending you two issues of the well-known newspaper. Have the patience to read the parts I marked in red and tell me if you are not being impudently alluded to and judged. My God, what an abomination! I feel so exasperated that I have to kneel long and hard before the crucifix. What will you do? A bold and energetic move against those veritable demons could bring down a little harassment on you but would help you and everybody else. It would surely help the cause of Jesus Christ and of the Church.[\[75\]](#)

“I am very well aware of my position before the Government”

Your Eminence, I would like you to clearly understand that I am deeply conscious of the sensitive task assigned to me and am very well aware of my delicate position before the Government. The Government bitterly opposes me, albeit furtively for the moment, especially after I warned my Missionaries in New York not to ask the Ministry for a subsidy, which the consul general had suggested they do. I told them: “You mustn't be either servile or hostile. Be on good terms with local authorities, and don't ask the Government for anything.”

It is true that in the last pamphlet I wrote, I was somehow addressing the Government itself. But, as your Eminence must have understood, my purpose was to pour water on the hysteria and frenzy of many people against priests, bishops, and the Holy See. Besides, this is how I was reasoning: either the Government grants draft exemption to the clerics as I have been publicly suggesting -- something I don't envision -- or it does not. In the first case, all the better for the Church. In the second case, the Government will clearly display its bigotry and hatred against us before the whole world -- which in fact did happen.

Your Eminence, how awful it is to be under fire from all sides! Assure the Holy Father that I pay attention only to him and that my whole ambition is to please him alone, knowing that, in so doing, I am pleasing Almighty God.[\[76\]](#)

“Jealous of the hierarchical principle”

“Instead, you secretly instructed him to look into the religious situation of the Italian communities in relation to the goals envisioned by the Sacred Congregation...” But, Your Eminence, is it possible that some people think I am so stupid and foolish as to send a lay man, howsoever holy he may be, to report back on matters that pertain unequivocally to the clergy? I, who am so jealous of the hierarchical principle? Had I even thought of this, I would have been fit for a mental institution, to say the least. My constant, undeviating practice is this: not to send out expeditions of priests without an understanding with the bishops themselves. Only on receiving *their* reports do I evaluate or have I evaluated the needs of the emigrants....

I would already have published the repudiation you urge me to publish if the Milan newspaper had not had the impudence to try to force it on me, summoning me publicly before its own tribunal, almost demanding that I give them an account of my behavior. The authority of a bishop -- even of one as wretched and miserable as I am -- is sacred; it is divine. Nor may we sacrifice it before the outcry of an ordinary newspaper. This would mean destroying the hierarchical principle, on which the future of the Church rests.

Nonetheless, Your Eminence, out of respect for you I will gladly issue a statement as soon as the opportunity presents itself. In fact, even before I do so, I will make it a point to submit it to you for your judgment.[\[77\]](#)

b) FATHERHOOD AND SERVICE

“I will embrace all and become the servant of all”

Having been fortified with the gift of the divine consecration, I am utterly confident that the Supreme Shepherd of the flock, Our Lord Jesus Christ, will graciously look down on the purity of faith, on the love for religion, and on the fervent piety of this marvelous clergy and people of the Church of Piacenza and will unceasingly and efficaciously make up for the utter frailty of her unworthy Shepherd.

As for myself, debtor to you all, I shall embrace you all in my ministry, to the best of my ability, becoming everybody's slave for the sake of the gospel (I Cor 9). Sent first of all to the poor and the unfortunate, who live out their lives in misery and wretchedness, I shall suffer with them. I shall, above all, serve and evangelize the poor, who, rich in faith, were chosen by the Redeemer as the first ones in the kingdom, heirs of the kingdom promised by God to those who love him (Jas 2).

Since I have been called to the martyrdom of the episcopate, that is to say, to toil, hardship, and anxiety, I will eagerly bear the day's burden and the heat and will most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your sakes (2 Cor. 11).

And lest I become disheartened, I will, like the Apostle Paul, model myself on the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who became man and was made obedient unto death on the cross for the glory of his Father and the salvation of souls. Now that I am renewed in the spirit of my vocation, I will stubbornly resist the sacrilegious machinations of the wicked

who are trying to tear down the house built by Christ himself on solid rock.

Clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, holding faith as a shield to quench all the flaming arrows of God's enemies, and taking the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, "I will fight the good fight," confident that he who began in me this sacred work will confirm and strengthen it and bring it to a successful conclusion and that he who placed this responsibility on me will himself help me fulfill it (St. Leo the Great, Sermo 2).

Whatever wisdom, whatever virtue, whatever knowledge of human or divine things, whatever prudence I have I will dedicate completely to you so that God's kingdom may spread and peace reign among you and that all of you will live holy and peaceful lives to the best of your abilities. I will shirk no toil to become a father to the unfortunate, teacher of the ignorant, guide of priests, and shepherd to all. In so doing, I will become all things to all and save all for Christ.

By offering the example of good pastoral qualities, by giving wise counsel, making sound recommendations, admonishing, imploring and, if necessary, strongly reprimanding the adults, who should be models, and the young, who should be learners, I will make every effort to prepare a perfect people for the Lord, constantly, humbly, and tearfully imploring God himself to make my works flourish. [\[78\]](#)

"In the bishop there has to be the fullness of love"

To make every sacrifice to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the hearts of people, to risk his life if necessary for the welfare of his beloved flock, to get down on his knees before the world, as it were, and beg from it, as a favor, the permission to do it some good -- this is the spirit, the identity, the only ambition of the bishop. He uses his authority, his talents, his health, his energies, everything for this noble purpose....

What truly good and beneficent work fails to get the bishop's support and blessing? Will he be repaid with ingratitude? It does not matter. His love will never fail: *numquam excidit* (...).

God is love. Now, the more people are united with God, the more they are full of love. That is why a bishop loves not only God or just his brothers and sisters but also loves everything else that is worthy of love. Everything, I say, everything without exception. He loves everything true, everything beautiful, everything great, everything good, everything holy: matter and spirit, reason and faith, nature and grace, culture and religion, Church and State, family and country. He loves the harmonies of human nature. He loves them because he could not do otherwise. He loves them because the fullness of love resides in a heart that is united through the fullness of the Holy Spirit to God, who by nature is truth, beauty, goodness, and life. [\[79\]](#)

"Whether friends or enemies, you are all my children"

I have spoken to you openly and frankly as my duty requires. Did someone find my rebukes harsh? If so, I would feel deeply hurt because, believe me, while I detest evil, I bear no grudge against anyone. I love you; and because I love you, I get angry with those

who become your stumbling blocks and try to deceive you. I embrace you all in Jesus Christ. I would like all of you to have a place in my heart. I would give my life and gladly become an anathema for each one of you if this would help you.

No, whether friends or enemies, you are all children of my family, all marked on the forehead with the sign of redemption, all destined to be my joy and my crown. I will tell you what a holy bishop used to tell his people: Even if some day God were to permit your ingratitude and disdain to be added to the tribulations and adversities of my ministry, I am convinced that, with the Lord's grace, I would repay you with blessings and with even greater love.[\[80\]](#)

"A father's heart"

Today your faith and goodness find cause for celebration in my many years as bishop, while for me these years are a source of fear and trepidation. Today, more than ever, I feel the formidable burden weighing down on my shoulders. I think of all the special, remarkable, extraordinary graces I have received, graces of predilection which, with constant cooperation on my part, would have brought me to a high degree of perfection; and I tremble. I think of the great account I will have to render the divine Judge for the twenty-five years I have been bishop. I think of the dangers the pastoral ministry entails, especially in our day. I think I will have to render an account for so many souls that preceded me on the journey to eternity, of every single one of you. While the future terrifies me, the past shames and disturbs me greatly. I can say with St. Augustine, "I tremble at the thought that I am your bishop."

I am mortified and dismayed by the thought of all the good I could have done for you with a more dynamic will, a more enlightened zeal, and a more generous life.

I am consoled by a promise I made to you on the day of my solemn entrance, the first time I had the joy of speaking to you. After warning you that you would not find in me the things you had admired in my predecessors, I candidly added: "But I assure you that you will find the heart of a father in me." Did I keep my promise? I am afraid to answer.

I can assure you of one thing: that I have always loved you, that your joys were my joys, your sorrows my sorrows. My love for you, O people of Piacenza, had no ups and downs nor has it ever cooled off because of difficulties or hurts. If I hated sin, I always tried to embrace the sinner.

I came with one ambition: to promote your well-being. Like St. Paul coming to the Corinthians, I came to you not confiding in words taught by human wisdom but in a display of spirit and power. I came announcing peace. In fact, I spared no sacrifice to foster the growth of the humble olive tree among you, seeing to it that in its shade would flourish charity, love for Jesus Christ, the Church, and her august Head, as well as a concrete desire for the welfare of this most beloved city and diocese.

I have loved you all without distinction. If someone occasionally saw my face darkened by unaccustomed sternness, while a cloud of sadness passed over me and my words became condemnatory, he should know that this sadness, this sternness, this condemnation were coming from deep love, were emanating from a heart that was weeping because it was rebuffed in its desire to do good.

I have loved you out of a sense of justice because you are my people. Oh, how I wish I could show you my love with something more than words! Every passing year forges another link in the chain that binds me to you, a chain forged in mutual love, a chain which, far from eroding with time, grows ever stronger and becomes unbreakable.[\[81\]](#)

c) A LINK IN THE HIERARCHY OF THE CHURCH

“The unity of the successors of the Apostles”

Jesus Christ recommended (...) the unity for which he entreated his heavenly Father (*ut sint unum*) to the successors of the Apostles and -- from among these -- to the Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, the center from which all the rays emanate and to which they all point; the teacher gifted with God's most special assistance, unappealable judge of all controversies; foundation stone of the mystical edifice built by the Word Incarnate for the salvation of all people; shepherd on whom absolute authority was conferred over all the flock and over all the shepherds that rule the faithful of each diocese.

In homage to this divine plan, the Head of the Shepherds and, with him and under him, the bishops make sure that the Church always enjoys that unity which is one of the most radiant signs of her divinity. It is true that heresies have arisen in the Church and will continue to do so. History, however, teaches us that, to point out and condemn the erring, there rose up not people without authority but the bishops -- judges and guardians of the sacred deposit of the faith -- and the Roman Pontiff, who, when necessary, ratifies their judgments with his seal of condemnation and gives the final blow to error.[\[82\]](#)

“No mission ever found a place in the Church independently of the bishops”

Please do not say, like the people the Apostle Paul scolded back in his day: I belong to Paul or I belong to Apollos or I belong to Kephas, whereas, in fact, we all belong to Christ.

Remember that in the Church of Jesus Christ every extra-hierarchical mission has been excluded, that “no one can lay a foundation other than the one that was laid, namely Christ Jesus,” that no one can set himself up as a teacher in the school of Jesus Christ except the one who is placed there by the Holy Spirit.

Those who refuse to submit to this teaching authority are rash. Those who rise up against it are apostates. Those who defy it are proud people, ignorant people, antichrists, who must be treated like heathens and tax collectors.

But this person is a great man! The other is a great theologian! That one is a great philosopher! This one is a great saint! What does it matter? Is he an angel from heaven? Even if he is an angel from heaven but dares teach or write anything different from what the Pope or the bishops teach, we will cry out with the Apostle: *anathema sit* -- let him be excommunicated.

None of you should be fooled by the pathetic myth -- which, in our day fascinates and dazzles some people who are not really perverse or mean -- the myth that people can still be truly united with the Pope when, breaking the necessary, divinely established bond of the hierarchical order, they are not united in obedience, respect and love with their bishop

and with him and through him with the Pope; or when, under the banner of zeal and an exaggerated devotion to the Pope, they have in fact failed in the obedience and respect due their bishop and, on the basis of their own arbitrary views, make a judgment as to whether or not the Bishop is being faithful to papal directives. Without doubt, this would be preempting the judgment of the Holy See, an attack on the divine constitution of the Church, and a step in the direction of the most subtle and pernicious liberalism. [83]

“Popes are multiplying and lay people are taking the place of bishops”

Things are bad, very bad. Politics is getting into everything, even into the pilgrimages! I know many Italian bishops and very many important people would have attended the Congress of Liège if the question of the temporal power had not surfaced. Czacki spoils everything. Popes are multiplying every day, and little by little lay people are taking the place of bishops. Every day the disarray, the confusion, and the chaos increase (...).

We poor bishops don't know what to think, what to say, what to write, what to do. We are now led along by the hand like kindergarten children, at the mercy of the newspapers, and what newspapers! Poor bishops!

Now I am working full-time on the pamphlet I told you about, which might be entitled: *The Social Question and the Mission of the Clergy*. As for publishing it.... It seems that some people are very quick to put on the *Index* those who don't think with ... somebody else's head. [84]

“You have redeemed the episcopate”

Holy Father, by now everybody is aware of your sublime plan, of the supreme desire of your heart. It is the plan of that divine Providence which “reaches from end to end mightily and governs all things well.” It is the desire of Him whose worthy and visible representative you are on earth: namely, that the children of the Catholic Church “all be one” and that “all be one” in the full and unconditional submission of mind, heart, and works to the authority of the bishops whom Jesus Christ appointed to rule the Church here on earth.

Your letter of last June to the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris gives solemn witness to this concern. The letter is so beautiful, so perceptive, and so timely that God surely must have inspired it. I kissed it with tears in my eyes. Holy Father, I must confess that I cannot find words to tell you, as I would like, all my admiration, all my gratitude.

With this letter you dispelled the clouds of fog raised by the evil spirit to darken the Christian sky. You have destroyed that entirely new kind of liberalism that day by day was increasingly spreading from the lowest ranks of the Catholic army. You have redeemed the episcopate, so to speak. You have freed it from a secret illegitimate power that was trying with the most insidious cunning to bring it under its yoke (...).

Above all, may your name be blessed for having made it so explicitly clear to all that those cannot be Catholics who are not united in obedience, respect, and charity with their respective bishops and -- with these and through these -- united to you, the head and teacher of all.

May your name be blessed for having opened the eyes of so many poor dupes and for rebuking those who do not shrink from opposing both the bishops and the Bishop of bishops, the Roman Pontiff, with devious methods that are all the more dangerous for their being ably camouflaged under opposite appearances. [\[85\]](#)

“We do not take sides”

God sees the purity of my intentions, the God who searches hearts and minds, the God before whom we must all soon present ourselves!

God knows that we do not play favorites, that we do not take the side of anybody, of any writer, that we love everybody without distinction, that we do not judge anybody's intentions, that we desire and seek only his glory and the good of souls, that, through his mercy, we are attached only to him, to his Vicar on earth, to his holy Church.

Great are the sufferings we endure seeing Christ's garment torn apart. Perhaps even greater sufferings lie in store for me. But with the Apostle Paul I will say: “Yet I consider life of no importance to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of God's grace.”

Even now, I find great comfort in the thought that the victory of truth may be delayed but not denied and that the most precious result of this victory will be, I am sure, full liberty for the episcopate and for its supreme head, the bishop of Rome, from which the episcopate draws all its power, all its firmness, all its vigor.

If nothing else, I will go to the grave with the consoling thought that I will have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith and that I will receive from God, the just judge, the crown of righteousness. [\[86\]](#)

Let charity be our badge, our weapon for combat”

Those who refuse to acknowledge sacred authority are outside the Church, as well as those brash individuals who try to arrogate to themselves the office and rights of that sacred authority.

So, I turn to you and I cry out with all the fervor of my heart: safeguard, safeguard the spirit of ecclesiastical discipline!

A spontaneous, sincere, constant, absolute, and inviolable love for this discipline is the reason for our strength, the foundation of our hope, the joy of our lives, and the source of all our blessings.

In the Church, discipline is a sacred thing: woe to him who dares profane it!

Defend this discipline with your lives against all attacks. Shun all discord, which is the downfall of discipline. Fear discord as if it were the most enormous crime (...). Avoid partiality and contentiousness, as well as exclusive and egoistic tendencies.

Let charity be our badge, our weapon for combat.[\[87\]](#)

“Obedience holds the hierarchy together; the hierarchy promotes unity; unity gives strength”

If the force of the clergy is in the unity of its members and if there is no unity without the hierarchy, what is it that holds the hierarchy together? The obedience, the submission of the priests to the bishops and of the bishops to the Supreme Pontiff: “we are children of obedience” (I Pt 1). We are followers of him who, in St. Paul’s words, became obedient unto death.

In our days, when pride and disdain of authority all too often hide beneath words like freedom and independence, there is reason to fear that this unwholesome atmosphere will engulf also the priesthood. But priests who are real priests, that is to say, who are imbued with the spirit of their state, will not let themselves be seduced by these false appearances (...).

They know that the grace of state does not go beyond the limits of their assignment and that their discernment and power are limited to the portion of ministry entrusted to them. They know their place and do not arrogate to themselves rights that do not belong to them. They do not presume to judge the whole while knowing only a part of the situation. They limit themselves to the task assigned to them and carry it out with success.

The promises they made at the foot of the altar the day of their priestly ordination are not empty promises. They keep these promises throughout their whole life. These are the good priests, who, by their spirit of submission, firmly establish and strengthen this great body of the Church; for obedience holds the hierarchy together; the hierarchy, in turn, creates unity; and unity gives strength.[\[88\]](#)

“Obedience solemnly promised to the bishop”

After the Pope, the person we owe full obedience to is our own bishop. We well remember that solemn moment when, clasping our hands in his, he asked us: “Do you promise reverence and obedience to me and my successors?” And we answered: “I promise.” This was our answer, the solemn vow we took in the presence of the whole Church of God. This is the promise we must always keep before our eyes, the promise that cuts short all our excuses for disobeying (...).

Oh, if bishops had obedient priests -- soldiers like the centurion -- and could tell one: “Go and he goes” and to another: “Come and he comes,” how much they could do to sanctify their dioceses, But since the bishops of dioceses everywhere run into opposition, belligerency, and reluctance, if not downright defiance and disobedience, most of the time they have to exercise their otherwise full authority to command as little as possible so as not to jeopardize this authority and put somebody’s weakness to the test. By exhorting, coaxing, and indulging the foibles of their priests, they do what they can, which is infinitely less than they could otherwise do.[\[89\]](#)

“Our Lord under the appearance of the legitimate superior”

When the Apostle Paul admonishes us: “Obey your superiors,” etc., he is not imposing slavery on us but a noble duty. Spiritual writers tell us there are three mysteries nature rejects with all its power and sense of pride. The first mystery is that of Our Lord under the veils of the Eucharist; the second, that of Our Lord under the appearance of a poor man; the third, that of Our Lord under the appearance of the legitimate superior. Just as the priest’s unworthiness does not change the reality of the first mystery, nor the poor man’s unworthiness that of the second, neither does the superior’s unworthiness diminish in any way the reality of the third (we take for granted that this unworthiness is not a figment of the fever-driven imagination of subordinates). So a “real presence” of sorts is imparted to those who give orders. We owe them not just external docility but also docility of conscience: *propter conscientiam* (...).

Undoubtedly, there are sufferings connected with obedience, but there are sufferings of a crueler nature for those in authority. Every authority is a martyrdom, and every superior is a victim crowned with thorns. So let us all, superiors and subordinates, be understanding of each other. Let us make our diocese a school of respect and mutual regard. Above all, let us banish from our relations -- established by God -- that unspoken cynicism, namely, that contempt for each other hidden in the heart, which is the wisdom of small-minded people and of proud personages.[\[90\]](#)

d) “I CANNOT KEEP SILENT”

“Three things are always weighing on a bishop’s mind”

In his position as overseer, a job that is always hard and often dangerous, a bishop has three things always weighing on his mind, namely, dangers to immortal souls, the crime of silence, and the judgment of God. So he fulfills all the duties of the good shepherd, guiding his sheep to green pastures and clear waters, moving fearlessly and resolutely against the wolves in sheep’s clothing who have entered the fold. He speaks, writes, and acts. In speaking, writing, and acting, he has no other aim but the glory of God and the salvation of souls. No beating around the bush, no equivocating, no shamming, no secondary motives.

On his lips, the word is a ray of heavenly light, a seed of Christian virtues. His good faith may sometimes be deceived, but he himself deceives no one. In fact, it is to keep others from being deceived that he often exposes himself to opposition and sufferings beyond belief. He is not concerned about his own comfort, interests, petty satisfactions, or those of others, but about the truth. The truth is his sole rule and guide, and he sacrifices everything rather than betray it.[\[91\]](#)

“We shepherds will never keep silent”

I know that, in the name of this false freedom, some modern unbelievers would like to frustrate the holy freedom we Catholics, we bishops, have received from God. Even if the law does not speak out, we shepherds will never keep silent. With the help of God, I, for one, will never keep silent or stop raising my voice, the voice of duty and authority, so as to destroy evil wherever it may be hiding and denounce the dangers and snares into which the ungodly are trying to lure my sons and daughters: "For Zion's sake I shall not keep silent."

I will not keep quiet. To one and all I will keep repeating the words of the Gospel: be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but underneath are wolves on the prowl. I will not keep quiet. I will say once again: it is an affront for outside teachers of false doctrines to come into our home, so to speak, to disturb the peace of our families and insult our religion, the religion of our forefathers, the religion that is interwoven with our history, our arts, our customs, our heartbeats, our breath. [\[92\]](#)

"We are called to share in the care of all the churches"

What then! Is a bishop no longer allowed to speak or write as his conscience, his right and -- more than his right -- his duty dictates, without having people, who have been admonished more than once, try to impose themselves on him?

Is a bishop, guardian of divine wisdom, as the *Apostolic Constitutions* call him, mediator between God and man, "prince and leader, king and ruler, after God an earthly god, endowed with the dignity of God, as it were"; is he no longer allowed to exercise his ministry without having to fear that his dignity will be dragged through the mud by those who keep insisting they are respecting it?

Is a bishop -- appointed by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church of God and called upon to share in the pastoral care of all the churches -- no longer allowed to set forth his views in all candor to our common Father concerning the dangers threatening souls without hearing himself called a stumbling block and the cause of ruin?

Is a bishop no longer allowed to openly declare that he loves his country, that he wants it to be a great and glorious nation, happily reconciled with the Holy See, without being suspected of being in league with the enemy? Is a bishop no longer allowed to entreat Almighty God to grant his Vicar on earth the glory of achieving this most difficult and necessary of goals, the reconciliation of our country, without having someone reproach the bishop for giving the universal Teacher advice or trying to force his hand?

Have they become so arrogant as to condemn actions with which the Supreme Pontiff was pleased? Have they become so presumptuous as to condemn, even if in veiled terms, what he himself asserts "is in full conformity with his wishes." Great God! What have we come to? Where are we heading with these tactics? We make our own the words of a saintly Father of the Church: Woe to the Church when bishops are forced to keep silent! [\[93\]](#)

"Let the words of the bishops thunder forth as the Lord inspires them"

There is no bishop on earth who does not want what the Holy Father wants, who does not condemn what he condemns. There is no bishop who does not bitterly deplore the intolerable situation in which the head of three hundred million Catholics is put, no bishop who does not join the Pope in strongly protesting past and present attacks on him. There is no bishop who does not declare with the Pope that civil society in Italy cannot flourish without providing for the dignity of the Roman See, for the freedom and independence of the Pope, as common sense requires.

So, let the words of the bishops thunder forth without restraint or fear as the Lord inspires them. Those who arrogantly criticize their words should remember that “to consider the Church an inorganic mass that needs to be stimulated by an almighty hand, with no one allowed to enlighten her or submit their humble and respectful views to her, is the greatest harm one can do her.”[\[94\]](#)

“The bishops have the right and the duty to enlighten even their superiors”

I have just received the letter you wrote me the day before yesterday. Thank you for your kind words. I am taking the liberty to tell you a few things in a big hurry but with an open heart and freedom of spirit.

First of all, I strongly protest against the insinuation that I lent my support to the “bad feelings some people are nursing because of the way the superior of Rho was appointed.” Your Eminence, I am a hierarchical man. On every occasion I have fought, almost alone, to defend the great principle of authority, on which the future of the Church rests. I would never go back on this (...).

Since they had not been able to meet with the Archbishop and had gotten only vague and inconclusive expressions from the Vicar General (the style reflects the man and vice versa), the good Fathers came to me for advice. I told them they could write or even go to Rome. Rome is always fair, I said, even if it might be caught by surprise in a particular situation.

Yesterday two of those Fathers came to see me and asked me to write letters of introduction for them to Cardinals Verga and Galimberti and to Bishop Della Chiesa. I wrote the three letters and gave them to the Fathers; and they left. I performed an act of charity and am ready to do it again today or any other time: it is the Lord who imposes this duty on us. Did I hurt somebody perhaps? Don't bishops have to counsel and console those who come to them even if they are not from their own dioceses? Have the bishops not been called by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church of God? Don't the bishops, therefore, have the right, indeed the duty, to enlighten even their superiors if necessary?

I respect the Holy Father too much, as well as those assisting him in ruling the Church, to believe they are offended when a bishop frankly and loyally, without ulterior motives, speaks the truth for the noble purpose of averting decisions that might have fatal and disastrous consequences. In a place where the world's affairs converge, it is quite hard to judge particular situations. Hence, God has provided for his Church through the divine institution of the episcopate.[\[95\]](#)

“Bishops may not, must not, be silent”

Holy Father, you must not be surprised if I say that revolution and revolutionary tactics have been introduced into the Church of God. I have a volume of proofs that I plan to publish to demonstrate this fact, deeply convinced, as I am, that I am not defending and vindicating my own cause but that of a terrorized episcopate, of a violated Church, of a betrayed religion.

If religion were attacked only by unbelievers, we would have little to fear. But -- and I say this with great sorrow -- when Catholics and priests raise the banner of rebellion within the Church and, under fine appearances, corrupt the Christian sense of the young priests and the people, the bishops cannot and must not be silent. I, for one, will not keep quiet. I have bewailed these evils for years, Holy Father, and I shed bitter tears over them before the Lord. We can no longer pretend they do not exist.

Holy Father, do not think that I am talking without knowing what I am saying or that I am being driven by personal interests or other motives. Indeed not. God, whom I serve and before whom we shall all soon appear, this God is my witness that I do not play favorites and that I do not take anybody's side. By God's grace, I am committed to Him alone, to you who are his Vicar, and to his holy Church.

For this very reason, I deeply feel the Church's anguish and, after long and prayerful reflection, have decided to confront the arrogant party that is trying to take over and is the source of so much spiritual devastation. I foresee that I will have to suffer much, but at least I will find comfort in the thought that I did what I could to avert worse evils.

As you know, Holy Father, one of your great predecessors used to implore God every day to inspire some bishop to openly tell him the truth. Since this surely is the desire of your noble heart, I know you will pardon me if I desire to tell you the whole truth, bitter as it may be.

Believe me, Holy Father, the destructive and rebellious work of the new liberalism will not stop until some clear public action is taken in support of the authority of the bishops.

I hope you will understand and listen to me. Yet if God should deprive me of even this consolation, my deep veneration and filial love for you and the Holy See would not, for that reason, be any less intense. I would always have the consolation of never having failed to speak the truth to everyone, of having fought the good fight and kept the faith, in anticipation of the crown the just Judge will one day bestow on me.

Most Holy Father, I will not close this letter without first declaring that I am and always will be ready to obey not only your commands but also your wishes, so that if you think I should keep quiet, I will keep a calm and peaceful silence out of respect for you, entrusting everything into the hands of God and of you who take his place.[\[96\]](#)

e) UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND LOCAL CHURCH

“The Pope is the center and the creator of other centers”

The Pope attracts and radiates, gathers into one and diffuses. He is the center of the whole Christian world and is at once the creator of other centers.

Unworthy though I be, I am your bishop. Who has given me authority over your souls?

Who has invested me, in the internal and external forum, with that legislative, judicial, and executive power which constitutes the spiritual sovereignty of my episcopal ministry within the territory of the Diocese of Piacenza? Who has placed the keys of the kingdom of heaven into my hands on your behalf? Jesus Christ, of course, since everything comes from him in the supernatural order, but Jesus Christ through the Pope.

To whom will I give the keys of the heavenly kingdom? he asked Peter. To you: "To you I will give" (...). Naturally, those keys will have to pass into other hands, but always through your hands. That power (within more or less ample limits) will have to be conferred on others, but by you and at your pleasure. St. Cyprian says that, just as the energy of the members of the human body flows from the head, the life of the branches from the roots, the water of the brooks from the spring, and light from the rays of the sun, in the same way all hierarchical powers flow from the See of Peter as from a visible spring. If it were not thus, with what right would I call myself your bishop?[\[97\]](#)

"The whole episcopate finds its center in the Bishop of bishops"

I am touched by the praise that comes from beloved friends but even more so the praise that comes to me from you because it has a higher aim than my humble person. The praise given a bishop, deserved though it might be -- surely not in my case -- is basically praise of the episcopate which, with its divine character, its grace of office, its heavenly dignity, and its power of jurisdiction -- a reflection of Jesus Christ's own power of jurisdiction -- is always the limpid and living source of all the good a bishop performs.

Since the whole episcopate finds its center in the Bishop of bishops, the Pope, and finds its unity in him and is, in fact, like the body of one single moral person, with the Roman Pontiff as its visible head, it follows that the praise given a bishop is not only praise given to the episcopate but, in a very special way, is also praise of that supreme papal power in which the episcopate lives and thrives.[\[98\]](#)

"The purest glory of the Diocese of Piacenza"

For twenty-five years you sit on this infallible throne. For twenty-five years you adorn this throne with your word, your example, the splendor of a singular wisdom and the exercise of the highest virtues. Twenty-five years of assiduous care and magnanimous battles, years full of holy, glorious, and immortal works (...). From the bottom of our hearts we thank you for the good you have done for us because your word which the Spirit of God inspires and accompanies makes us strong with your strength, brave with your bravery, steadfast and fearless like you.

Sincere and loving union with the See of Peter was always the purest, most desired, and most cherished boast of the Diocese of Piacenza. Today this Diocese, through me, renews its protestations of loyalty and respect for your august person and loudly proclaims its desire to continue its ancestral traditions, knowing full well that, in union with the Roman Pontiff and in full and perfect conformity with your teachings and desires, lies also the welfare of our country. [\[99\]](#)

“The bishop: head of a Church that lives its own life within the great unity of the universal Church”

To be a bishop means to belong to everybody and no longer to oneself. To be a bishop means to be, in the highest degree and through the exalted power of the priesthood, father of a family, head of a Church that lives its own life within the great unity of the universal Church (...).

The ecclesiastic who does not put into practice the golden words of St. Ignatius Martyr fails in his most sacred duties: “Be subject to your bishop as if to Jesus Christ. Obey your bishop as Jesus obeyed his Father” (...).

These were the eminently apostolic rules that stood out in the life of our saintly bishop. He constantly deplored the decline of these rules and the great evils that, as a result, would accrue to the Church. He used to say (...) that what would hasten the victory of the Church and make of her an army in battle array would undoubtedly be an indestructible attachment to the center of Catholic unity, as well as respect, love, and obedience in all things to the Roman Pontiff, but never separated from respect, love, and obedience for episcopal authority, on which the welfare of the Church is founded and rests, as a Church Father teaches us. [\[100\]](#)

“We the bishops are all brothers”

Coming together for the first time to discuss matters dealing with the pastoral care of your souls and united in a spirit of obedience and devotion to the common Father of the faithful, we found that meeting each other and feeling like brothers was one and the same thing (...).

Know that our words are not our own. They are the faithful echo of the divine teaching authority that Jesus Christ entrusted to Peter and that from Peter through the bishops reaches down to you. We are loving and devoted brothers and are happy to call ourselves brothers because, with fervent hearts and deep devotion, we listen to the infallible teachings of our one and only Teacher. With God’s grace, we eagerly hear his voice and give it docile and loving attention: “You are all brothers. Your only teacher is Jesus Christ.” [\[101\]](#)

“The impossibility of governing our dioceses”

Because of meddlers and scandalous controversies, I honestly confess to you that the pitiful condition of our dioceses is causing me the greatest agony of my life and torments me so much as to endanger my health..

When I went to Rome, I spoke clearly, maybe with excessive frankness, of the deplorable events happening among us and of the impossibility of governing our dioceses if that brazen faction is not reined in. I told them that, since this faction has its leaders in Milan,

it was able to reach all cities; that it was making itself untouchable, even before the bishops, by exaggerating its attachment to the Pope, etc. What can I tell you? I think my words somewhat surprised the Holy Father. I have a feeling the faction got wind of this; *inde irae* (hence their fury).

A few days ago, somebody told me of the nasty insinuations the *Osservatore* aimed at you and me and some other colleagues. I haven't read that newspaper for two years and don't care what it thinks. But once I get back to Piacenza, I'm going to write to the Pope about the matter and will write forcefully, and not just about myself. My dear friend, you and I are now the targets for the arrows of these poor blind people and must resist their insane efforts. We must be calm and keep our intentions pure, seeking only the glory of God and his Church and the welfare of souls.

Personally, I am ready not only to write but also to take a trip to Rome to make the Holy Father aware of the real state of affairs.[\[102\]](#)

The factions, which are coming up with one pretext after another so as to slowly undermine the bishops and mould Catholic public opinion according to their way of thinking, are becoming increasingly bold, to the point at times of making it impossible for the bishops to carry out their sacred ministry (...).

I who have wasted away my health and almost everything I have for the good of religion; I who refused honors, important honors with large pensions attached to them, to protest against the violated rights of the Church; I who regard as commands even the less significant leanings of the Holy See; I who have always been ready and still am, not just in words, to shed my blood for the Church and for her august Head, I am under suspicion of treason? My God, sustain me in my difficult trial because, were this to happen, I would die of a broken heart![\[103\]](#)

I have written to a man of influence down there and, recently, to the Pope. I'm sending you copies of the letters so you can tell me if I have written with enough tact and if I should pursue the matter. If the bishops did not remain silent, something good might happen by dint of talking. By the way, what does Bishop Guindani think? If he thinks like us, couldn't he write, too, as I did? In the last analysis, it is a duty of our ministry to make the Pope aware of the true state of affairs, so as to save what we can.[\[104\]](#)

The confusion of tongues is really appalling. If things continue this way, the dioceses will become ungovernable. Meanwhile, I think there is great need for much caution, especially for us bishops, surrounded as we are and spied upon by certain pharisees, who avidly look for every pretext to judge and put us in seeming contradiction with the Holy See. All this causes serious harm to the episcopate and appalling scandal to the faithful. In such a sad state of affairs, I implore God every day that he grant me and all my confreres equanimity, patience, peace, and trust in his divine help, without which we would go crazy.[\[105\]](#)

“We men have some sense, too”

With all my heart I share your sorrows and sufferings. But it is necessary to be strong and carry the present tribulation with great dignity. I am sure that in the not-too-distant future justice will be done to you. When we get to know the censures of the Inquisition, we will say: “The mountains begot,” etc., in the words of the fable, and you will be vindicated. Mark my word. A Church Father, St. Ambrose, I think, once wrote: “In all things I wish to follow the Church of Rome; but we men have some sense, too.” I think this is what he was trying to say: just because I am a bishop, must people impose on me as if I were a beast of burden?

Watch out for surprises: I've told you before that the goal of your adversaries is to make you give up your diocese. [\[106\]](#)

“The episcopate must rise”

The episcopate must rise and find in its own divine authority the power to stand up to its enemies and demand the respect it deserves. I've expressed this thought to you at other times, and I don't think I'm wrong. If we think help will come from down there, we're kidding ourselves. Still, I'll try everything. I assure you I'll speak with such force and conviction as to bend any will, provided they do not purposely act -- as I suspect they may -- in accordance with the all-too-human policies that, for some time, have been dominating the external affairs of the Church. [\[107\]](#)

“I will know how to defend my authority”

We are too outspoken and sincere, I know, but I don't think this is bad. There is also a time to speak out. The moment has come to do so, when and where possible and appropriate, of course, because the silence of the entire hierarchy has contributed powerfully to the increasing boldness of the new liberals. If, somehow, God willing, they could only be stopped! But I strongly doubt that. I'll remember your good advice. I'll be careful but not to the extent of being scared of anybody. They won't ever love us, you can be sure of that. But at least they will fear us.

I feel perfectly at peace. If down there they say something that just isn't right, I will give them an appropriate response. I don't owe anybody anything. I know how to defend my authority and my place with utmost vigor. Before beginning the battle, I did a lot of thinking and weighed all the difficulties. I'm convinced I can stand up to all the might of our adversaries.

Prudence and circumspection, yes; but, above all, courage and firmness. I have written to the Pope along these lines, with reverence but with vigor. [\[108\]](#)

4. THE PRIEST

Christ perpetuates himself in the priest and works through him. The priest is appointed to proclaim the truth, communicate grace, and serve those who are receiving the heritage of salvation. His only ambition is to dedicate himself wholly to the coming of the kingdom. His reason for being is the salvation of people. The goal of his vocation is holiness, his and that of others.

Holiness is a holocaust. One acquires it by generosity of will, integrity of heart, assiduous meditation on the law of God, and the exact fulfillment of one's duties.

The priestly minister is fruitful only with the grace of God, which one obtains through prayer, adoration of Christ in the Eucharist, and an exemplary life.

Holiness must be complemented by knowledge, the guardian of faith and morals.

Priestly fatherhood brings forth heirs to the priesthood: he who helps provide the Church with a priest is a benefactor of humanity.

a) PRIESTLY MINISTRY

“Sharers in my paternal labors”

With a father's ardent affection, I embrace all of you, pastors of souls, knowing as I do the beauty and necessity of your ministry since for a few years I, too, exercised the ministry in this vast parish of St. Bartholomew in Como. I will never cease praising the parishioners' docility, faith, devotion, attendance at the preaching of the word of God, reception of the sacraments, and touching displays of filial love.

As sharers in my pastoral labors and dispensers of the mysteries of God, make every effort to be counted among the faithful dispensers, mindful of that very somber and at once terrible maxim: Those who preside will be subject to a most rigorous judgment (Wis 5).

No matter what sacred ministry you exercise, whether it be offering the august sacrifice of the Mass, administering the sacraments or performing sacred functions, exercise the ministry like a virtue communicated by God, with pure mind and heart, with a deep sense of faith and ardent devotion, so that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ (I Pt 4).

Beloved brothers, be angels of peace, be brave workers. With kindness and tenderness, comfort the poor, the little ones, the orphans, the widows, the sick and the dying. In this way, the charity and paternal solicitude of the pastors will shine ever more brightly.

Be extremely loving and tender with the deaf-mutes, the blind, and other unfortunate people. Make sure they, too, receive instruction. Diligently teach the young boys and girls the principles of the faith and the obligation of obeying God and their parents. Be always eager and ready to help everyone with works of charity, thus tying the hearts of the faithful to you and to the faith by the most devoted loyalty. [\[109\]](#)

“God, priest and man”

Through his divine power, Jesus Christ could certainly have saved people without using other people but, in his infinite wisdom, did not choose to do so. And so, in the order of

grace, as in the order of nature, he created intermediate and secondary causes. Between himself and people he placed his priests, in whom he deigned to perpetuate himself. In his prayer to the Father, Jesus recognizes as disciples only those who would believe through them. The gospel in fact always mentions three things: God, priest, and man. Whoever excludes the priest removes the connecting link and breaks the chain, tears down the bridge, and creates an abyss.[\[110\]](#)

“The priest is Jesus Christ working in a man”

Who is this man who holds in his hand the life and destiny of souls and, in some way, the life and destiny of God? Once again, stand in awe of the dignity and power of the Catholic priest!

Not only does Jesus Christ live in the priest in a real way; but, through the priest, he also constantly performs all the divine functions that bring about the sanctification of souls and the salvation of the world.

The Catholic priest is not only Jesus Christ living in a man -- which is the privilege of all Christians. The priest is Jesus Christ working in a man and carrying out the divine work of reparation together with a man. The priest is Jesus Christ speaking, Jesus Christ offering sacrifice, Jesus Christ forgiving, Jesus Christ saving. Everywhere, in the pulpit, at the altar, in the tribunal of penance, the priest is invested with Christ's own dignity because he is invested with Christ's own authority! *Sacerdos alter Christus* -- “The priest is another Christ.”[\[111\]](#)

“He is the man of God when teaching the truth”

When we speak, it is like God speaking because he speaks not only through his Son but also through us, the continuators of his work.

So the priest is truly the man of God when communicating the truth. Someone said very beautifully that the priest gives the truth to all, to great and small alike, just as God gives the light of the sun to the cedar and to the blade of grass. The priest is made loftier without pride and humbles himself without diminution. Not only people with brilliant minds, eager for sublime and profound speculation, but also common people and children, whose minds need simplicity and clarity, find in the priest the answers to all the questions our human nature instinctively asks regarding its origins, its conditions, its duties, and its destiny. What is even more important is that through the priest all these people find unshakable certainty and absolute assurance in their faith.[\[112\]](#)

“In the name of God, he dispenses grace”

Besides truth, there is another sacred gift the priest gives people in the name of God, namely grace, a wholly gratuitous gift, which lifts the heart, creates and nourishes the supernatural life in us, makes us friends of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, and heirs of his kingdom. Without grace, we can do nothing, nothing that is deserving of eternal life.

But how can the priest communicate grace to the faithful? He communicates it through those mysterious channels we call the sacraments.

The transmission of this heavenly flow of grace had to come about in a manner fully in accord with the nature of man. Since man is composed of spirit and matter, it is necessary that even things of a purely spiritual nature be communicated to him through some material element that will touch his senses. Through his senses, a man thus becomes aware of the spiritual action taking place within him. This is precisely what happens through the sacraments. [\[113\]](#)

“We take the place of the Savior”

Venerable brothers, we have been called to be and are ministers of Christ, sent forth by him just as he was sent forth by the Father; ministers chosen by the Holy Spirit for the work each one of us has been assigned; men of God sent to serve those who are heirs to salvation; priests of the Most High God; dispensers of the mysteries of God and of the surpassing grace of God; salt of the earth and light of the world; people set on a lampstand to give light to all those in the house. Responsibilities were placed on our shoulders that would be awesome to angels. Hence, we very much need piety, zeal for souls, and study so that no fault may be found with our ministry (...).

We carry out all our activities full of faith and the Holy Spirit. We fulfill our ministry in the best possible way, glorifying and praising God, showing ourselves in all things as ministers of God. We do this by much endurance, hardship, kindness, knowledge, unfeigned love, purity, and genuine piety. We possess the promises of the present life and of the future life as well, for which we must work with all our energy in order to save souls, to make perfect the saints through our ministry, and build up the body of Christ.

We take the place of the Savior Jesus Christ. Hence, concerned with the salvation of souls, obeying his commandments and following his example, we must graciously welcome and help all the faithful. We must firmly resist vice and the hypocrisy of the pharisees, without human respect. Whether convenient or inconvenient, we must with all patience and doctrine reprimand and plead with the obstinate, the hardened, and those with little religious instruction. We must avoid greed and even the suspicion of vanity or personal gain, becoming slaves to everyone so as to win everyone over to Christ. [\[114\]](#)

“A priest’s only ambition”

To work, to grow weary, to sacrifice himself in every way for the spread of the kingdom of God here below and to save souls; to fall on his knees before the world, as it were, and ask of it the favor of being allowed to do it some good: this is a priest’s only ambition. For this purpose he employs whatever power, whatever authority, whatever skill, whatever talent, whatever energy he has.

Are children in danger? He assumes responsibility for them. Does a tragedy occur? He rushes to give help. Does a quarrel break out? He becomes the herald of peace. Here he becomes the guide of the straying, support of the wavering, shield of the oppressed. There he becomes the eye of the blind, the tongue of the mute, the father of orphans, the mother of little ones, the companion of the imprisoned. He becomes a slave to all so as to win over everyone to Christ.

From the shack of the poor he rushes to the mansion of the rich, from the altar to the deathbed, from the mountains to the valleys, always in search of the lost sheep. He has peace only when he can clasp one of his sheep to his bosom and lift another to his shoulders, when he can bind the wounds of one of his injured sheep and feed another with food taken from his own mouth. He is never happier than when, going to bed at night, he remembers a tear he wiped, a family he consoled, a child he protected, the name of God he glorified along with his people.[\[115\]](#)

“The salvation of souls is our only reason for being”

Work hard, cheerfully, and untiringly to win souls over to God: *in hoc positi sumus* (“this is why we were put here”). This is precisely why we are priests.

The salvation of souls is our life, our only reason for being. Our whole existence must be one constant search for souls. We must not eat, drink, sleep, study, speak, or even relax except to do good for souls, without ever, ever growing tired. Just as Christianity binds a Christian to act like a Christian at all times, in the same way the priesthood obliges a priest to act like a priest at all times. What a Christian must do for the salvation of his own soul, the priest, and more so the pastor, must do for the salvation of the souls of others. In this way does he save his own soul.[\[116\]](#)

“They were given the duty to care for souls, not necessarily to put things right”

A very subtle temptation often creeps into the hearts of people in authority. They see at times that their labor does not yield an immediate or abundant fruit. The situation is desperate, they say, and nothing can be done. They get discouraged and so give up on their ministry.

Should we be surprised that what the Apostle Paul experienced in himself is now happening to others? “But for that reason I was mercifully treated, so that in me, as the foremost, Christ Jesus might display all his patience as an example for those who would come to believe in him for everlasting life” (I Tim 1:16). These pastors then should go forth as ministers of Christ in all patience, remembering the Lord’s words: “One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work” (Jn 4:37-38). They must sow the word and leave others to gather the fruit. They must remember that in ordination they were given the duty to care for souls, not necessarily to put things right. However, they must burn with love, for “love believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (I Cor 13:7).[\[117\]](#)

“Spirit of mildness”

It is also fundamental to know how to do the works of God. Some undertake the works of God in a purely human spirit and, as a result, gather little or no fruit. You know what the spirit of God is? “The spirit of God is utterly mild and gentle. It is not found in agitation or fire but in utter serenity. It is open and simple” (*Tertullian to Marc.*). Christ worked in this spirit, and his ministers must be inspired with a like spirit. Since the Lord is not found in turmoil and unrest, we must carry out the sacred ministry in the same spirit of mildness. The wise man says: “Son, great is the power of God; by the humble he is glorified” (Sir 3:19). With any other attitude, pastors and anyone committed to the care of souls will hinder both their own salvation and the work of God.[\[118\]](#)

‘Priests of God, society invokes your help’

Priests of Christ! Never forget that, if there was ever a time when society needed you, this is it. She herself invokes your help (...).

Run to her then, apostles of charity, and may your ministry be one of well-being. May your word be water that quenches, bread that nourishes, medicine that heals, light that dispels darkness.

Deepen ever more your understanding of revealed truth and of every field of knowledge. It is up to you to strengthen the faith, destroy prejudices, shake up the sluggish, and win over hearts.

Love and help each other. Be men of sacrifice. Be like the people the Apostle Paul describes: “They hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” Make absolutely sure that to faith you add virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, suffering; to suffering, piety; to piety, fraternal love; to fraternal love, charity. Indeed, if these virtues are part of you and increase in you, they will make your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ bear fruit in you (...).

Brothers, watch over peace in the family, the sanctity of marriage, respect for Sundays and holy days, the dignity of God’s house, reverence for superiors, honesty in business, and the observance of justice. Do not be frightened by the opposition and antagonism of the world.

Make allowances for the weaknesses of everyone, love everyone, do good to everyone without exception. Imitate the Good Shepherd. His zeal, which unites and does not tear apart, should be your kind of zeal; his spirit of mildness, your spirit. Detest sin, never the sinner. All of you should be on guard both against excessive acquiescence and against grim-faced severity.[\[119\]](#)

b) THE HOLINESS OF THE PRIEST

“The purpose of your vocation is holiness”

The purpose of your vocation is holiness (...). Priests are called not only to personal holiness but are committed to the holiness of others as well. “I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain” (Jn 15:16).

I chose you, that is to say, separated you from sin and fixed you firmly in the state of grace so that you might go forth, make progress in virtue, and bear fruit, that is to say, bring people to conversion. These fruits must last; in a word, the faith of those you will bring to me must be solid.

With what power and according to what model can priests manage to do this if not with Christ’s power and according to Christ’s model of holiness? “Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me” (Jn 15). The power of your priesthood derives from your sharing in Christ’s priesthood. In fact, Tertullian tells us, he appointed priests as his vicars. For this reason, you must represent Christ to the people both in your holiness and in your ministry.

When a priest approaches the altar to offer the immaculate Host, the faithful must see in him Christ’s love for, and devotion to, the Father.

When a priest climbs the pulpit of truth, the place itself demands that he talk about the highest truths. In the same way, people must see those truths so incarnated in the priest that he reproduces the preaching Christ, not the pharisees (St. Gregory, pars II, c. 3).

When a priest sits in the tribunal of Penance, there especially he must be molded and fortified by the holiness of Christ. “The hand that reaches out to wipe away other people’s guilt must itself already be clean, so as not to sully even more what it touches should it be itself soiled with mud” (St. Gregory, l.c., 27).[\[120\]](#)

“Holiness is purity consecrated to God”

Holiness, says St. Thomas, is purity consecrated to God. Not common or mediocre purity, but sublime purity, as St. John Chrysostom tells us: holiness is a lofty purity of mind. In any case, the purity of the priest could not be mediocre, for he is like a city on the mountain top which cannot be hidden from view. Holiness, then, is purity consecrated to God: purity dedicated to the honor of God. Together with purity of mind, true holiness demands a steady immolation. Holy, in fact, is what is entirely consumed on the altar of God. Obviously, authentic holiness requires that the life of a priest be free of all vices and ever committed to the honor of God.

I would be unhappy if at this point anyone begins to think that such holiness is so far removed from daily life, so difficult to achieve, that it must be reserved to people who live withdrawn from the world.

There is no reason for anyone to fear real holiness. Holiness, the perfection possible in this life, is not something absolute, free from every imperfection. In fact, even the just man sins seven times a day. Holiness, instead, consists in a constant effort to attain it. This is what St. Bernard taught. Here let me mention St. Augustine’s teaching on this score: “He is perfect who has no serious sins and tries to avoid venial sins as well; in short, it is he who runs without tiring along the path of virtue” (*De Perfect. Iust. c. 3*).

[\[121\]](#)

“The first step to holiness is an ardent and generous desire”

The first step or means to holiness is the ardent and generous desire for holiness itself. Since holiness is the goal of the priesthood, all aspirations must be directed to this end. An ordinary desire or resolution is not enough. What is needed is a will, a desire comparable to hunger and thirst. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.”

Holiness is the true wisdom that one must beg for, desire, seek out like riches, and dig out like treasure (...). No one will ever reach the pinnacle of holiness if he does not unceasingly and ardently long for it. Venerable brothers, all of you have desired holiness. Each of you must judge the intensity of your desire by your fruits.

The love of holiness gives rise to frequent and daily meditation on the law and the heavenly mysteries. The priest who neglects daily meditation will not be holy but will, instead, experience desolation. “He is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then promptly goes off and forgets what he looked like” (Jas 1:23).

If one has a true love of holiness, he will be zealous in purifying his conscience every week according to the prescription of the synod. He who neglects this duty is far from the path of holiness, for he who disparages little things will gradually go astray.

The examination of conscience stems from the same intense desire. This examination is especially necessary for priests to ascertain what they are accumulating on the foundation of the faith, whether gold or silver, hay or straw. St. Gregory the Great warns us that, in fact, our spirit is constantly distracted with everyday cares and that we would be unaware of this if we did not check our progress or regression through self-examination.[\[122\]](#)

“Integrity of heart”

What does an upright heart mean? A heart that seeks only God, a simple heart, a pure heart, like the one desired by the royal psalmist: “A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me” (Ps 51:12) (...).

This integrity of heart is truly a great thing. It is the wellspring of all virtues, the font of holiness, the source of priestly life (...).

This integrity of heart must be the supreme concern of any priest. It was with this attitude that you took your place in the army of the Church, and it is in this attitude that you must constantly persist. The wise man says: “With all care, guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life” (Prv 4:23). How true. What, in fact, diminishes the fear of God in us, what makes us so fickle in the practice of virtue, and why is our progress in the ways of perfection so laborious? The cause is the faintness of our hearts. Why are the stones of the sanctuary sometimes found strewn at the corner of every road? And why do the very cedars of Lebanon come crashing down? Because of a hidden sin of the heart.

Hence, like a wise architect, the priest must lay the foundation of an upright heart, that is, a heart turned to God, and then build on this foundation.[\[123\]](#)

“How can we make sure of staying on the path of integrity?”

How can we make sure of staying on the path of integrity? By meditating on the law of God and constantly dialoguing with him in prayer. He who wants to keep this integrity of heart must apply himself to prayer. A spiritual writer says this about prayer: “If someone were to ask me what a priest in care of souls most desperately needs, I would repeat: prayer. If he were to ask me what else he needs, I would repeat: prayer. And if he were to ask me the same question again and again, my answer would always be the same.”

You understand, then, how important prayer is. Let us listen to St. Bernard: Reflection or meditation, from which prayer flows, yields these benefits -- first of all, it purifies the mind, that is to say, the very source of meditation. Furthermore, meditation corrects excesses, moderates behavior, makes life virtuous and orderly and, finally, provides knowledge of human and divine things.

Meditation clarifies what is obscure, puts together again what has been torn apart, gathers what has been scattered, discerns the secrets of the heart, fathoms things that are true, examines things that are probable, un.masks things that are deceptive and false.

It is meditation, once again, that helps us plan our work and -- once the work is carried out -- helps us evaluate it so that nothing unbecoming or worthy of correction is part of our life. Finally, it is meditation that prepares us for adversity, and this is prudence. When adversity does come, it is meditation that helps us barely notice it, and this is fortitude (*De Consid. I, c. 7*).[\[124\]](#)

“Love thrives on meditation and is nourished by it”

This, then, is the power meditation has to foster singleness of heart and integrity in our spiritual life. From meditation incalculable riches will accrue to us whereas without meditation we experience desolation upon desolation and become absolutely barren of good works. We will never be able to fulfill the duties of our ministry worthily if we do not keep our ministry constantly before our eyes through an untiring and intimate contact with God.

So, priests who fritter away the day in visits and exterior amusements, thus extinguishing the spirit of prayer, must examine how they are carrying out their ministry. They are readier to engage in worldly affairs or discuss the daily news than to engage in prayer. They are accustomed to talk nonstop with people and almost never with God. They rarely find time for their morning meditation. They put off the obligation of the Canonical Hours to the last hours of the day as if it were the least of their duties. They get bored with God because they love him so little.

You must realize that love thrives on meditation and is nourished by it. “In meditation a fire breaks out in me,” the prophet says. These words should be applied above all to a priest’s love. As God’s minister, he must be a blazing fire: “He made his ministers a fiery flame” (Heb 1:7). His heart must be an altar on which to offer a perpetual holocaust: “The fire on the altar is to be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest must put firewood on it” (Lv 6:5). You all know that daily meditation must keep fueling the life of a priest so that this fire will never go out but spread far and wide.[\[125\]](#)

“Good example is the mark of a good shepherd”

It is not enough for a priest to be pious and holy before God or in the depths of his conscience. He must appear such even before people. Since he has become the portion of the Lord, he must not only be a person of integrity but must also give witness to this integrity among the faithful.

He regards a good reputation as his bounden duty to God, to the Church, and to the faithful. You well know that good example is the mark of a good shepherd, as Christ himself tells us: “When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them and the sheep follow him (*Jn 10:4*) (...).

A priest in care of souls is like a city on a mountaintop, exposed to the view of everybody. His life cannot remain hidden and is bound to have an effect on others. In fact, he is destined for the fall and rise of many. So see how you are conducting yourselves in word and deed.

A priest is a lamp set on a lampstand, giving light to all in the house. He must keep his light bright and strong so as to lead others to virtue by his example. A priest's exemplary life is the best way to form people. You well know that nothing is more powerful than good example (...). Sacred preaching already possesses great power, but this power is doubled when the word preached is holy and the one preaching is likewise holy.[\[126\]](#)

“God did not choose his ministers from among angels but from among men”

In his infinite goodness, God did not choose his ministers from among angels but from among men -- “every high priest is taken from among men” -- that is, from among human beings who are full of infirmities and imperfections. These ministers are fashioned from the common clay of Adam and exposed like everybody else, and often even more so, to the assault of the passions. We must not forget that, when God gave priests his powers, he did not give them his impeccability. If he lets a few leaves of the great tree fall into the mud, he does so in order to teach us that these powers do not depend on the merit of the one receiving them; that they are given to the individual not for his own convenience but for the good of others; and that the Church does not stand firm by human power but by the power that comes from above.[\[127\]](#)

“If priests are not angels, it is just as well”

If priests are not angels, it is just as well because they will more readily sympathize with sinners and with their unfortunate brothers and sisters and come to their help: “for he himself is beset by weakness.” We can truly say, however, that priests have no reason to blush before their accusers, that, as a whole, they are carrying the banner of their ministry high, and that with knowledge, charity, virtue, and hard work they are fulfilling the

precept of the Apostle: “I will bring honor to my ministry.”[\[128\]](#)

c) THE PRIEST’S PRAYER”

“The fruits of preaching and of the ministry depend on grace”

How full of zeal you must be and how vigorously you must work at it. It is by virtue of your office that “you have become surety to your neighbor, given your hand in pledge to another, have been snared by the utterance of your lips, caught by the words of your mouth. So hurry, stir up your neighbor! Give no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids” (Prv 6:1-4).

I cannot think of anything that will challenge and stir up your zeal more than these words. You may recall that I have already urged you to close every sermon with a thought on the Eucharist, to look for any occasion, in season and out of season, for giving a Eucharistic exhortation.

Now I would like to suggest something else to you: prepare your sermons before the Blessed Sacrament so as to pass on to your people the very words Christ will have inspired in you. This is also what Moses and the Prophets did.

A priest before the tabernacle pleads insistently that his icy heart be melted by the heavenly fire that burns in Christ and that his soul be filled with divine fervor so that he may become a living witness before his people.

You know very well that the fruits of preaching and of the ministry depend on grace, as the Apostle Paul tells us: “Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who causes the growth.”[\[129\]](#)

“Let your people often see you kneeling before the tabernacle”

It would be highly desirable and praiseworthy for a priest to go and kneel before the holy tabernacle early every morning, almost as if to be ahead of the sun in praising God, and there make his meditation, prepare himself fittingly -- always before the Blessed Sacrament -- for the Sacrifice of the Mass, and, after Mass, to remain for an appropriate thanksgiving. But, unfortunately, priests all too often go to celebrate Mass without any preparation, without even a prayer, and right after Mass get all taken up with worldly affairs (...). They cannot endure kneeling before the tabernacle in prayer before Christ for a quarter of an hour every day, and they leave with a feeling of impatience reserved only to God. Christ, the neglected guest, the stranger in your house, could very well address this lament to you: “I have become a stranger to my brothers and sisters and an alien to my mother’s children?” (...).

Let your people often see you kneeling before the tabernacle, sometimes for the recitation

of the breviary, at other times for the examination of conscience. Let them see you stopping in to pay a visit to Christ before you leave the house to ask him for his help and grace, and let them also see you going back to Him to thank him upon your return. Blessed is that priest who occasionally interrupts his work to spend some time in fervent prayer before Christ the Lord and knows how to flavor his work with a friendly conversation with Christ.[\[130\]](#)

“Frequent encounter and dialogue with Christ”

The second element of Eucharistic life -- of which the pastor of souls must give good example to his people -- is the frequent encounter and dialogue with Christ.

There is nothing more proper and salutary than this encounter. Christ in the Eucharist is the deposit entrusted to the priest, the priest's treasure. Do we not expect vigilance and surveillance for deposits? Does not the heart hasten and linger where its treasure is? Christ in the Eucharist is the wisdom, the prudence, the protection, and the strength of the priest: Christ is the wisdom that enlightens him, the prudence that guides him, the protection that shields him, and the strength that makes all difficult things easy for him (...).

Maybe we had this experience in the first years of our priestly ministry. But with the passing of time the gold got tarnished and its luster got dim. We became like those of whom the Apostle Paul speaks: simulators of a piety that is just a facade. We have been in intimate contact with Christ in this sacrament for twenty, thirty, or forty years and yet have received very little from its fullness. While, as sharers in this mystery, indeed as its authors, we enrich others, we ourselves are wasting away in our misery. How can this be? Is it not perhaps because our faith is waning? We come into contact with the material aspect of this mystery but do not know how to penetrate sufficiently into it, for the voices speaking to us of Christ in this sacrament are silent.[\[131\]](#)

“Recommendations to the clergy”

Always keep in mind the vocation God has bestowed on you.

With your vocation vividly and constantly in mind, you must so adorn yourselves with virtues that others will see holiness shining from you as from a beacon; a holiness that should be great in the other states of life but much greater in you, ministers of the mysteries of God and dispensers of divine grace.

Try to conduct yourselves like angels of God and to lead so heavenly a life here on earth that it will set an example of supernatural virtues for others.

With one mind and one heart, devote yourselves to divine worship, to meditation of heavenly things, to prayer, and to the study of sacred and ecclesiastical disciplines. Shun the vanities and seductions of the world. Freed from all bad habits, walk straight in the way of the Lord. Enthusiastically embrace charity, the fountain of all virtues. Practice humility, meekness, patience, justice, temperance and fulfill all the duties of a truly

Christian life.

Let your minds dwell on whatever is pure, true, holy, and religious. Live these values.

Pray constantly.

With a pure mind and deep recollection, spend half an hour a day in mental prayer. To the best of your ability, let it be your first task. Mental prayer, in fact, is the hinge, the foundation of priestly life. If you are faithful to it, you can expect all kinds of good things.

Celebrate Mass devoutly and piously. Prepare yourselves for its celebration with real devotion, meditating deeply on such an awesome mystery. To celebrate Mass worthily, examine your conscience thoroughly and frequently. In celebrating Mass, watch out for mistakes.

Do not let a day pass by without a visit of adoration and supplication to Jesus present in the Eucharist.

Have a strong devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and our holy patron saints.

If you want to preserve and increase the spirit of prayer, do not let a day go by, for whatever reason, without examining your conscience at midday and at night or doing spiritual reading and reciting the Rosary.

Through the mercy of God, venerable brothers, you were ordained priests to preserve and promote the glory of God. So, discharge your ministry with dignity and honor.

Your dress, your walk, your behavior should be in keeping with the holy orders you have received.

Be content with frugal meals and with spare and modest furnishings.

Avoid ostentation, luxury, and the pursuit of honors, as well as ambition and vanity. Scrupulously practice the moderation your clerical life calls for.

Your speech, too, should follow these standards. In your speech there should be nothing vulgar, frivolous, or indecent.

Strengthen your heart so that it does not go after trivialities, worldly amusements, or other trifles.

Keep your senses under control lest they become servants of your passions, whereas God has given us the senses as servants of our reason.

Your eyes must be innocent and pure, your hearing chaste and guarded, your mind and senses chaste, your way of living spiritual and chaste.

To keep chaste, be on the defensive.

Do not get involved in worldly affairs.

Do not be greedy for money or gain. If you are poor, do not desire to be rich lest you fall into many temptations and into the snares of the devil. Do not bear your poverty grudgingly. Christ, our heavenly teacher, who at his birth was laid in a manger and died naked on the cross, loved and taught poverty. They can lack nothing who fear the Lord and call upon his holy name, especially religious and priests. Distribute the church income to Christ's favorites, namely, the poor, the widows, the sick, the pilgrims, all the indigent and hungry. If you deny them the food they need, you will be guilty of sin

against charity in the sight of God.

Whatever time you have free from church functions, from prayer and meditation and from other priestly duties, do not waste it in idleness, in laziness, and in frivolous things; but, called as you are to be the portion of the Lord, meditate day and night on his law.

Hence, apply yourselves with great diligence to the study of the sacred sciences. You should so love these sacred studies that whoever despises them will hear these words from the Lord: "Because you have neglected knowledge, I reject you and do not want you to be my priest."

You should have the Scriptures in your hands day and night. Spend time with the treatises on dogmatic and moral theology, with Canon Law, with books on sacred liturgy and Church history, and with the works of the Church Fathers.

In the words of St. Jerome, you must all be in communion with the See of Peter, namely, the Supreme Pontiff. As members of one body, we must not only obey the august Head of the Church but also desire, think, and judge like him, almost as if we had no distinct will of our own but thought, spoke, and acted through him.

In a matter of such importance, we must be absolutely on guard against sophistry, quibbling, hesitation and arbitrary interpretations, all of which are unbecoming to a priest and already smack of desertion. Away with such things! Instead, when we submit to the Pope, we give evidence of unwavering discipline, wherein lies the strength of every institution.

In the sight of God and the people, you must all be of one mind and one heart with your bishop and never forget the eloquent words of St. Ignatius Martyr: "Those who belong to God and to Christ are with the bishop"; and the words of St. Cyprian: "Whoever is not with the bishop is not with the Church."

So banish all discord, which, especially in our days, the enemy often tries to sow between the shepherd and his flock, and stay closely united with the shepherd God has given you. Leaving aside personal ambitions, cooperate with him in all good works. The bishop's authority must be something sacred to you.

You can be sure that, if not exercised under the authority of the bishop, priestly ministry will be neither holy nor effective nor fruitful.

Be careful to preserve obedience. You solemnly promised obedience to the bishop. Ever since you became priests, you no longer belong to the world, to your family, or to yourselves, but to the Church.

Whatever be their high office or intellectual prowess, keep away from those priests who do not openly and sincerely side with their bishop.

You pastors must look to Christ, the chief shepherd, as to your preferred model. Since you stand above the people in dignity of office, you also have an obligation to be an example to them of virtue and diligent fulfillment of your duties.

First of all, you must know your sheep. You must lead them and protect them. Keep accurate parish records. Get to know the life and customs of your parishioners.

Make sure superstitions do not make their way among your people and bad books and antireligious newspapers do not spread with impunity.

Identify those who corrupt the people. Try to dissuade them from the path of corruption with all the means charity can suggest to you.

Keep note of the poor, the widows, the orphans, of all those in need. Give them your advice, your consolation and your help. If you cannot help them personally, warmly

encourage others to help them.

Above all, nourish the people entrusted to you with the preaching of the word of God, with salutary admonitions, with the administration of the sacraments, and with your example and prayer.

Teach the children catechism. Encourage their fathers and mothers to personally take their sons and daughters and the rest of the family to catechism.

At Mass, especially on Sundays and holy days, never omit expounding the gospel or the other Mass readings to the faithful and explaining the mystery of the most holy Sacrifice so that, having been instructed more fully, they may also take part in the Mass more devoutly.

At least on Sundays and on solemn feast days, give religious instruction to the people entrusted to you, according to their capacity, and nourish them with the word of salvation.

You must often and strongly exhort parents to bring up their families religiously in the school of Christian virtues. Convince them to keep at home good books, approved by you, which they should read especially on Sunday so as to form themselves and their families to a holy life.

“Safeguard the deposit”: these words are addressed to each one of you so that you will safeguard your flock, at any cost, like a deposit entrusted to your faithful care, and will diligently guard your flock and keep it from harm.

To help sinners back to the path of salvation by the grace of God, you must persist in season and out of season with private admonitions, if need be, with advice, with corrections, and with reprimands.

Sharers in my labors and solicitude, you are the workers in the vineyard entrusted to me: work and struggle with me so that, by the help of God’s mercy, we may gather our people as good grain into the heavenly granaries.

You, the young priests who help your pastors as associates, do not expect of them more than is fair. Live in the parish house like good and faithful friends, without revealing to outsiders what happens there. Have respect, love, and obedience for your pastor and cover up his eventual defects with filial love.

You clerics, buds of the olive tree, delight of your father, the shepherd’s first and sweetest thought, behave as your ecclesiastical state requires. You are clerics, that is to say, the portion of the Lord; and, in return, God himself is your portion. You must behave accordingly, then, so as to possess God and, in turn, be possessed by God. Think how important it is for you to be faithful to your duties, how incomparably chaste your life and your behavior should be. The Lord has chosen you so that you might stand before him and serve him.[\[132\]](#)

d) THE LEARNING OF THE CLERGY

“The Church is founded on faith; yet knowledge is also necessary”

No human society can be instituted and endure without knowledge, and no one can fill any public office without the needed learning. With even more reason will the Church flourish and increase with learning and her mission be more fruitfully and effectively fulfilled. The Church is founded on faith; but to engender and guard the faith, knowledge is necessary. Through knowledge the faith leading to true blessedness is born, nourished, defended, and fortified. Most of the faithful, says St. Augustine, do not have this knowledge even if they possess saving faith.

Just as it guards the faith, knowledge also protects the integrity of morals. But in our times people despise or reject this knowledge of faith and morals, some out of hatred, others because they want to indulge their vices more freely, still others because priests do not encourage them to hold firmly to wholesome doctrine and stand up for it during public discussions. So the need for a priest's knowledge increases. In fact, the doctrine of the faith must be defended not only in the cities but everywhere because the enemy has sown the weeds of error all over. And this is the duty of the priest, custodian of the faith and vindicator of the integrity of morals. But how can he defend and preserve the faith if he does not know it or understands it badly?

The priest's ignorance or neglect of learning, then, is an evil. First of all, because whoever fails to be instructed falls into evil (Prv 17:26). Secondly, because the ignorant shepherd will be ridiculed by those around him. Finally, because he will be witnessing the corruption of his people and be unable to do anything about it. What can be expected from the ministry of a priest who does not possess the necessary knowledge? What spirit of faith will he have in his performance of the liturgical functions. How sure will his guidance in the confessional be? What kind of watch will he keep over the flock entrusted to him? He is "the useless servant" who will receive the punishment he deserves: he will be cast out into the darkness, bound hand and foot.

If at times the Church has suffered harm from the defection of nations and the corruption of morals, this must be attributed in large measure to the ignorance of her ministers. [\[133\]](#)

"Two qualities make an accomplished man of God: holiness and knowledge"

Two qualities make an accomplished man of God: holiness, which makes him pleasing to God, and knowledge, with which he instructs the faithful (...). Without knowledge a priest does very serious and irreparable harm to the Church.

Every day and ever more tragically, the Church experiences how dangerous it is for the shepherd not to be able to find pastures, for the guide not to know the way, for the deputy not to know the will of the Lord (St. Bernard. Declam.).

It is not enough for a priest to stand out just for holiness or just for learning. Where are those who say it is enough for a priest to be virtuous? (Hier. ad Fabiol.). It is not enough for prelates to behave well and be known for integrity of morals if they do not also have knowledge of doctrine (Grat. Test. 36, c.2), because virtuous behavior in a priest without the word does indeed keep saints on the path of holiness through example but cannot lead back the straying and the ignorant to the knowledge of truth (Chrys. hom. 10 in Math.). On the other hand, knowledge alone is dangerous if one's life is stained with evil deeds.

In fact, to emit light alone is useless; to be on fire alone is not enough; perfection lies both in emitting light and in being on fire. [\[134\]](#)

“The need for study”

Although no one denies the need for learning, few nevertheless dedicate themselves to acquiring it.

There are some who before being entrusted with the care of souls devote themselves passionately to their studies. However, once they have obtained a benefice, they abandon their books, convinced they have learned enough for the uneducated people entrusted to them. It is a vain excuse, venerable brothers. Even if it is true that, most of the times, common knowledge is enough to handle ordinary questions, we often run into difficulties and complications that are not easy to wriggle out of. So priests ought to follow the example of the more serious doctors and lawyers who, when free from the care of the sick or from court obligations, dedicate themselves to the study of matters in their particular fields. Hence, our priests ought to dedicate themselves to serious study so as to come up with credible solutions to new, emerging problems. As soldiers practice with their weapons even when there is no danger of enemy attack, so should priests keep poring over their books, which are their weapons, if they do not want to seriously compromise their conscience.[\[135\]](#)

“The science of the saints”

The science of the saints is summed up in three points:

- 1) The science to which priests must devote themselves is knowing the means of perfection. Hence, they should learn the method of prayer and meditation and know perfectly the method of the examination of conscience and of the exercises of piety;
- 2) They should dedicate themselves to the study of what has to do with the Sacrifice of the Mass and the other sacraments and with the recitation of the Divine Office so as to know the meaning of the rites and ceremonies as much as possible.
- 3) The science that deals directly with the direction of souls, that is, dogmatic, moral, ascetical, and mystical theology. Everyone ought to have the book of an approved author on each of these matters and consult it every day. These are the main works; and they will help our priests acquire the necessary knowledge. We warmly recommend them to one and all.

While we recommend this kind of knowledge to our priests, in no way do we disapprove of secular knowledge and culture. Once we have taken care of ecclesiastical learning, we look favorably on secular learning as well. The more power and honor to the priesthood if a priest wishes to outdo lay people even in the other sciences. God is the Lord of sciences, and we must lead back even secular sciences to the feet of Christ.[\[136\]](#)

e) THE PROMOTION OF VOCATIONS

“Multiplying priests is like giving life to all kinds of good works”

Multiplying priests is like giving life to all the good works one can think of.

That incomparable hero of charity, St. Vincent de Paul, would say to his missionaries: “My brothers, we can think as hard as we want, but we will find that we cannot contribute to a greater cause than that of helping to form a good priest.”

Do you want to know the superabundant merit that will accrue to the one who welcomes the young ones of the Lord into the Seminary? Listen to Jesus himself: “Whoever receives you receives me,” he says to his apostles; “and whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is my disciple -- amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.” And what will this reward be? Jesus Christ tells us: “Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward.” In other words, as St. John Chrysostom explains, whoever helps form a minister of the gospel and comes to his assistance will share in all the good the minister performs and have from God the same reward as that of the minister, namely, an incomparable reward.

[\[137\]](#)

“Make an effort to prepare others like yourselves”

My beloved brothers, dearest pastors and priests, make an effort, as of this moment, to prepare others like yourselves to take your place in the diocese when it will mourn your passing. So, look around and see if in your parish you have any youngster with a fine mind, who is outgoing, lively and, at the same time, docile, studious, modest, clean-cut, and loves to serve in church. When you find one, I beg you to take it upon yourself to nurture him with special care. With his parents’ approval make sure you enroll him in the seminary (...).

Blessed is the pastor who helps give the Church at least one priest! Even if he may not always have worked with all the vigor and alacrity, with all the intensity that the needs of the times called for, still he can present himself before the divine Judge full of confidence. For he knows that he is leaving behind someone who will continue his heavenly mission here on earth and that, through his successor, he will continue in some way to evangelize, to instruct, and to offer still more sheaves to the Master of the harvest.

[\[138\]](#)

“Blessed is he who gives the Church a priest”

Do not fear that your expectations might be dashed. Should you be deprived in this life of seeing with your own eyes the longed-for fruits ripening on the tree of charity, still those fruits will ripen in the gardens of heaven to your credit. That is to say: in the sight of the Lord a virtuous deed is never lost. Even if most of the aspirants in the seminary

will leave and only a few reach their goal, these few will be worth a fortune and be the joy of heaven and earth.

Among the one hundred drops of rain that fall to the ground, ninety-eight become mud. Of the other two, one falls on the forehead of the infant in baptism, giving the Church a son or daughter, while the other falls into the priest's chalice, becoming one with the Blood of Christ and giving God to the world. Blessed, I repeat, a thousand times blessed is the person who gives the Church a priest![\[139\]](#)

“How many vocations are lost through the fault of parents”

You know very well how many vocations are sadly lost through the fault of parents. So, do not hesitate to portray to fathers and mothers the terrible consequences they will be guilty of in the sight of God if they directly and openly obstruct the vocation of their children, if with invincible obstinacy they close the doors of the seminary to them, if with blandishments or threats they force those born to spread God's kingdom on earth to drag around the heavy and ignominious chains of the world.

Warn them about that intemperate and worldly love that makes some of them think that those who don the cassock are almost lost both to the family and to the family name. Oh, how many parents have thwarted the vocation of their sons for earthly motives, only to discover too late that they had prepared for themselves and their sons a life of unhappiness and misfortune!

So remind them, venerable brothers, that if they must be careful not to push their children onto a path that is not theirs, they must be equally careful not to pull them off the path to which God calls them. Teach them that, far from obstructing and bemoaning their child's vocation, they should nurture, develop, and protect it through a Christian upbringing and consider themselves highly honored by it, just as, in times of greater faith, our forefathers and mothers felt honored to have a vocation in the family. Tell them also that the vocation to the sacred ministry is like a very delicate seed, planted by the very hand of God in the soul that comes as a pilgrim to this earth. If parents surround that seed with the most favorable conditions, they will see the seed quickly grow, flower, and bear fruit. If they surround it with unfavorable conditions, without a miracle of God's omnipotence the seed will surely die.[\[140\]](#)

“The seminaries: I love them as the apple of my eye”

The Diocese of Piacenza has its seminaries, too, and nothing surely is closer to my heart than these beloved religious institutions. Indeed, I love them. I love them as the apple of my eye because in the increasing number of priestly vocations I see a sign of the future well-being of my flock. For this reason, I gladly shouldered enormous sacrifices in the past, and I will continue to do all I can even today. But my efforts alone, dearly beloved, are not enough. I need your help. I need it desperately (...).

Our seminaries are poor, as well as are most of the youngsters who apply for admission. Almost all of these youngsters, as we know, come from families with little or nothing and are therefore, to a greater or lesser degree, in need of help even though the tuition is very low.

How painful it is for a bishop to very often have to turn away bright and promising lads from the seminary, just for lack of funds! How sad it is to hear that, for the same reason, others who are even more promising will have to be sent back home to their families! How painful to be unable to help them out!

Brothers and sons of mine, only you in your charity can relieve me of this anguish and distress. It is precisely on your charity that I am relying. I hope that even this time I have not appealed to your charity in vain.

I would like to see every parish, or at least every vicariate of the Diocese, set up, in the seminary, a scholarship for needy clerics.[\[141\]](#)

“My seminaries are full”

My seminaries are not only full but bulging with clerics. Even if I wanted to, I could not accept young men from other dioceses. Priests, as you know, are like medicine. You mustn't take more than necessary; otherwise, watch out! In a few years, at this rate, I won't know where to put all my own seminarians. This is God's answer to those who want to impoverish the clergy so as to thin out their ranks.[\[142\]](#)

“How lucky I would be if many of my priests were to volunteer for the foreign missions”

How lucky I would be if many, or at least some, of my priests were to volunteer for the sublime work of the foreign missions. Even though we are beginning to feel the scarcity of priests even here, not only would I not object to their leaving, but I would have only words of praise and encouragement for them, convinced as I am that one of the most efficacious means for keeping the faith among our people is that of bringing it to people who do not have it yet.

Having once been enrolled in your Institute for the Missions and not allowed to personally belong to it by the will of the late Bishop of Como, I have nonetheless always belonged to it in spirit. I sincerely hope that God will bless your institute and make it flourish so that, in numbers and quality, it may live up to its most noble purpose.[\[143\]](#)

5. LAY PEOPLE

Every human being is a spokesperson for the universe and its priest as well. He or she reads the book of human realities and praises their Author, Lord, and Father. Lay people discover the signs of eternity in temporal realities and make them known. They are the priests of the home and of civil society.

They are apostles of truth, of word, of example, of charity, of true civilization, of genuine

progress. By baptism, they are priests; by confirmation, soldiers and witnesses.

In cooperation and in communion with the ministerial priesthood, they make a distinctive and indispensable contribution to the Christian rebirth of the world. The Church belongs to them as much as it belongs to the ecclesiastics. Since it belongs to them, they love it, defend, it and proclaim it with courage. They are not ashamed of the gospel. In a secularized world they openly give witness to it by a forthright profession of faith, by fidelity, by the vigor of their personal convictions, and by concerted and disciplined effort.

a) THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE FAITHFUL

“Every human being is the spokesperson and priest of the universe”

While we are not the last end of created things, certainly in the physical order we are their immediate goal because they are subject to us and serve us: “You have placed him over the works of your hands. You have placed all things under his feet.”

Why, in fact, does the sun pour forth the inexhaustible torrents of its light? Who is it that snatches from electricity its power and compels it to follow certain paths and become an instrument of traction, of movement, of new life? Who is it that compels a ray of the sun to become a fascinating painter of the works of nature and art? Who is it that subjugates air and steam to his own wagon, so as to outspeed the birds in flight? Who is it that measures the distance of the planets, their surface area, that determines their weight and analyzes their composition? What creature is there that scans the paths of the shining stars? Why did God create the treasures in the sky, the earth, and the sea with so much magnificence?

Without human beings, these marvels would not make sense. All these things would have no reason for being, for multiplying, or for continuing to exist. In their very nature and purpose, all these things proclaim the need for human beings in creation because without human beings they themselves might fall back into primordial nothingness. We are the immediate, temporal, and subordinate purpose of their existence and duration.

So for us the universe is like a great book in which are recorded the innumerable favors of the Creator. It is up to us to read the Word of God’s love, wisdom, and omnipotence written on the face of things; the Word of God who for our sake drew all these things from nothingness and for our sake keeps them from falling back into nothingness. Given the inability of the other creatures, human beings have received the honor and responsibility of being their spokespersons and priests of the universe, giving voice to inanimate nature in its hymn of glory and universal gratitude to the Creator! [\[144\]](#)

“Citizen of eternity”

The Catholic religion, which has revealed to human beings their high worth by clearly

disclosing to them the sublime purpose for which they were made, has also imposed on them duties that are commensurate with the sublimity of this end of theirs. In the conduct of their lives, Christians can no longer confine themselves to the narrow limits of reason and time if they do not want to disavow their divine origin and their noble destination.

As citizens of eternity, Christians must scan with their minds the vast horizon revelation has opened up before their eyes, where the earth is only a reflection of heaven and eternity the final judge of human actions. In this light (which is the only true light), the most dramatic events lose their importance; or better, the real importance of these events comes from religion, interwoven, as it is, in a thousand different ways with all things human. The rise and fall of empires, the revolutions of peoples, the convulsions and fusions of peoples are just a process kicking up a bit of dust in the immense reaches of space. Religion is the only thing that really matters. What God ultimately has in mind in working through human events is the spread and triumph of religion.

In this magnificent plan nothing is isolated any longer: one being is related to another, one action to another. All individuals and nations have a role to play; all have a share in the work of building up the edifice. Doing our part means fulfilling the designs of divine Providence. It means weaving, during our lifetime, the eternal crown of justice that, even before his death, St. Paul knew he would receive. On the other hand, doing our part poorly means disturbing the order established by God. It means failing to come up to God's expectations. It means burdening our conscience with the guilt of the servant who buried his talent instead of trading with it. [\[145\]](#)

“Lay people, you too must be apostles”

Brothers and sisters, you too must be apostles, that is, people of action and sacrifice, zealous for the honor of God and the Church, aflame with love for souls. Who ever said that, just because you are lay people, you cannot exercise the apostolate of the word in the little world around you by using uplifting speech in your conversations, your instructions, and your admonitions? Who ever said you cannot exercise the apostolate of good example by openly professing your faith, cost what it may! What about the apostolate of charity: helping the poor, visiting the sick, consoling the afflicted, doing good to all? What about the apostolate of civilization: cooperating in the work of destroying sin, which depraves people, and in the work of advancing justice, which brings prosperity to nations? When the fatherland is in supreme need, every citizen becomes a soldier. When the Church is in desperate need, every believer must be an apostle, nay, a fervent and generous apostle. [\[146\]](#)

“Even lay people have their apostolic mission”

Lay people are soldiers of Christ, too, are they not? They too must take up arms for the support and defense of his kingdom (...). The activity of the clergy has limits beyond which it cannot go either for lack of means or programs or because situations are unfavorable or actually hostile. Lay people can go where a priest cannot. Often an exhortation from a lay person is accepted more readily than from a priest (...). Lay people, too, have their apostolate and, may I say, their apostolic mission. [\[147\]](#)

“Every Christian is born an apostle”

Not all of you, it is true, have been called to preach the gospel like the Apostles, but all of you have an obligation, in proportion to and in conformity with your state of life, to advance the cause of religion, to defend it, and to promote its glory. In the words of Tertullian, every Christian is born an apostle: an apostle to help keep the promoters of evil from increasing and to prevent desertions from the fields of the Divine Tiller; to keep divisions and dissensions from erupting; to forestall the growth of that deadly and worse-than-death coldness that keeps people from attending to their duties, to piety, to the word of God, to the correction of their morals, and to the exercise of Christian virtues (...).

Whoever does not feel the urge to share in the apostolate for the defense of truth and of the Church obviously has not received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit cannot remain idle once he enters a human heart. He is an active and productive Spirit, full of power and energy. Whoever has this Spirit in his heart speaks willingly of God and of things divine, is full of zeal for the instruction of his brothers and sisters in Christian doctrine, and proclaims his readiness to die at any time for the cause of Jesus Christ and his Church. [\[148\]](#)

“You are not declining old age but rising youth”

If the day when our wayward society returns to the straight path seems far off, you, especially, O good lay people, who are disgusted and horrified by the apostasy of our society, who revere and love the name of God, you can hasten the longed-for hour. You can prepare the hearts of your brothers and sisters for repentance by professing your faith in the sight of all people, by taking pride in being Christians and working with greater alacrity. You feel honored at being able to serve the Lord and to glorify him in your speeches and writings, and in the various events of life.

You can do much because, in the words of a well known writer, “You are not declining old age but rising youth.” It is up to you to get hold of society and make it Christian once again by working with bold ideas and firm intentions so that the Catholic spirit will infiltrate everywhere and permeate everything having to do with the intellectual, moral and even physical life of people.

Because of foolish prejudices, so many teachings are viewed with suspicion if they come from priests but make a deep impression if they come from lay people! How many doors closed to God’s minister open wide before a man of the world, who could, if he wanted, bring in with him the precious treasure of the faith! Because of your everyday contacts, you have so many ways -- which a priest rarely if ever does -- to get close to your brothers and sisters, to enlighten them, to speak eloquently of Jesus Christ and the Church. What a precious and fruitful apostolate you could exercise in the midst of society! [\[149\]](#)

“You are the priests of the home”

The work of priests could never fully achieve its purpose if it were not backed by the parents. So let me address another word to you, fathers and mothers, and to you who take their place. In the words of St. Gregory the Great, the lips of parents are their children's first books. Yes, it is up to you, as the Apostle Paul teaches, to bring them up in discipline and in the precepts of the Lord, that is, in his holy law and in his gospel teachings.

Just as you taught them since they were babies to respect you, to give you a kiss or a caress, to babble your name with their infant lips, so you should also teach them from their infancy to join their little hands to devoutly greet the Lord, to pronounce his most holy Name with respect, to invoke him, to adore him everywhere and to unite themselves with him through the bonds of faith, hope and love (...).

Do not miss a chance to instill noble and lofty sentiments into their hearts. By so doing, you will help them raise their minds to heavenly thoughts. Your teaching should be such that it almost melts into each and every action and merges with it, as it were. Your teaching does not have the heavy trappings of the pulpit; so it does not induce the boredom and dreariness associated with the pulpit. Your teaching should be understood and loved by both the slow and quick-witted. Since your teaching is imparted by a word, a gesture, even by a look or a smile, it will carry with it both the precept and the incentive to live it.

Religious instruction uses both reason and sentiment: reason is for adults, sentiment for children. Hence, a mother, the person in whom sentiment predominates, is also the most lovable and most powerful of educators. The memories of a mother are never forgotten (...).

Mothers, make use of this gentle and sublime influence the Creator has endowed you with. Utilize this power to bring up children worthy of Him and every day present them to Him as your living and precious offerings. You are the priests of the home, just as a priest is the mother of the Church. You must find your greatest joy and satisfaction in forming Jesus Christ in the hearts of your children. Raphael became immortal by painting the figure of the transfigured Lord on canvass. More blessed and more sublime is the Christian mother who makes living pictures of the Son of God out of her children. She can say of herself, with greater truth, what a famous painter had said of himself: "pingo aeternitati," I am painting for eternity.[\[150\]](#)

"They made the spirit of Jesus permeate every fiber of society"

Recall the example of your forefathers and mothers (...). They set an example for us to follow even when it comes to public life. They were more concerned with just and holy laws than with politics itself. They were convinced that religion, which is essentially superior to political parties, must be served by all and not be the servant of anyone. They were not so arrogant as to pretend that the Church should be ruled by their lights or by the norms of earthly prudence, which, after all, is so criminally indulgent and misleading vis-à-vis the world. Instead, as true followers of the Redeemer, true disciples of the gospel and true patriots, they made the spirit of Jesus permeate every fiber of society and created the stupendous harmonies of the Christian world and Christian civilization.

Dearly beloved, if that spirit truly burns in you, it will indeed burst into life and turn into action. It will pass on from you to other souls, to your family, to your relatives and friends, to your fellow citizens, to the whole world around you, be it big or small. This priesthood, this lay apostolate, was always a duty and an honor, but today it is a supreme, urgent and absolute need.[\[151\]](#)

b) THE ACTIVITY OF LAY PEOPLE

“The lay army of the Church of Christ”

The activity of lay people must be joined harmoniously to the activity of the clergy (...). The lay Church of Satan must be counteracted not just by priestly power but also by the lay power of Christ's Church. God has always given victory to these two forces (priests and lay people) when joined together. “The gates of hell shall never prevail against my Church,” he assured us. Now, the Church, in its fullest sense, the Church the beloved spouse of the Nazarene, the Church the immortal kingdom of the living God, the Church the mystical body of Jesus, is not made up just of priests, nor just of bishops, nor just of the Pope, but of the shepherds and faithful together, even though the latter depend on the former.[\[152\]](#)

“Be our mediators”

The Church certainly will not perish as a result of the present battles, just as it did not as a result of much more formidable ones in the course of nineteen centuries. But we would fail to appreciate the plan of divine Providence were we to abstain from working toward its victory under the pretext that the Church was entrusted to the priests (...).

There is no question that Jesus Christ could defend and safeguard his Church. But, out of his great kindness, he called human beings to the honor of being her helpers. He did not call only the priests but also the lay people. He called men and women, the mighty and the humble, rich and poor, learned and unlearned.

My beloved lay people, you must therefore appreciate the nobility and dignity of your mission and must try to live up to it (...). Be our mediators just as we are God's mediators on your behalf (...). Of what use is it to deplore with endless lamentations the decline of faith and morals and the universal chaos, if we do not want to inconvenience ourselves; if we do not want to do anything to remedy the situation; if, once the battle begins, we abandon the field, run away, and hide? Were we not all marked on our foreheads with the oil of the strong? Were we not all enrolled in the army of Christ?[\[153\]](#)

“Everyone is an apostle of the truth”

All of us, with courage, constancy, and discipline, must use whatever lawful means we can to influence this society, the majority of which is Catholic, a majority, however, that is ruled by an unconcerned and antichristian minority. I say all of us, because we would make a serious mistake if we thought that the defense of the faith is the exclusive duty of

the clergy, whereas it is really the duty of all those who profess it.

The Church, the mystical body of Christ, is a moral body, made up of many members, different from each other, yet all united in one single body, with a structure and supply network by which all the members can help each other and contribute to its life, vigor, health, and preservation. Now, since the Church is made up of both clergy and laity, the clergy cannot succeed without the laity, nor the laity without the clergy. No, religion is not a patrimony of which the clergy alone are the beneficiaries. Since religion serves everybody, it must be defended by all (...).

No age, office or state of life is exempt from this duty, just as no office, age or state of life is excluded from its benefits. On the other hand, when religion languishes, when consciences demean themselves and freedom dies out, is it the fault of the clergy alone? Do not lay people, too, and all of society suffer great harm when this happens? Moreover, a faith that can look with indifference and insensibility on the spread of evil and that, in the midst of blasphemies and scandals, is able only to focus on itself so as not to perish, is a faith some might consider good. But frankly it is something I find quite hard to understand. Besides, religion is truth. Every person possessing the truth has the duty to spread it, to share it with those who do not know it, and to defend it with all one's energy when it is attacked. In this sense, everyone is an apostle of the truth just as everyone can become a martyr of the truth.[\[154\]](#)

“Laity and Church: two sisters indissolubly united”

What a beautiful and consoling spectacle we are witnessing! Standing next to their holy shepherds and mingling with an illustrious group of priests, we see an equally illustrious group of lay people, all animated by the desire to do good, all aflame with a lofty zeal for the holiest of causes, namely the cause of the Church (...).

Today, unfortunately, some are trying to erect a wall between laity and Church, between these two realities that are sisters indissolubly united. To better attain this end, what have the followers of modern liberalism done? They have tried to make the Church an object of hatred, painting it in the eyes of the people with dark colors. They have profaned the holiest and most precious terms and given them outrageous meanings so as to turn them against her. Against the Church's people, things, and institutions, they have recruited the notions of patriotism, liberty, human dignity, science, equality, and progress: terms that, coming from them, are fraudulent and dripping with blood.

Now, to know, love, and obey this Church, to be concerned with her struggles and victories, to spread her teachings and help her ministers, to defend her rights and make up for the harm done to her, to comfort her in her sorrows, this, especially in our days, is one of the most important duties of Catholics. This is what the united efforts of clergy and laity should aim at.[\[155\]](#)

“We want to be real Christians”

We want to be real Christians, Christians in faith and in deed. Be we, priests or lay people, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, must all be united as one family. Each of us in our own heart and all of us together, with one mind and one heart, must offer ourselves to

the Father of the faithful, to the holy Vicar of the Prince of peace and justice, as obedient and docile doers of everything he wants and desires for the indivisible good of religion and country.

We must be united as real brothers and sisters not only inside the church but also outside the church so as to help and comfort each other, to work for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ and extend his reign in families, schools, and public life. We must be united if we want to ensure for ourselves the right to real Christian freedom -- which ought to be equal for all and not be just the absurd privilege of sectarian cliques -- and if we hope to enjoy that freedom without arrogance or desire to lord it over others.

For the sake of their families and in the interest of our country, we must defend our poor young people from bad example and harmful teachings, from immoral behavior and all kinds of corrupting influences.

We want freedom for the Church, freedom for our Leader. We want freedom of worship, freedom of work, freedom to keep the Lord's day, freedom to exercise our most sacred rights, in a word, the freedom of the children of God.[\[156\]](#)

“Today the laity's field of work is vast”

What a vast field of activity lay people have in our day: promoting, encouraging, and distributing good literature; creating and organizing Catholic committees and societies; ceaselessly campaigning for religious instruction in our schools and for Sunday rest; contributing to political administration, whenever permissible, by voting in municipal elections; counteracting by word and deed, whenever necessary, the pernicious influence of the Masonic miasma, that has by now penetrated everywhere; whenever possible, getting rid of those bullies, those cowards in the municipalities who sometimes dare to wound the deepest sentiments of their people by letting this faith be ridiculed and their most sacred rights and most cherished traditions trampled underfoot; gathering the youngsters at the Sunday youth centers and schools of Christian doctrine, thus keeping them away from the corruption of the world; coming to the assistance of our august Common Father in his poverty through our filial offerings; supplying our churches with new ministers by our offerings for the support of poor seminarians; setting up credit unions that will root out usury and help those in need, especially among the working class; demanding with dignity and wisdom but with strength, courage, and determination, and always by legal means, real and genuine freedom and independence for the Supreme Pontiff, our head and father, the kind of freedom and independence he, the only judge on the matter, considers necessary. All these works, one more necessary and meritorious than the other, will confound the enemies of the faith, will nourish the flame of divine love in us, and will show that we really are worthy sons and daughters of the Church of Jesus Christ.[\[157\]](#)

c) THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel”

In matters of religion, be they about doctrine or morals, precepts or counsels, about the laws of God or of the Church, about worship or hierarchy, about the Pope, the bishops or the least priest, not only our speech but also our very lives should cry out to the world: I am not ashamed of the Gospel (...).

This is the hour for us to profess and practice our faith fearlessly. This is the hour for us to work strenuously for the Christian rebirth of our people, disillusioned and vexed, as they are, by the false promises of those who, instead of well-being and prosperity, have given them only humiliation and misery. This is the hour for us to lavish our love on the people in the name of Jesus Christ so that they do not go after false teachings and even false promises. This is the hour for us to draw as one man around our supreme leader, the vicar of Jesus Christ.[\[158\]](#)

“Who said martyrdom is not for us?”

Who said martyrdom is not for us? In Scripture, the Holy Spirit says to each of us: suffer agony for your soul and struggle unto death for justice. This justice is the truth of Christ. Those who abandon this truth think unjust thoughts and become doers of iniquity, thus incurring the eternal wrath of God (...).

For this truth we must fight strenuously even unto agony and death. Sooner or later, an hour of this agony will come into everyone's life. If nothing else, says a Doctor of the Church, the unrelenting struggle of the spirit against the flesh, the anguish of a soul sometimes subjugated by earth like a slave and seemingly rejected by heaven as unworthy: this is martyrdom. To have the courage of one's convictions and to live a Christian life before a scoffing world because it does not have the courage to believe: this is tantamount to martyrdom.[\[159\]](#)

“We must openly take sides with God”

Many remain Catholic but out of cowardice keep their faith hidden. We must not condemn ourselves to silence when we hear the thrice holy name of God blasphemed and our Common Father, the Roman Pontiff, jeered at. We must not be like the Catholics Pascal describes with such deep insight: “They are irresolute because of cowardice, complacent because of self-interest. One hardly knows what they really stand for.”

The time for powerful action has come. Are we not sons and daughters of heroes and martyrs? Are we not heirs to a faith that stood up to tyrants and villains? Do we not profess the faith that has conquered the world? If this faith teaches us that here below we are constantly struggling with spiritual enemies, are we not to struggle with the enemies of religion? Our love for religion should prepare us for an untiring defense of this faith. However, there is no better or easier defense than to openly and fearlessly profess it in word and deed without ostentation.[\[160\]](#)

“The courage of righteousness “

Now is the time for us to show the children of the world, who brag they are free, what true freedom is and what it consists of. If the life of a Christian is warfare at all times, what shall we say of our modern days? We can try to fool ourselves all we want. But in our day a war, a treacherous war, is raging against Catholicism from one end of the world to the other (...). It is up to us, sons and daughters of the true Church of Christ, to fearlessly fight this war, a glorious and holy war par excellence. It is up to us to display before friend and foe the power and enthusiasm of courageous Catholics, the power and courage of a people radiant with all the splendor of Christian faith and hope.

If the wicked have the daring of evil, to the point of impudence, why should the upright lack the daring of righteousness? If the wicked have the courage to ruin themselves, why should we not have the courage to save ourselves? If the wicked are free to corrupt youth, why should we be timid and afraid to train them to be good Christians? The wicked could not care less about other people's feelings. They trod underfoot the cherished traditions, the laws, the conscience, the will of a whole people. But we, brightly enlightened by nineteen centuries of God's light, urged on by all that is good and true on earth, sustained and blessed by heaven, assured of an immortal reward, are we going to draw back in fear? (...).

Especially you young people, the precious hope of Church and country, never forget that battles and victories must begin in your heart. Your heart is the first battlefield on which the great problems and most sacred rights of Church, family, and civil society are first brought up and studied (...). Do not let yourselves be duped by the idle talk of a world that snickers because it does not have the courage to believe. Flee from the apostles of error as you would a poisonous snake. Deepen your knowledge of the principles of our holy faith. Cultivate the science of the faith. If you are believers out of deep conviction, all the seductions of the world cannot touch you. Victorious within yourselves, you will lift the banner of Christian truth higher and higher. You will fear only God and be truly free. [\[161\]](#)

“Have the strength of your convictions”

Fortitude: this is what is missing in most people today. Fortitude is not firmness, because firmness can also be an inert force. Nor should fortitude be confused with fidelity and constancy, because fortitude is the cause not the effect of these two virtues. Fortitude is not violence, because violence peters out in a fleeting and sterile effort. Fortitude gives power to mind and heart, a power that stands fast, that goes forward, that withstands all attacks and overcomes all obstacles. Fortitude is a conquering virtue.

Even during the most hard-fought struggles, fortitude remains within the exact limits of the truth. With calm and sovereign authority, it rules and directs all the faculties of the mind, all the outbursts of the heart. It is fortitude that creates great enterprises (...).

You, too, must have this fortitude, the strength of your convictions, above all. When one has nineteen centuries of light, glory, and good works behind him, when one is sustained by an invincible army of apologists and doctors, when one has the support of knowledge and talent, of chastity and sacrifice, of the apostles and martyrs, of a Church that even today fills the world with marvelous deeds, oh, that person will surely speak and work with holy freedom and noble pride! He has every right to look error in the eye and not flinch!

Use this fortitude against your passions. Even our passions can be powerful instruments for good if we are able to control them, to channel them with the fortitude of our will. Lightning crushes and destroys as it passes; but, made docile by the hands of science, it conveys the thoughts of men and women across the ocean with the speed of lightning.

Do you have energy and drive? Come! The field is so vast. Looking over your program, gentlemen, I read: the organization of Catholics in Emilia; Catholic action; religious and worship activities; the press; schools, etc. Do you have any ambition? Well, then, channel it toward the conquest of all that is good, of all that is true. Yes, there is such a thing as holy ambition. It keeps spurring us on: higher, still higher! higher in efforts, higher in virtue, higher in sacrifices, higher in regenerating power! *excelsior, excelsior!*

You must have the energy of the apostolate because every Christian must be an apostle. How can one possess the truth, see it, feel it, love it, and not experience a powerful need to spread it and share it with others?

You must have the fortitude to hold on and resist during the hour of trial and battle because every Christian is a soldier (...). Fight with courage but, at the same time, with charity. In the words of a distinguished modern writer, your adversaries, howsoever wicked, still belong to the architecture of good; and if God were to deal some powerful blows, they would be transformed. Put your hand into the sanctuary of the heart. One by one touch all the chords in it, and you will discover the chord of love. Touch that chord with kindness, which is the sister of charity. That chord will vibrate and you will have won over an immortal soul and gained a new heart to the scepter of truth. Always remember that Christian truth does not want people who kill but people who save. It does not need executioners but victims. Recall that, when describing the armor of a Christian soldier, the Apostle Paul mentions shoes: the soldier's feet should be shod in readiness for the *gospel of peace*. At the school of Jesus Christ, to fight and win means to love. Love is victory, hatred is defeat. [\[162\]](#)

“Character, which gives rise to firmness and courage”

The most precious trait a person could have in society is character, the fruit of deep convictions; character, which, in turn, gives rise to the firmness and courage that make one express his or her opinion without fear and before anyone whenever necessary. Unfortunately, a dreadful scourge of our day is the absence of this character. As a result, people often do not understand each other because, like chameleons, they keep changing ideas, opinions, and language, according to the persons they may be talking to (...). It is high time to do away with half-baked consciences and cowardly fears. Oh, once again, why do we not make good use of all the freedom which is ours? [\[163\]](#)

“It is time to wake up, it is time to act”

It is up to us who, through the mercy of God, are believers to make every effort to save society and our country from greater evils, especially because, frankly, we ourselves are not without fault. For too long we have been weak, uncertain, almost afraid of the threatening look and arrogant demeanor of the shameless destroyers of the faith, a faith that should be more precious to us than our very lives. While we may not have offered incense to their idols, we nonetheless hid ourselves and left these people at liberty to do harm and say whatever they wanted.

It is time to wake up, it is time to act (...). Those who see the wicked feverishly engaged in their activities and stand aside are traitors and cowards. The gospel is full of allegories, recommendations, reproaches, and anathemas against the laziness of the do-nothings and the sterility of lethargic souls. No vice is condemned more often and more forcefully.

To these people I say: what good is it to you to keep deploring the evils besetting you if you do nothing about them? It only helps make our enemies bolder, for in this attitude they detect your cowardice and weakness. Do you not know that, generally, the events of one age have their roots in an earlier one, that the order of events results from the order of ideas and that, as a result, if we want a better future, now is the time to prepare it for ourselves? (...).

Expecting everything from miracles is neither virtue nor faith but unwarranted presumption. True believers surely believe in miracles, but they know very well that God does not perform them either to satisfy the vain curiosity of the foolish or to reward the laziness and sloth of anyone.[\[164\]](#)

“Christian society does not reject the Nicodemuses but does want the fire of Peter”

The timid and the cowardly must become strong because, while Christian society does not crush the fainthearted, it does need lions. While it does not reject the Nicodemuses, it does call for the fire of Peter (...). In a word, if all those who are inwardly Catholic were to show themselves Catholics in deed, you can be sure that goodness would begin to battle with evil on an equal footing and that the rights of the majority of citizens would be respected by the very people by whom, frankly, Catholics allowed themselves to be taken advantage of. Well, then, let this be your first task: to do good together and to do it openly and courageously.[\[165\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) *Unione con la Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 810.

[\[2\]](#) Easter Homily, 1879 (AGS 3016/4).

[\[3\]](#) *Pastoral Letter (...) for Holy Lent, 1878*, Piacenza 1878, pp. 17-18.

[\[4\]](#) Easter Homily, 1880 (AGS 3016/4).

[\[5\]](#) *Id.*, 1893.

[\[6\]](#) Homily for Pentecost, 1879 (AGS 3016/6).

[\[7\]](#) *La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 38-40.

[\[8\]](#) *Lett. Past. (...) Nov. 3, 1881*, Piacenza 1881, pp.23-25.

[\[9\]](#) *La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1889, pp.25-27.

[10]Ibid., pp.35-36.

[11]Homily for the Feast of All Saints, 1886, (AGS 3016/8).

[12]Il Concilio Vaticano, Como 1873, pp. 115-117.

[13]Homily for the Feast of All Saints, 1886 (AGS 3016/8).

[14]*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1879*, Piacenza 1879, pp. 17-18. We should note that, in Scalabrini's time, the terms "Catholic religion" and "true faith" were synonymous.

[15]Homily for the Feast of All Saints, 1897 (AGS 3016/8).

[16]Ibid.

[17]*Il Concilio Vaticano*, Como 1873, pp. 119-120.

[18]Homily for Pentecost, 1898 (AGS 3016/6).

[19]Homily for the Feast of All Saints, 1897 (AGS 3016/8).

[20]20 For the dedication of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Piacenza, Feb. 17, 1884 (AGS 3018/2). The Latin quotation comes from St. Augustine.

[21]*Pel suo ritorno da Roma*, Piacenza 1882, pp. 21-22.

[22]*Cattolici di nome e cattolici di fatto*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 15-16. By "new liberalism," Scalabrini means the attitude of the "intransigent" extremists.

[23]Ibid., pp. 16-20. The Author deplores the "system" of the more radical "intransigents," who would accuse of unorthodox ideas or of disobedience the "Rosminians" or the "Conciliatorists" who disagree with them.

[24]*Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, p. 18.

[25]*Ringraziamenti*, Piacenza 1901, p. 5.

[26]*Il santo giubileo*, Piacenza 1886, pp. 20 -2 1. Once again, the Author deplores the violent attacks of the "intransigents" and their attempts to "go over the heads" of the bishops with the pretext of defending the Pope's authority.

[27]*La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 45-46.

[28]*A venerabile clero e diletto popolo*, Piacenza Sept. 22, 1894.

[29]Christmas homily, 1876 (AGS 3016/1).

[30] *Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 14-15.

[31] *Il Concilio Vaticano*, Como 1873, pp. 214-215.

[32] *La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 10-13.

[33] *Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, pp. 16-17. Some “intransigents” criticized Leo XIII for having abandoned the unyielding policies Plus IX had adopted against the Italian Government.

[34] Letter to G. Bonomelli, May 23, 1883 (Carteggio S.B., p. 126). The “party” meant the more radical “intransigents.” “The particular program” is found in these words: “I will weep over the evils afflicting the Church and dedicate myself entirely to prayer and the exercise of my sacred ministry, doing what I think is best for souls and being concerned only with preparing myself for death” (Id., Sept. 19, 1892. Ibid., p. 71).

[35] Id., May 6, 1891 (ibid., pp. 284-285).

[36] Id., January 1886 (ibid., p. 191). The maxim was dear to Antonio Rosmini. See *Imitation of Christ*, Bk. II, Ch. 2, #1 and 2 Chr 20:17.

[37] *La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 14-15.

[38] *Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 31-32.

[39] Ibid., pp. 18-19. The Pastoral Letter was written on the occasion of the “Miraglia schism” (see Biografia, pp. 872-905).

[40] Past. Letter of Jan. 23, 1878, pp. 1-5. The letter was written after the attack made on the bishop by the anticlericals for obeying the orders of the Holy See on the occasion of the funeral of King Victor Emmanuel (see Biografia, pp. 624-628).

[41] Ibid., pp. 5-7.

[42] *La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 30-31.

[43] *Cattolici di nome e cattolici di fatto*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 24-25. The Author contends, against the “intransigents,” that the first “law” of the Church is charity.

[44] Ibid., p. 27.

[45] Words spoken on the occasion of the disaster on the island of Ischia, Aug.4, 1883 (AGS 3018/23).

[46] Discourse on the Most Holy Crucifix, 1880 (AGS 3017/3).

- [47] *Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima dell'anno 1893*, Piacenza 1893, pp. 13-14.
- [48] *Obolo di S. Pietro*, Bologna 1900, pp. 5-8 (Collective Pastoral Letter of the bishops of Emilia, drawn up by Bishop Scalabrini).
- [49] *Il Concilio Vaticano*, Como 1873, pp. 172-173.
- [50] Homily for Pentecost, 1900 (AGS 3016/6).
- [51] *Al Venerabile Clero e Dilettissimo Popolo della Città e della Diocesi*, Piacenza 1878, p. 5.
- [52] Letter to Leo XIII, Feb. 15, 1879 (AGS 3019/2).
- [53] *Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1879*, Piacenza 1879, p. 5.
- [54] *Atti e documenti del Primo Congresso Catechistico...*, Piacenza 1890, p. 238.
- [55] Homily for the Feast of St. Peter, 1899 (AGS 3016/7).
- [56] *Sull'Opuscolo La Lettera dell'Emo Card. Pitra - I commenti - La parola del Papa*, Piacenza 1885, pp. 20-21.
- [57] Letter to Pius IX, April 5, 1876 (AGS 3019/1) (translated from Latin).
- [58] Letter to Leo XIII, March 27, 1893 (AGS 3019/2).
- [59] *Lett. Past. (...) 15 agosto 1895*, Piacenza 1895, pp. 6-7.
- [60] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
- [61] Letter to Leo XIII, Jan. 1, 1901 (ASV-SS, Rub. 3/1901, fasc. 3, Prot. N.61381).
- [62] *L'elezione del nuovo Pontefice Pio X*, Piacenza 1903, pp. 5-6.
- [63] *La prima Lettera Enciclica di Sua Santità Pio X*, Piacenza 1903, pp. 6-7.
- [64] *Spirito di allegrezza*, Piacenza 1878, pp. 4-5.
- [65] *Universo Nostro Clero*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 3-4. (translated from Latin). The letter was written on the occasion of the decree *Post Obitum*, condemning forty propositions of Antonio Rosmini (see *Biografia*, pp. 702-722). The priests of Piacenza were divided into "Thomists" and "Rosminians" (see *ibid.*, pp. 696-702).
- [66] First Pastoral Letter, Como 1876, pp. 1-2.
- [67] *Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 19-20.

[68] *Lett. Past. (...) per la Visita Pastorale*, Piacenza 1876, pp.5-7.

[69] *Discorso per il giubileo episcopale di Mons. G. Bonomelli*, Cremona 1896, pp. 7-8.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

[72] 7 For the consecration of Bishop Angelo Fiorini, Nov. 26, 1899 (AGS 3018/4).

[73] Letter to G. Bonomelli, June 10, 1892 (Carteggio S.B., p. 297). Leo XIII had threatened to remove Bonomelli from the administration of the Diocese of Cremona.

[74] *Ibid.*, March 2, 1893 (*ibid.*, pp. 102-103). The “poor archbishop” who had been humiliated by Rev. Davide Albertario was Bishop Luigi Nazari di Calabiana, of Milan (see *Biografia*, pp. 553-554).

[75] *Id.*, Jan. 14, 1893 (*ibid.*, p. 88). The “well-known newspaper” was “L’Osservatore Cattolico” of Milan (see *Biografia*, pp. 551-553).

[76] Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Jan. 14, 1889 (AGS 3/1). The “pamphlet” Scalabrini is referring to is *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, in which he asks the Government to grant missionary clerics in training exemption from military service in favor of a 5-year period of “civil service,” to be fulfilled teaching school to the emigrants.

[77] *Ibid.* “L’Osservatore Cattolico” had insinuated that Scalabrini had sent his brother, Prof. Angelo Scalabrini, to report on the religious situation of the Italian communities abroad (see *Biografia*, pp. 34-35).

[78] First Pastoral Letter, Como 1876, pp. 2-3.

[79] *Discorso per il giubileo episcopate di Mons. G. Bonomelli*, Cremona 1896, pp. 14-15.

[80] *Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 4244. The “stumbling block” was the apostate priest, Rev. Paolo Miraglia (see *Biografia*, pp. 872-905).

[81] Discourse for his episcopal Jubilee, 1901, (AGS 3018/13),

[82] *Sull’Opuscolo La Lettera dell’E.mo Card. Pitra - I commenti - La parola del Papa*, Piacenza 1885, pp. 13-14. The pamphlet deplored by Scalabrini was defending the extremist “intransigents”, who pretended to be the only “Catholic” voice and readily labeled their adversaries as heretics.

[83]Ibid., pp. 18-20.

[84]Letter to Cardinal A. Agliardi, s.d. (AGS 3020/2). As usual, Cardinal Wlodimir Czacki expressed ideas that agreed with those of Scalabrini. The “newspapers” were those of Albertario, Des Houx, Nocedal, etc. The “pamphlet” would be published in 1899 with the title, *Il socialismo e l’azione del clero*.

[85]Letter to Leo XIII, Aug. 16, 1885, published in *Leonis XIII Epistola ad Archiepiscopum Parisiensem*, Roma 1885, pp. 144-145. In his letter to Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris, Leo XIII had condemned the excesses of the more intransigent journalism (see Biografia, pp. 580-581).

[86]*Sull’Opuscolo Lettera dell’Emo Card. Pitra - I commenti - La parola del Papa*, Piacenza 1985, pp, 21-22.

[87]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[88]Obbedienza, unione, disciplina (AGS 3018/20): it is a draft prepared by Scalabrini for a collective pastoral letter of the bishops of Emilia.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]*Discorso per il giubileo episcopale di Mons. G. Bonomelli*, Cremona 1896, pp. 10-11.

[92]Christmas homily, 1885 (AGS 3016/1). In 1885, the Evangelical Methodists had opened a church in Piacenza.

[93]*Cattolici di nome e cattolici di fatto*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 21-22. The author here defends Bonomelli, who had been accused of “liberalism” because he had set his heart on the reconciliation of the Holy See with the State of Italy (see Biografia, pp. 679-682).

[94]Ibid., pp. 23-24. M. Salzano’s book, *Il Cattolicesimo nel secolo XIX*, is being quoted here.

[95]Letter to Cardinal M. Rampolla, July 17, 1893 (ASV-SS, Rub. 3/1893, fasc. 1, Prot. N. 13276).

[96]Letter to Leo XIII, Nov. 19, 1881 (Carteggio S.B., pp. 39-40). By “revolution in the Church” Scalabrini meant the violation of the “hierarchical principle,” that is to say, the violation of the bishop’s authority over his diocese, an authority to be exercised subordinately to the Pope, not to priests or lay people (see Biografia, pp. 524-531).

[97]Homily on the Feast of St. Peter, 1898 (AGS 3016/7).

[98]Address at the Academy for his episcopal jubilee, 1901, (AGS 3019/2).

[99]Letter to Leo XIII, April 28, 1903 (AGS 3019/2).

[100]Funeral eulogy for Bishop Angelo Bersani Dossena, Bishop of Lodi, 1887 (AGS 3018/7).

[101]*I diritti cristiani e i diritti dell'uomo*, Bologna 1898, pp. 3-4. (Collective Pastoral Letter of the bishops of Emilia, drafted by Scalabrini).

[102]Letter to G. Bonomelli, Sept. 29, 1881 (Carteggio S.B., p. 16). "L'Osservatore Cattolico" had improperly interfered in an internal affair of the Diocese of Piacenza, namely the removal, for disciplinary reasons, of the rector of the seminary, Canon Savino Rocca (see Biografia, pp. 495-503).

[103]Letter to Leo XIII, Sept. 26, 1881 (AGS 3019/2)

[104]Letter to G. Bonomelli, August 1882 (Carteggio S.B., p. 64). Bishop Guindani was Bishop of Bergamo.

[105]Id., Sept. 11, 1881 (ibid., p. 14).

[106]Id., April 28, 1890 (ibid., p. 267). The "censures of the Inquisition," which had been announced, were to deal with the "notes" or comments of Bonomelli to Monsabré's books, which Bonomelli had translated into Italian; but Scalabrini was able to forestall the censures (see Biografia, pp. 759-765).

[107]Id., Sept. 19, 1882 (Ibid., p. 70).

[108]Id., Nov. 22, 1881 (ibid., p. 35).

[109]First Pastoral Letter, Como 1876, p. 4.

[110]*Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 22-23.

[111]*Il prete cattolico*, Piacenza 1892, pp. 20-21.

[112]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[113]Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[114]Address to the clergy in the congregation for the cases of conscience, 1877 (?) (AGS 3018/1) (translated from Latin).

[115]*Il prete cattolico*, Piacenza 1992, p. 25.

[116]Circular letter of Feb. 7, 1898, Piacenza 1898, pp. 22-23.

[117]Third discourse of the second synod, May 4, 1893. *Synodus Dioecesisana Placentina Secunda ...*, Piacenza 1893, p. 195 (translated from Latin).

[118]Ibid., 195-196.

[119]*Il prete cattolico*, Piacenza 1892, pp. 37-38.

[120]Second address at the second synod, May 3, 1893. *Synodus Dioecesisana Placentina Secunda ...*, Piacenza 1893, pp. 179-180 (translated from Latin).

[121]Ibid., pp. 180-181.

[122]Ibid., pp. 181-182.

[123]Third address at the third synod, Aug. 30, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesisana Placentina Tertia ...*, Piacenza 1900, p. 248 (translated from Latin).

[124]Ibid., pp. 248-249.

[125]Ibid., pp. 249-250.

[126]Ibid., p. 25 1.

[127]*Il prete cattolico*, Piacenza 1892, p. 32.

[128]*Fede, vigilanza, preghiera*, Piacenza 1899, p. 17.

[129]Third address at the third synod, Aug. 30, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesisana Placentina Tertia...*, Piacenza 1900, p. 255 (translated from Latin).

[130]Ibid., pp. 253-254.

[131]Ibid., pp. 252-253.

[132]Partial translation of the *Monitiones* made by Bishop Scalabrini at the third synod (ibid., pp. 204-216). “Clerics” here refers to seminarians in their last stage of priestly formation.

[133]Third discourse of the second synod, May 4, 1893. *Synodus Dioecesisana Placentina Secunda...*, Piacenza 1893, pp. 187-188 (translated from Latin).

[134]Ibid., pp. 185-186.

[135]Ibid., p. 189-190.

[136]Ibid., p. 191.

[137]*Opera di S. Opilio*, Piacenza 1892, pp. 10-11.

[138]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[139]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[140]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[141]Ibid., pp. 7-9.

[142]Letter to G. Bonomelli, Oct. 14, 1897 (Carteggio S.B., p. 342).

[143]Letter to Mons. G. Marinoni, March 27, 1882 (Archives of the Pontifical Institute for the Foreign Missions, Milan).

[144]For the inauguration of the Church of Mt. Carmel in Piacenza, Feb. 17, 1884 (AGS 3018/2). We can find Scalabrini's ideas on "the religious" in Part V, "Religious Life."

[145]First Annual Meeting of the Parish Committees (1882?) (AGS 3018/18).

[146]Panegyric for the Feast of St. Columbanus, Sept. 9, 1894 (AGS 3017/4).

[147]"II Catechista Cattolico," 1901, v. 1, pp. 257-258.

[148]Homily for Pentecost, 1876 (AGS 3016/6).

[149]*Unione, azione, preghiera*, Piacenza 1890, pp.8-10.

[150]*Educazione cristiana*, Piacenza 1889, pp. 31-33.

[151]*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima dell'anno 1893*, Piacenza 1893, pp. 21-23.

[152]*Azione Cattolica*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 16-17.

[153]Ibid., pp. 18-20.

[154]For the inauguration of the diocesan and parochial Committees, April 18, 1881 (AGS 3018/18).

[155]Opening of the 4th Regional Assembly of the Opera dei Congressi, June 11, 1897 (AGS 3018/18).

[156]Closing of the 4th Regional Assembly of the Opera del Congressi, June 12, 1897 (AGS 3018/18).

[157]Opening of the 4th Regional Assembly of the Opera del Congressi, June 11, 1897

(AGS 3018/18).

[\[158\]](#)Closing of the 4th Regional Assembly of the Opera del Congressi, June 12, 1897 (AGS 3018/18).

[\[159\]](#)*Pel solenne riconoscimento delle reliquie dei SS. Antonino e Vittore*, Piacenza 1880, pp. 29-30.

[\[160\]](#)For the inauguration of the diocesan and parochial Committees, April 18, 1881 (AGS 3018/18).

[\[161\]](#)Address on the Feast of St. Antoninus, 1893 (AGS 3017/5).

[\[162\]](#)Words spoken on the occasion of the 2nd Regional Assembly of Catholic Committees, April 24, 1889 (AGS 3018/18).

[\[163\]](#)*Come santificare la festa*, Piacenza 1904, p. 33.

[\[164\]](#)Opening of the 4th Regional Assembly of the Opera dei Congressi, June 11, 1897 (AGS 3018/18).

[\[165\]](#)On the occasion of the inauguration of the diocesan and parochial Committees, April 18, 1881 (AGS 3018/18).

PART THREE

MAN OF THE WORD AND FOR THE WORD

Scalabrini explicitly states that his most characteristic apostolic initiatives (catechesis, pastoral visitations, migration, the deaf-mutes) are but the fulfillment of Christ's missionary mandate: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to every creature" (Mk 16:15) He is a man of the kerygma, the missionary message of the gospel.

For his diocese of Piacenza he adopts a new style of pastoral care, marked by an intense administration of the Word and the Sacraments, driven by an ardent "thirst for souls" and characterized by direct contact with the people of all classes and places.

Five pastoral visitations, personally conducted, of the more than three hundred parishes of his diocese, three diocesan synods, and seventy pastoral letters give concrete evidence of his aspiration to become all things to all so as to win over all to Christ.

Convinced that religious instruction is the primary means for Christian formation, he once again confers on catechesis the primacy in the work of evangelizing and rechristianizing a society rapidly becoming unchristian because of anticlericalism, rationalism and materialism. Consequently, he turns into a pioneer in the new catechetical movement, calling thousands of lay people to the catechetical ministry, encouraging parents to be the first catechists of their children, within the family, which is "the domestic church" where one prays and reads the gospel.

St. Paul's "woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" finds concrete expression in Scalabrini's instruction of the deaf-mutes; in the gospel ideal -- not limited to the physically handicapped -- of giving hearing to the deaf and speech to the mute; and in the recovery of the sanctity of the Lord's Day, the day of the community's joyful celebration of the banquet of the Word and of the Eucharistic Bread.

1. THE SHEPHERD

“The good of souls, above all” -- this is the goal of his priestly and episcopal activity. He subordinates all his decisions and activities to the salvation of human beings. An apostle cannot remain inside the church. Like the Good Shepherd, he leaves his tent, he leaves the sacristy. He goes in search of the sheep lost in the hills and plains. He goes out to “preach Jesus Christ and him crucified to all people,” ready to give up his life, lavishly expending all his physical and moral energies.

“Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” Christ is the Word: “The word of Christ is not lesser than his body.” “Without preaching, the Church would be a utopia; and, without the word, the Sacrifice would be an unproductive commemoration.”

Without proper training, instruction is sterile. Popes, bishops, priests, and parents have the right and the inalienable duty to train. The family, humanity’s second soul, is where the first Christian training takes place. The holy day is the time for instruction and training in the faith, the moment when all families become one single family and anticipate the heavenly Jerusalem.

a) A NEW PASTORAL METHOD

“Those you gave me I have guarded”

Pray also for me because today, the 20th anniversary of my consecration as bishop of your souls, I feel more than ever the weight of responsibility I have for you before God. My dearly beloved sons and daughters, ask God to grant me the grace to love you always as I love you today and to be able to say with serenity and confidence when I hand you back to him at the end of my life: “Father, those you gave me I have guarded and none of them was lost!”¹

“To win over all people to Christ: this is the constant and supreme aspiration of my soul”

Thirty years have passed since this precious portion of Christ’s flock was entrusted to my care. One day, which cannot be far off, I must render God a most strict account of my stewardship. Will I have the joy of telling him: “Father, those you gave me I have guarded and none of them was lost through my fault”?

This awesome thought is always before my mind. It impels me; it spurs me on to make up for the failures and defects of my long episcopal reign with a thorough and comprehensive visitation.

So, dear brethren and children of mine, I am announcing to you that I have decided to personally conduct the 6th pastoral visitation of each and every parish of my diocese.

Considering my age, I should surely be dismayed at the prospect. But so keen in me is the desire to see and address you once more as your shepherd and father that no difficulty frightens me and no labor is too heavy for me.

But, conscious as I am of my nothingness, I do not confide in myself but in the help of the supreme Shepherd Jesus Christ. I confide in the help of him who “went from village to village proclaiming the good news and curing all sorts of illnesses among the people” and, after moistening the earth with his sweat, gave blood and life for his beloved sheep.

So, my dearly beloved, I will come to you in the name of God. I will come to announce his will to you, to remind you of the eternal truths, to protect you against the poison of error, to correct abuses, if any, to bring the lost sheep back to the fold, to implore heaven’s blessings on your children, to

¹*Fede, vigilanza, preghiera*, Piacenza 1899, pp. 22-23.

pray for the eternal repose of your beloved deceased, and to bring solace and comfort to everyone and to encourage you to do good.

How blessed I will be if, at the end of this visitation, I will truly be able to say with the Apostle Paul: "I have become all things to all so as to win over all to Christ."

To win over all people to Christ: this is the constant and supreme aspiration of my soul.²

"The good of souls, above all"

However, you did absolutely the right thing by calling a spade a spade, and I don't feel hurt at all that you sent some of my letters to people you felt you should send them to, since, as you know, I have nothing to hide from my superiors. Only my self-esteem felt a bit taken aback because these were confidential letters, written to a bosom friend, which you are, and, consequently, hastily drafted.

Anyhow, truth, justice, and, above all, the good of souls: this is my ambition, as it is yours.

Let us not get discouraged, my good friend. Peace, fortitude, prayer. We must fix our eyes on Jesus Christ and place all our confidence in him alone.³

I have written you know to whom. I have written him several times, clearly and loudly, maybe too loudly. I have even told him that he will soon find himself before God, to whom he will have to give an account of an army of souls being lost and of the terrible sufferings being inflicted on bishops, who no longer have freedom of speech or action because they are overwhelmed by the interference of lay people, who are being encouraged and rewarded by those who should restrain them, especially by the usual pharisaic faction, which is being tolerated and indeed supported just when it is trying to subvert the hierarchical order established by Jesus Christ, etc., etc. (...).

I go my merry way, convinced as I am that the faithful and obedient bishops are not those who, out of an ill-conceived sense of respect, foster certain deceptions and perhaps make use of them, but those -- and they are few, poor fools! -- who sacrifice their peace, their future, their all, so that the Holy Father may be made aware of the deception and that the Church may be free of the disastrous consequences of error.⁴

Unfortunately, the situation is bad, very bad. Everybody sees it, and no one does anything about it! Our only hope is in God. Since not even the loudest trumpets are able to wake up the sleepers from their slumber or make the last illusions come crashing down, we must let God do something. We will peacefully go our way and try to save as many souls as we can. The upright will love us and God will reward us.⁵

As for me... "salvation is only in the Lord." Should we become monks or Savonarolas? The first would be a fine alternative for those who have a real vocation to that life. The second would be a glorious alternative for those who are up to it. But maybe it's better not to do anything and just do whatever we can to promote the glory of God and the good of souls, with the assurance that "if we know how to keep still and suffer, we will see the help of the Lord."

²Pastoral Letter of May 5, 1905, pp. 1-2. The 6th pastoral visitation was scheduled to begin on June 11, 1905, but the bishop dies on June 1 of that year.

³Letter to G. Bonomelli, Feb. 1, 1883 (Carteggio S.B., p. 96).

⁴Id., January 1887 (ibid., p. 203). "I even told him" refers to Leo XIII.

⁵Id., May 1889 (ibid., pp. 252-253).

Meantime, let us work, let us pray and hope for better times.⁶

“Lord have pity on the Shepherd, have pity on the flock!”

Beloved sons and daughters, listen to the voice of one who seeks, desires, and wishes only your good. I told you many times and I am happy to repeat it: for me the greatest source of consolation and joy is your faith, your piety, your loyal and sincere attachment to the Church.

But I cannot deceive you. I have the duty in conscience to tell you the truth. Woe to me if I do not speak up! Listen: evil is also in our midst and it is very serious. O Piacenza, my beloved city, think of the faith of your forefathers and mothers. Look how you have fallen from your ancient greatness! Who betrayed you? Who reduced you to such ignominy? Within your walls I see many people who ignore all the duties faith imposes on them, who insult the faith with satanic blasphemies, who desecrate the holy days, who constantly offend God with their pagan lives, who read blasphemous books and newspapers, who oppose the Church and her faithful ministers, who let themselves be duped like children by all kinds of ideas, foisted on them with pretentious gravity and ignorant pride by astute and boisterous people. What are you doing, my children? Are these the works of your faith? Is this how you reciprocate for the blessings God has lavished on you? Shame on you, shame on your city! Do you not see that, by acting in this way, you are turning with insane pride against the Almighty, that you are grieving your holy patrons, as well as Our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God and your mother? O Lord, listen to the groans of my deeply saddened soul! Why did you let me live during this time of deviation and evil? When will these days of turmoil and sacrilegious profanations end? Lord, have pity on the Shepherd, have pity on the flock!

But in the midst of sorrow there is also comfort. Dearly beloved, I take comfort from the thought that up above there is someone who keeps an account of all the sufferings we endure and our divine Leader and Teacher endured before us. There is comfort, nay, a soothing balm, in knowing that we are suffering for justice' sake and that we are suffering not with hatred but with love for those who persecute us, so that they might be converted and live.⁷

“This is the kind of shepherds our modern days call for”

The pastor, then, as you well know, is indebted to everyone, always ready to help everyone. Two extremes must be avoided, however.

Let me be practical, like a father.

Some dedicate themselves so intensely to the salvation of others that they gradually lose their spirit. They end up by losing themselves without saving others. They must remember that they do good to others only insofar as they are doing good to themselves. Therefore they must cultivate piety, for “piety is useful for all things,” especially in the works of the ministry. “Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me” (Jn 15:4). They should never neglect themselves, therefore, but be ever mindful of their own sanctification (...). There are others, on the other hand, who, like shopkeepers, set up shop in the parish house. If asked, they are ready to help people. They do not neglect to instruct the faithful that come to them. But they are not moved by zeal. They do not give thought to the needs and dangers of their flock.

⁶Id., July 10, 1893 (ibid., pp. 310-311). Tired of the constant threat of removal from the government of his diocese, Bishop Bonomelli had written, “I will soon become either a monk or a Savonarola” (see Biografia, pp. 272-273).

⁷*Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 37-38. The “sacrilegious profanations” had been perpetrated by the apostate priest, Paolo Miraglia.

Because of misconceived prudence, timidity, or laziness they neglect the means that are called for. These men can be compared to flags that stand out on the poles for all to see but do not ripple or flutter in the wind. The prophet speaks of them, when he says: “They are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph” (Amos 6:6). Such must not be the pastor’s life. Remember what the master of the house told his servant: “Go out to the highways and hedgerows and make people come in” (Lk 14:23).

These are the zealous pastors that are absolutely needed in our times.⁸

“Come out of your sacristies, but do so in order to bring holiness”

Venerable brothers and beloved fellow workers of mine, you, above all, must grow ever stronger in the spirit of your calling. With courage persevere in your parish work, which will not be rewarded by the world but by the One who has called you to the inestimable honor of taking his place in the work of saving souls. Redouble your efforts and your watchfulness. Speak out clearly and loudly so as to shield your flock from the wiles of the seducers. At this time, especially, make every effort to promote religious instruction and piety among the people. Yes, do come out of your sacristies, as they say today, but come out with your minds and hearts filled with the Holy Spirit. Come out of your sacristies in order to sanctify. The sacrifices of your ministry are great, indeed much greater in these days when this ministry is so beset by all kinds of obstacles. But, in heaven, these sacrifices, even the smallest ones, are counted up. So, be patient and take courage.⁹

“Let us come out of our tents!”

A well-known modern writer has said that this is no time to remain lazily in our houses sighing and crying, while the fire of unbelief and immorality is spreading and, like natural fire, threatening to destroy the ark of faith in our land. So let us get out of our tents. Let us remember that we have only the weapons of faith and love. With these let us enter into public life, to the extent civil law and our consciences permit, without taking sides politically, ready to die rather than to make compromises with what is false and unjust. Let us enter into public life not as enemies of constituted authority but as relentless enemies of evil wherever it may be found. Let us enter as disciplined men and women who, after the example of Christ and his Church, can tolerate evil itself but without approving it or doing it ourselves.¹⁰

“The pastoral visitation and the celebration of the synod”

You are my joy and my crown. Neither the fear of dangers nor the fury of unexpected circumstances or tribulations of whatever kind will ever separate me from you. With Jesus Christ, eternal Shepherd of our souls, may I be able to say in all truth when the time comes: “Father, those you gave me I have guarded and none of them was lost” (...).

⁸ Third address at the 2nd Synod, May 4, 1893. *Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Secunda...*, Piacenza 1893, p. 194 (translated from Latin).

⁹ *Unione colla Chiesa, obbedienza ai legittimi Pastori*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 43-44.

¹⁰ *La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, p. 41.

The depravity of our days, the clash of passions, and the arrogance of the various factions (why fool ourselves?) have wrought great havoc elsewhere and have not left our own Diocese untouched (...). A certain spirit of egoism and self-interest is attempting to penetrate even the less affluent classes and to lead them to illicit gain. And there is more! Young people are attracted by false promises, and everything is being done to possibly tear them away from all bondage, except the bondage of their passions. We are going through a period of history that could be fatal to the salvation of many people! With all my heart I desire that all my good people elude all the snares of this bleak age and always walk the path of truth and justice.

This will happen, dearly beloved, if faith will not cease to reign in your hearts; if you will always be docile to the motherly cares and rules of the Church; if you always remember that, without love, one day neither the applause of the world, nor the protection of the powerful, nor your accumulated riches will count for anything; and that only a soul without sin, a conscience that is upright and just before God, and a life of Christian resignation, adorned with good works, are entitled to an eternal reward (...).

To you, venerable brothers, the apple of my eye and the support of my weakness, I make this one recommendation: read and meditate seriously and tirelessly on all the regulations which, in accord with you, I have promulgated in the Synod and just published since it is my intention that they take full effect throughout the whole Diocese this coming October 15.

The more you conform to this code of laws, the more you will sanctify yourselves and others and call down on yourselves and others the blessings of Almighty God (...).

Venerable brothers and beloved faithful, I am happy to tell you that with the help of God, I have brought to a happy and successful conclusion the sacred pastoral visitation and the celebration of the Synod, two very serious and important obligations of my pastoral ministry.¹¹

“We must not get lost in the past but prepare the future

Thank you ever so much for your kind and uplifting letter. I have the impression the Holy Spirit has granted you the *sensus Christi* with which to understand the state of your diocese so rapidly and so well.

As a rule, priests who live isolated in the mountains are good, have no pretensions, and are loyal to the bishop. What they need is not corrections and acts of authority so much as encouragement and loving nudges to do good, as circumstances require. I repeat: by and large, your priests will not bring you any grief.

Yes, my venerable brother, without wasting time with the past but preparing the future, we must awaken the Christian spirit in our young people, which has been half destroyed by the adults. It won't be too hard if God gives you the grace to do what you have in mind. The religious wave of Christian spirit will penetrate into the families through the young people who come together in our youth centers. Families are always touched very much by the good done for their children. The care of children and the care of the sick: these are the two tools with which to win all people over to God. This is what I keep telling the pastors of my diocese.¹²

“To restore all things in Christ”

It is absolutely essential to put God at the head of society, to lead all people back to Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life; to call them back to the Church, who is mother, teacher,

¹¹*In occasions del compimento delta Sacra Visita Pastorale*, Piacenza 1903, pp. 5-6.

¹²Letter to Archbishop P. Morganti, 1902 (AGS 3021/17).

guardian, and defender of all rights and all legitimate authority. It is essential to train our young people according to Christian principles, to sanctify the family; to restore a balance among the different social classes, in keeping with Christian norms and traditions; to profess the faith openly and fearlessly; to practice all kinds of works of charity, without regard for oneself or for earthly recompense. In a word, “it is essential to restore all things in Christ.” This is the remedy for our ills. This and this alone is the secret of the greatness and the power that will ensure the peace and prosperity of both families and nations.¹³

“I would be ready to sacrifice my very own life”

You must not take advantage of God’s goodness and forbearance any longer. You must not fool yourselves any longer. Wake up from your sleep of death. Come to your senses, return to your conscience, reconcile yourselves to God. This is the prayer of your shepherd and father, who loves you deeply. Dearly beloved, have pity on yourselves. Fear, yes, fear the day that will come when you will wish you had time to repent but, to your utter ruin, will not have it. If today you hear the voice of the Lord, repent, repent at once. Do the number and gravity of your sins frighten you? Or are you afraid that the God whom you have offended will not lovingly welcome you back. If I, a poor creature bereft of all virtue, am so consumed with zeal for your welfare that I would be ready to give up my very life for your return to the heavenly Father’s house, how great then must be the desire of an all good, tender, and merciful God to take you back to his bosom; of a God declaring he does not want the sinner to die but to be converted and live. Cheer up, then! Conquer all fear, dearly beloved, and rest assured of the help of God.

Once you have become friends of God and heirs to heaven, you will taste in this life the peace of the godly and in the life to come the joy of the elect.¹⁴

b) THE PASTORAL VISITATION

“I will come and in all simplicity preach Jesus Christ and him crucified to you”

Do not expect sublime eloquence from me nor clever tricks of human learning. I will come and in all simplicity preach Jesus Christ and him crucified to you; Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life; Jesus Christ, without whose knowledge we would work in vain to achieve salvation; Jesus Christ, his immense love, his mysteries, his teaching, the infallible magisterium of his Church. These are the things that will quicken and increase your faith. The faith! Oh, how precious it should be to you! (...).

I will make every effort, as my duty requires, to reawaken this faith in all of you, that living and active faith whereby the saints conquered the world and ascended to the kingdom; the faith that reduces to nothing the glamour of flesh and blood, that dispels the darkness of human reason with its light, that makes people see things not as they appear but as they are in reality; the faith that is a shield and a breastplate with which to hold fast and fight bravely against the princes of darkness and against spiritual iniquity; in a word, the faith that, like everyday food, strengthens all the powers of the soul with grace and, in Paul’s words, forms the life of the righteous: “The righteous one lives by faith.”¹⁵

¹³*La prima Lettera Enciclica di Sua Santità Pio X*, Piacenza 1903, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴*Il Giubileo dell’Anno Santo*, Piacenza 1900, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵*Per la Visita Pastorale*, Piacenza 1876, pp. 11-12.

“I will come to you in the name of God”

Venerable brothers, I am absolutely confident that dew will come down from heaven in abundance to make my humble efforts, and yours, fruitful, so that purity of morals, modesty, religion and harmony will once again soon flourish in the illustrious Church of Piacenza with a new beauty. And you, especially, are expected to spread the fragrant aroma of Christ. I am firmly convinced that, from the visitation I am about to begin, many good things will come: a reawakening of Catholic life; the observance of Sundays and holy days; respect for our churches, attendance at Church, reception of the sacraments, attendance at classes of Christian Doctrine; attachment to the glorious and infallible See of Peter and his most worthy successor, the great, the angelic, the immortal Pius IX; and, finally, charity, which is the bond of perfection, the soul of the soul, the seed and foundation of all Christian virtues.

I will therefore come among you in the name of God, dearly beloved sons and daughters. I will not rely on my poor abilities but expect everything from the grace of his Holy Spirit, wishing you good things for your well-being from Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the support of the bishops of his Church. Christ is the torch that illumines the bishops, the fire that warms them, that communicates the word of life to them, that impels them to announce this word of life to the people, without hesitation, without fear, in all frankness.

How blessed I will be if, in this way, “I can finish my course and bear witness to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20), sanctifying all of you and at the same time awaiting with ever-present fear the tremendous Judgment of God.¹⁶

“The sweetest consolation of all”

To better dispose the faithful to this sacred visitation, I direct that, in every parish, it be preceded by the Spiritual Exercises or at least by three days of special preaching.

My venerable fellow workers, see to it that, when I come, I may distribute the bread of angels to everyone, from the First Communion children to those who are on the threshold of eternity; to everyone, without exception. My brothers, my sons and daughters, this is the sweetest, the most cherished consolation you could possibly give your bishop in the midst of the incessant cares and grave concerns of his pastoral ministry.

Again, I recommend myself to your prayers and eagerly look forward to embracing all of you in Jesus Christ. With affection and tenderness, I give you my pastoral blessing.¹⁷

“I am here to become all things to all”

Go, Jesus Christ said to his Apostles, go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you: *docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis*. And in obedience to that voice, the Apostles did go. They went from city to city, from hamlet to hamlet, from village to village, wherever followers of the Crucified One could be found, to bring the light of the truth and the life of grace to all people.

I am here once more among you, dearly beloved sons and daughters. I come as the successor of the Apostles, unworthy though I be. Oh, how happy I am to see you again after so many years! I still

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹⁷Pastoral Letter of May 5, 1905, Piacenza 1905, pp. 4-5.

remember with deep emotion the demonstrations of kindness you offered me the first time I set foot in your illustrious town. Now you wanted to renew these demonstrations of affection by celebrating my arrival among you with an outpouring of festivity and jubilation. I thank you, beloved sons and daughters. I thank you in the name of Jesus Christ, whose humble representative I am. In me do not see the man, for I am so weak and sickly, but Him whom I represent, in whose name I speak, in whose name I work, whose graces I am ready to dispense from the treasury of the Church (...). I have come here to bring you peace, to bless your families, your work, your fields and the graves of your beloved departed. I am here to become all things to all: to speak to the adults with a heart brimming with fatherly love, to call down the Holy Spirit upon the Confirmation children, to console the afflicted, and to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls in every possible way.¹⁸

“Your souls are as dear to me as my own soul”

My beloved sons and daughters, with your consciences restored to peace, with newness of heart, and with strength from the table of the Divine Lamb, you will find great joy in joining your Bishop in the sacred functions he will be celebrating. Together, we will visit the cemetery where the ashes are resting of your beloved parents, your brothers and sisters, your husbands and wives, your sons and daughters, your relatives and friends, and all your fellow townspeople. We will kneel on that sacred ground and, in the somber and sublime silence of the tombs, implore God to grant eternal rest to your beloved departed.

Parents, you will bring your children to me in church, so I may sign their tender foreheads with the sacred chrism and call down upon them the Holy Spirit who will fill them with his many gifts, so that they will not be seduced and ruined by corruption.

Parents, I will examine your children on the things all Christians should know if they want to be worthy of the name they bear and save their souls. You will proudly hear them giving me the right answers, I hope. But if some of your children seem to need more instruction, you will sincerely resolve in the presence of God that, from now on, you will look after the religious instruction of your children with greater care, taking them personally to catechism classes....

What a magnificent holy day you will all experience with your Bishop, dearly beloved, if -- and I have not doubt of it -- you will spend it in the joy of the Lord and in prayer. Dearly beloved, see to it that I will go away with the consoling thought that this time, too, my visitation will have done some good to your souls, as dear to me as my own soul. I seek only souls. I want only the souls of my children. I do not want any of them to be lost!¹⁹

“I know my sheep and they know me”

Venerable brothers and dearly beloved sons and daughters, ever since I was called by the Holy Spirit, unworthy though I was, to rule this illustrious and glorious Diocese of Piacenza, I had no concern other than you and the welfare of your souls. To achieve this goal -- and God is my witness -- I would willingly have given my blood and my life if necessary.

Loving you deeply as he does, your father was impatient to see his children with his own eyes. In his solicitude, your shepherd was impatient to see his entire flock personally. Praise the Lord! Finally my wishes have been fulfilled.

Now I can truly say that there is no part, albeit remote, of this mystical vineyard that I do not know fully. Like Jesus Christ, the model and head of all shepherds, I can say in all truth: “I know my

¹⁸Words spoken on entering a parish for his pastoral visitation (AGS 3018/25).

¹⁹Ibid.

sheep and they know me.” I can say what St. Paul told the faithful of Rome: “I came to you with joy by the will of God and was refreshed together with you.”²⁰

“In you we found the consolations of the faith”

In a word, dearly beloved, I was happy to find in you the consolations that the Apostle Paul appreciated so much: “the consolations of the faith” (...)

Proof of this faith was, first of all, the fact that so many persons of both sexes, of all conditions and classes, young boys and girls, went to confession and received Communion from me.

Proof of this faith was the great effort all made to attend all the public devotions, readily leaving behind work and business; the eagerness to take part in the sacred functions with devotion and to listen with religious hunger to the divine word, which I never neglected to preach to them with evangelical freedom and in all simplicity, several times a day, both in the parishes and public oratories and on any other opportune occasion, paternally “admonishing them to stand firm in the faith” and to live “in a manner worthy of the Lord, so as to be fully pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of God.”

Proof of this faith -- and we saw it with our eyes -- was the patience and diligence with which all the teachers of Christian Doctrine were instilling into the hearts of the children the holy fear of God, along with the first rudiments of the faith. Proof of this faith was the genuine concern of good parents to send their children to church for this purpose, as well as the parents’ boundless pride and joy in presenting their children to me so that I might mark them with the sign of the brave through the anointing with sacred chrism.

Proof of this faith was the fact that, as a rule, I found the churches either restored or beautified or even in the process of construction through the munificence and pious largess of the faithful. Together with their pastors, zealous and solicitous for the dignity of the house of God, the faithful did not spare any sacrifice in also enriching these churches with sacred furnishings, religious paraphernalia, precious works, and noble artifacts.

Finally, proof of this faith was the festive welcome I received everywhere at my arrival from all the people I intended to visit; the way they humbly knelt as I passed by, in hopes of receiving my blessing; the way they escorted me at my departure for long stretches of road despite, more often than not, the harshness and difficulties of the trails, the rainstorms, the swollen torrents, the bad weather, and the severity of the seasons.

Finally, I am deeply grateful for the very effective help the tireless sons of St. Vincent De Paul gave me with their precious work and cooperation; for, in almost all the three hundred sixty-five parishes of the Diocese, they went ahead of me like angels of God to prepare the way for me, to give our people “the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.” The truly copious fruits we gathered from this visitation are due mostly to them. They are due to these worthy laborers of the Gospel, as well as to the priests -- religious and diocesan -- who on this blessed occasion exercised the ministry of the word.²¹

“For the third time I visited the Diocese”

²⁰*Pel compimento della Sacra Visita Pastorale*, Piacenza 1880, pp. 3-4.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 5-9.

For the third time I visited the Diocese, as circumstances permitted, and spent time at three hundred and eight parishes. Several times a year, I have administered the sacrament of Confirmation. I have preached the word of God. I have carried out all the duties of a bishop.

During this third pastoral visitation, I climbed Mount Penna which rises 5200 feet above sea level. That mountain range is inhabited nine months out of the year by about three hundred workers, who are extremely poor. They cut wood, make charcoal, and do other similar jobs. They live in the shelter of age-old elm trees, seeking cover under their branches from the inclemency of the weather. They never, or hardly ever, receive the spiritual ministrations of a priest. During my visit, the only local rustic house was transformed into an episcopal residence and a cathedral. I stayed there four days and, by word and works of piety, I heartened this abandoned portion of my flock. Their simplicity of faith and morals comforted me very much. Really, Your Eminences, where the efforts of human beings are lacking, there the grace of God overflows on behalf of the faithful who seek God with a pure heart and sincere will.

I consecrated twenty-eight churches, some of them entirely new, others restored or beautified. I blessed eighteen sets of bells, usually climbing to the top of the belfry.

Many rural parishes were in desperate need of suitable and decent cemeteries in conformity with the requirements of the law. Whenever I had a chance, I never failed, privately and publicly, to recommend this matter to the competent civil authorities. I did not speak out in vain; for, during the past three years, I blessed thirty-five new cemeteries, set up properly as required by Canon Law and the Synods.²²

“A work that exceeds my strength”

When I got back from my pastoral visitation after an absence of several weeks, I found your welcome letter waiting for me. I had been looking forward to it for such a long time. You can imagine how happy it made me. Thank God, I too feel fine, notwithstanding my constant labors. In three weeks, I visited twenty parishes at the very top of the mountains. I had to travel on horseback for several hundred miles. How good I feel in the midst of those people, so full of faith, so far away from the noise and gossip of the world!

During the week, I will leave once again, this time for Borgotaro, and will continue the visitation during the whole month of July.²³

This is the 123rd parish I am visiting this year: the pace is insane. But I want to make up for time lost last year. Thank God, my health is always excellent. People tell me I'm getting younger: yes, with the youthfulness of the flower that blossoms beautiful and full of life in the morning but withers come evening. But it doesn't matter as long as we achieve our purpose.²⁴

To expect not to have aches and pains at our age is asking for too much. The body is wearing out and I am swiftly approaching the end. In the meantime, I talk, I write, I preach, I ride on horseback, I travel, I sweat, I work -- all to please at least the Lord.²⁵

²²Report for the 6th “ad limina” visit, Dec. 20, 1891 (ASV, Rub. 647/B, Placentina, S.C. Concilii Relationes).

²³Letter to G. Bonomelli, June 17, 1894 (Carteggio S.B., p. 315).

²⁴Id., Aug. 8, 1902 (ibid., p. 372). The “time I lost last year” refers to the time he had spent visiting the emigrants in the United States.

²⁵Id., Aug. 11, 1903 (ibid., p. 378).

With overwhelming joy I have received here, where I am conducting my pastoral visitation, your most cordial letter of the 2nd of this month. With all my heart and all my soul I thank you for your thoughtfulness and affection. Those newspaper people are busybodies. They wrote of me as if I were close to death. Instead, my indisposition was nothing more than a slight 24-hour fever, which surprised me just as I was coming back from a most arduous visit to the parishes of the upper Apennines. I overworked myself beyond words but tried to recoup my energies with a 3- or 4-day rest; and then off again. I don't know how to slow down, and I can't resign myself to changing pace; and yet I will have to.

I'm getting older; I'm 64. I am feeling the work load more and more, but the needs are becoming ever more pressing. The socialist tide is rising. Everything is spurring me on and pushing me to labors that are above my physical and moral frailty. But, in the name of the Lord, forward march! as long as I have breath.²⁶

c) PREACHING THE WORD

“The divine Word became man and came as the ineffable word to speak to human beings”

Beloved sons and daughters, first of all, we must listen to the word of God. Why? Precisely because it is the word of God; because it is the word of him who is our creator, our lawgiver, our sovereign, our teacher, our master, our father; because his word is, above all, the truth, truth itself, absolute truth, supreme, unchangeable, and eternal truth; and because, after the Most Holy Eucharist, nothing on earth can equal the excellence, nobility, holiness, and greatness of this very word.

The holy books tell us that from all eternity, God contemplates himself and pronounces a word. This word, as measureless as his immensity, as infinite as his being, as powerful as his omnipotence, is the living, substantial, and absolute expression of all that He is. It is the Word of God, the Second Person of the most august Trinity. The divine Word became man and came as the ineffable word to speak the word of eternal life to human beings.²⁷

“The word of God is as necessary as faith”

Dearly beloved, faith is the most precious of treasures, the source of all graces, the foundation of all virtues, the root of our Justification, the gate of heaven. But how can we obtain this faith? By the word of God. This is precisely what the Apostle Paul teaches when he says: “Who will call on the name of the Lord and be saved? Those who have believed. But how will they believe in the truth of the faith if they are not taught? And how will they be taught if someone does not preach to them?” Hence, the faith of Christ comes through hearing, and the hearing of the faith comes through the word of Christ preached: “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.” It follows then that, if faith comes through hearing the word of God, the word of God is as necessary as faith.

Yes, dearly beloved, this and this alone is the road that, as a general rule, God has set down for the salvation of believers. He could have saved them in other ways: by heavenly apparitions, by supernatural inspirations, by miracles, and so on. Instead, he was pleased to save them by means of

²⁶Id., Oct. 4, 1903 (ibid., pp. 378-379).

²⁷*La Divina Parola*, Piacenza 1897, pp. 4-6.

preaching: “It was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith.”²⁸

“The word of Jesus Christ is not inferior to his body”

We must listen to the word and receive it not as the word of man but as the word of God. Tell me, my brothers, says St. Augustine, according to you which of these two things has the greater dignity: the word of God or the body of Jesus Christ? If you want to be honest, you will have to admit that, in the eyes of faith, the word of Jesus Christ is not any less precious or worthy of esteem than his body: “The word of Jesus Christ is not inferior to his body.” If this is true, as in fact it is, it is easy to understand that we ought to listen to the word with attention, with respect, and with the firm resolve to put it into practice.

According to this same Doctor, we must listen to the word with such attention that the care we take lest any particle fall to the ground during the distribution of the body of Christ is to be used also with the divine word, making sure that, while thinking or speaking about other things, we do not lose any particle of the word or let it fall from our heart. Nor is this a vain scruple, because -- St. Augustine concludes with frightening words -- those who hear the word of God with indifference are no less guilty than those who let the smallest particle of the body of Christ fall to the ground with indifference. Besides, dearly beloved, we must never forget that, while the preacher speaks to us from the pulpit or the altar, it is Jesus Christ who speaks to us from heaven, that while the sound of the voice strikes the ears externally, the Teacher is within us. Hence, rather than the ears of the body, we must open the ears of the spirit to his word. He will make us understand in a mysterious but very clear way what he wants of us.²⁹

“The power of the word is tied to the divinity of the ministry”

The word of God does not lose any of its power and remains always the word of God even when it comes forth from the mouth of the lowliest priest, as long as he is legitimately commissioned. As long as he does not overstep the bounds of orthodoxy and has not renounced the faith, the Word of God commits himself to making himself present through his mouth, just as on the altar he commits himself to making himself present through the hands of his minister, even though imperfect.

A celebrated orator says that, though God has chosen human beings to illuminate, evangelize, teach, and sanctify people, he did not want the efficacy of these ministries, entrusted to human beings, to depend on the virtue or the holiness of human beings. Otherwise, human beings would owe their sanctification and their salvation to human beings. Dearly beloved, keep this clearly in mind: the power of the word of God is not tied to the personal qualities, to the gifts or even the holiness of the minister but to the divine nature of the ministry. It is tied to the word of a human being in so far as that word speaks of Jesus Christ and in the name of Jesus Christ or rather in so far as Jesus Christ speaks through the human being.³⁰

“The gospel word is like a letter sent to you by the Father”

²⁸Ibid., pp. 7-9.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 31-32,

³⁰Ibid., p. 30.

The gospel word is like a letter sent to you by your heavenly Father. Now, a loving child does not dilly-dally over whether the paper is expensive or cheap, whether the characters are neat or smudged, but rushes to see what his father has written. So, even with regard to sacred preaching, we must pay attention not to the person speaking or his manner of speaking but only to the truth he proclaims. There is no way, then, that your soul will not be filled with the most profound and loving respect (...).

Is the word of God meant to make us Christians at heart and in deed? If so, then the word must be transformed into love. Not only must we understand the truth but also love it, and not just love it but put it into practice as well. "Living the truth in love," as the Apostle Paul teaches us. The sign that the divine word has borne fruit in us is the works we perform because, if faith without love is dead, love without works is not love. When he speaks, God makes us understand what we must do; but, at the same time, he helps us do what we have come to know.³¹

"Were it not for Eucharistic preaching, the Church would be a society of utopians"

Realize how important your preaching is. Herein lies the whole salvation and well-being of the Church. The fruit of this preaching is that it makes one leave infancy behind and begin to live and walk along the path of prudence. What would the Church be without Eucharistic preaching? A religion without sacrifice, a society of utopians, a house built on sand. Christ himself would become a fable, a myth.³²

"Without the word, the Sacrifice would be a fruitless commemoration"

Christ in the Eucharist is the power and wisdom of God, and we preach Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. Reflect on the concept of preaching. When he instituted the Sacrifice and consecrated priests, Christ said: "Do this in memory of me" (1 Cor 11). In his very action Christ himself joined together preaching and Sacrifice: without the word, the Sacrifice would be a fruitless commemoration. You know with what sublime and divine eloquence Christ spoke to his apostles at the Last Supper before and after the institution of the Eucharist. The apostles have continued his preaching (...). They devoted themselves to the preaching of the word; and, listening to them, the faithful persevered as a community in the breaking of bread (...).

The divine Founder of the Church enjoined the preaching ministry on the apostles and, through them, on us his ministers: preach the gospel to all people, he said. After the institution of the Eucharist, he commanded: Do this in memory of me. Treasure the memory of what you see me doing by renewing the Sacrifice, and with your preaching keep alive the memory of me in the hearts of the faithful. The kingdom of God becomes ever more perfect through the Eucharist. You, chosen to share in this divine action, must devote yourselves untiringly to Eucharistic preaching so as to spread and consolidate the kingdom of God. Never was this preaching more necessary than in our days, of which the prophet could say: "the table of the Lord has been despised."

Why is it necessary? Because God's gift is so little known, for Christ's greatness in this sacrament is a greatness of love. In a word, it is necessary because we rarely speak of Christ in his Sacrament. Some instead might like to blame the times, the spreading errors, the vile publications, or the new scandals multiplying daily. These people will put the blame on desecrations, on crass indifference,

³¹Ibid., pp. 33-34.

³²Second address at the 3rd Synod, Aug. 29, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Tertia...*, Piacenza 1900, p. 239 (translated from Latin).

or on the decline of faith in so many people. But where do these evils come from if not from the lack of preaching? Listen to the Apostle Paul: "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17).³³

"Preaching and the Eucharistic Sacrifice: the two powers Christ has invested you with"

Ponder over the prophecy found in the Book of Wisdom: "I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you." Ps 22:23). Christ fulfills this prophecy not with his mouth but with ours: through your preaching and through the Eucharistic Sacrifice. These are the two powers Christ has invested you with (...). With the priesthood and the Eucharistic banquet, the splendor of Christ will become like a light: "He stood firm and looked down on the earth. He looked and the nations melted before him and the ancient mountains were rent and the heights of the mountains bowed before him" (Ps 3:6). This is the triumph and conquest of the world promised by Christ. We know the world has not yet been conquered. But look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest.³⁴

"In your preaching mix the useful with the pleasing"

In this banquet, Christ has mixed the *useful* with the *pleasing*: the *useful*, because, as the poet says, he revives man -- lost through the sweetness of the forbidden fruit -- with a more sublime food and destroys the serpent's poison with the sacred blood; the *pleasing*, because, as the spouse exclaims: "his fruit is pleasing to my mouth".

In your preaching join the two aspects: the *useful* to a good explanation of the Eucharistic mystery, according to the analogy of the faith, confirming it with the authority of the Church Fathers and Doctors; the *pleasing*, by supporting your arguments also with well-founded reasons taken from science.

Do not get discouraged by the thought that the faithful will not understand. Understanding the mysteries does not depend on natural intelligence but on the light of faith, which God infuses through preaching. God himself will open the hearts. Besides, by dint of being heard, even those points that initially seem less comprehensible -- precisely because they are preached so seldom -- soon become intelligible.

You were all introduced to this duty since early youth. But only a few of you perhaps made any progress in this field because you did not heed the words of the Lord Jesus: "Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ" (Jn 17:3). We would fool ourselves if we were to be satisfied with giving the people commonplace knowledge, limiting ourselves to always giving them milk, never solid food. The Eucharist is at once milk for children and food for the strong, the bread of the sturdy. So, we must speak to Christians of the wisdom hidden in the mystery.

Above all, study Christ and his Sacrament. We must preach not only Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried, and ascended into heaven to be our advocate before the Father. We must also preach Christ who daily takes away sins by his self-oblation and becomes wisdom of God, justification and redemption for us all. We must preach the Christ who lives among us until the end of time, the Christ who lives

³³Ibid., pp. 240-241.

³⁴Ibid., p. 245.

in the Blessed Sacrament and draws all things to himself. Christ is not an apparition that disappears at once. Rather, Jesus is the Christ yesterday, today and the same forever.³⁵

“It is not the word of God some are preaching but the word of man”

Maybe there was never as much preaching as today. But why is it, one might ask, that the fruits of this preaching are generally so meager? We usually blame the listeners. Frankly, too often the mystical seed does fall on poor soil where the rocks and thorns keep the seed from growing up and developing. But very often is it not the fault perhaps of the one who is sowing this seed in the field of the Lord?

Yes, beloved brothers, unfortunately this is the case. We must not hide the fact that many, many sermons are unfruitful because it is not the word of God some are preaching but the word of man. They want to show off fashionable learning, says an illustrious writer. They want to amaze and astonish their listeners with rhetorical effects, with feats of memory, with an unending list of names, with quotations from all kinds of writers, with journalistic oratory, with references that titillate the unwholesome curiosity of the people, with giddy emotion (denounced by St. Jerome long ago), with theatrical posturing, with the power of the lungs, with screaming that hurts and injures the ears. I shall never get tired of denouncing this kind of oratory, which some would want to make fashionable in our day, to the great detriment of souls and to the utter discredit of preaching; an oratory that is rich in figures of speech but poor in thought, fertile in expressions but sterile in sentiments, which is just a pompous display of fraudulent opulence that subjects the great teaching ministry to one’s desire to please people and forces the word of truth to go begging for flattery; an oratory that titillates the listeners and leaves the passions in peace and which, instead of preaching Jesus Christ, preaches only itself; an oratory that is an empty show of hollow spirits and superficial souls; that gets lost in vague doctrines, frivolous descriptions, tender portrayals, extravagant ideas, turgid sentences, artificial phrases, ornate language, and flowers of speech which the most indulgent taste would tolerate only in a novel and for which holy truth is forced to blush, like a modest matron who sees herself wearing a dancer’s dress; an oratory, finally, that is secular in substance as well as in form and reduces the sacred minister to a comedian and the divine ministry to a comedy.³⁶

“Debtors to the learned and the unlearned”

Preachers, especially pastors and their associates, must remember that they are not to speak with the beguiling words of human learning but with the testimony of spirit and virtue. They must remember that they are debtors to the learned and the unlearned and, hence, that they must try to be simple, clear, and brief. They are not to mount the pulpit unprepared or preach without having invoked the light of the Holy Spirit. They should remember that their words must indeed enlighten the minds of their listeners but, more importantly, must inflame their hearts. While we must never omit explaining the deepest truths of the faith, nevertheless our sermons, even our eulogies, must always contain something that has to do with practical life.³⁷

³⁵Ibid., pp. 243-244.

³⁶*Lettera Circolare (...) al Venerabile Clero della Città e della Diocesi*, Piacenza 1898, pp. 3-5.

³⁷*Synodus Dioecesis Placentina Secunda...* Piacenza 1893, p. 31 (translated from Latin).

d) CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

“Educating means drawing out what is within”

The term *educate* contains something we ought to examine. The term derives from Latin and means drawing out what is within, opening and unfolding what is inside in embryo. Now, applying this term to human beings, we say that education is the means to unwrap the seeds sown in the human heart and bring to light what is hidden in those seeds. This manner of speaking presupposes that God has placed in the human heart a seed of sorts from which the tender and fragrant flower will come forth.

And indeed it is so! Strictly speaking, the educator does not put anything from the outside into the heart of a child. Rather, with diligent and loving effort, he unfolds and unwraps what is, so to speak, wrapped in the depths of the heart and makes the seeds and germs of the natural virtues come to bloom, together with those blessed germs and seeds of supernatural virtues that had been placed in our souls at baptism.

This is what true and solid education comes down to. This, mothers and fathers, teachers, educators, priests, pastors, all of you who have been called in some way to this most noble and divine task of educating the youth, this is what your work comes down to.

However, we must not forget that, next to the seeds of good, we also find the seeds of evil in the human heart. In the depths of his being, every child carries the seeds of a criminal or of a saint.

Dearly beloved, your work must aim at smothering the bad seed early on, so the good seed may sprout and grow exuberantly. You must crush the instincts of sensuality and pride showing up since infancy. See to it that the child does not follow the onset of passion but the impulse of virtue, that he gets used to doing things for the beauty of virtue shining in the mind rather than for the fascination with pleasure that beguiles and corrupts the senses.

But, you will say, how shall we achieve this? By grafting onto his soul, from his tender years, the holy fear of God; because, remember it well, dearly beloved, true education is not possible without religion. Educating children means putting into their minds the truth, the whole truth, from the simplest truth to the deepest one. It means opening their hearts to the noblest sentiments, to those of the most delicate purity and of the purest chastity. It means making their hearts throb with emotion at the words: God, country, freedom, equality, and fraternity, which the Gospel itself has consecrated.³⁸

“No, the Gospel does not represent a process of mummification nor the stone age”

In what does real education consist? Perhaps in learning well a trade or a profession? Or in being able to present oneself to the world with grace? This could be the veneer or the varnish of education, I dare say, but it is not education.

Nor must we confuse education with instruction, as many do who identify education with instruction. Instruction has to do with the intellect, education with the will. Instruction makes people learned, education makes people virtuous. Instruction is concerned with knowledge, education with conscience. Instruction is a means, education the end. Education then transcends instruction and knowledge, just as the good transcends the true and virtue transcends talent.

And yet, in our day, people keep talking about enlightening the mind. Instruction, they shout everywhere, instruction! I am all for it. As followers of the God who loves to call himself the God

³⁸*Educazione cristiana*, Piacenza 1889, pp. 8-9.

of the sciences, we too love higher studies. We salute those who dedicate time and energy to these studies and specialize in them. We very much want all, rich or poor, patrician or plebeian, according to their social standing, to acquire the knowledge that is necessary and useful to their condition. In fact, I am among the first to consider as a conquest everything that helps make us advance even one step on the way of civil progress, and we salute with joy the rebirth of our country which adorns itself with new glories.

But that fanatical clinging to old things, that cleaving like barnacles to the ancient, that castigating of anything that seems to have a touch of novelty even in the empirical field, that crucifying of those who will not bow to a mentality of mummification or of the stone age, no, this is not the Gospel; this is not religion; it is a symptom of ignorance and pigheadedness rather than of wisdom and honesty.³⁹ Yes, let them pursue the arts and sciences, as long, of course, as they do not overstep their natural boundaries. May the light of instruction spread far and wide. But we must never forget that instruction must go hand in hand with education.

“Spare no effort to bring up your children as Christians”

Mothers and fathers, you too should stay alert and guard your house because our times are ungodly indeed and the enemy of all good goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour among your children. Their souls cost Jesus his blood and he will ask an account of them at the price of blood. Oh, please, spare no effort to bring up your children as Christians and to train them to be God-fearing people if you want them to be docile, respectful, and loving. Keep an eye on the places they go to, the friends they have, the books they read. But, above all, give them good example, so that in you they have a school of all Christian virtues, a school that never closes.

Employers and factory supervisors and all of you who have authority over others, see to it that the racket of the work place turns to silence on Sundays and holy days and that all the voices of industry become silent so that, on the day sacred to God, only the voice of the priest and of religion may be heard.

Teachers, tutors and educators of young people, whom I esteem in a special way, let me address a word also to you. The future is in your hands. Many ask whether things will finally get better: they do not know the answer. Yes, I answer without fear of error, things will get better if your efforts are worthy of the noble mission entrusted to you, if you see to it “that not only your teaching method is reasonable and serious but that, even more importantly, your teaching itself is wholesome and conforms fully with the Catholic faith, in the arts as well as the sciences.” This is how you will form excellent citizens. In hushed silence, religion and country, heaven and earth, God and the world watch your work: the hour is decisive, the outcome momentous.⁴⁰

“Religious instruction: this is the great secret of Christian education”

Education and religion are two inseparable things, but religion must be the foundation of education. It is necessary then to make the light of those truths shine with splendor before the eyes of children so that these truths may shape their thinking and behaving. It is necessary to teach them all their obligations in a clear, easy, authoritative, consistent, and convincing way. It is necessary to take these young creatures from their cribs and gently lead them to their ultimate goal, which is to know,

³⁹Ibid., pp. 5-6.

⁴⁰*Lett. Past. (...) per la Santa Quaresima del 1879*, pp. 47-48. The italicized words are taken from Leo XIII’s Encyclical, *Quod apostolici muneris*.

love, and serve their Creator and one day enjoy him in eternity. In other words, it is necessary to instruct children, but to do so in a Christian way.

Religious instruction is the great secret of Christian education, the supreme need of our age. This, I repeat, dear parents, is your supreme duty... “Do you have children?” the Lord asks in the Book of Ecclesiastes: “train them and bend them to goodness from the time of their infancy.”

Who can doubt that this is a very definite obligation of yours? Tell me: what is this creature that came to increase the number of the living through you? This creature is a human being. Let me quote an illustrious writer: in this creature, so lovely yet so fragile, there dwells a soul that has a heavenly origin, a breath of God, as it were, and a ray of his immortal beauty; a soul redeemed by Jesus Christ at the price of his Blood, a soul purified by the waters of holy baptism, a soul on which the Holy Spirit sheds his purest graces and in whom he finds his sheerest delight.

Fathers and mothers, greet this heavenly stranger, who has come to sit next to you. Bow before this divine guest, who flew down to live with you under the ever blessed title of son or daughter of yours. This little body that you see and that so fascinates you is just the covering, the sanctuary of a most noble spirit which you do not see but which comes from God and must go back to God. Remember this well: God has associated you to himself in giving physical life to this being and wants to use you to nourish his spiritual life so that this child will fulfill his mission on earth and achieve his destiny in heaven.⁴¹

“The inalienable right of parents to have a wholesome and life-giving instruction imparted to their children”

The measure providing for religious instruction only for the children whose parents explicitly request it is a sham. It is hard to understand how the authors of this unfortunate measure could not see the awful impression it makes on children when they notice that religious teaching is treated so differently from all the other subjects. To apply himself diligently, a child needs to know the importance and necessity of what is being taught him. What effort, then, can you expect a child to put into that instruction toward which school authorities are cold or hostile and which they barely tolerate? (...).

Unfortunately, the promotion of secular schools in the name of freedom and learning simply aims at tearing the young away from religion and family and co-opting them, body and soul, to the principles of Freemasonry. So far, the so-called modern reformers have tried to hide their ultimate goal with uncanny craftiness. Now, however, they have thrown off their mask. It is with grief and anguish -- in view of the terrible and irreparable harm that will accrue to Church and country, the two supreme loves of my heart -- that I say it is no longer in order to form strong nations, as they claim, or just to limit the Church’s power that they want young people to be at the mercy of secular authority. Rather it is in order to tear out all sentiments of faith, all thoughts of God from the hearts of these young people. They admit this openly, for all to see.

In the beginning, parents, especially, did not split hairs. But now they are waking up to the fact that they have been betrayed and are rising up to assert their inalienable right to have a wholesome and life-giving instruction imparted to their children, such as that imparted in the name of God in the Church.⁴²

“First impressions are powerful and generally decisive”

⁴¹*Educazione cristiana*, Piacenza 1889, pp. 11-13.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

First impressions are powerful and generally decisive for the rest of one's life. This thought should fill our hearts with loving concern! For it is in a child's earliest years that the lessons of faith and morals are impressed more easily on his or her memory, that Christian truths move the human spirit more intensely, that the gentle teachings of religion touch the heart more forcefully. On soft wax the image of God can be more easily impressed, while it takes a chisel and much time and effort to engrave it on marble. When one does not have prejudices to erase nor evil habits to correct, the soul is more easily molded to one's holy obligations. When does a wise farmer put a support on a sapling to keep it from bending out of shape? Does he not do this when it is young? He knows that later on it is too late. You must do the same thing, dearly beloved.

The seed of faith and religion that you sow in the virgin soil of a child will soon become his support. A Christian attitude will then take deep root in the child and develop into a strong tree. The winds of passion may at times buffet the tree, shake off some fruit, or even break some branches; but the trunk thus stripped will still stand and, with the arrival of the first sun of spring, will sprout new branches and produce abundant fruit.⁴³

“Infuse into their hearts the knowledge of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament”

Children and young people must have first place in your apostolic zeal. You know that they are Christ's favorites: “Let the children come to me and do not prevent them.” That is to say:, respect the attraction they feel for me and encourage them. Teach them that they can possess Christ by believing in him and that they will draw him to themselves by imitating him.

Urge mothers to take possession of Christ in this sacrament and to present him to their children, teaching them in good time, from their earliest years, after the example of St. Monica. Tell mothers what the Apostle Paul says: “The woman will be saved through motherhood provided she perseveres in faith” (1 Tim 2:15). Convince mothers that they cannot properly train and educate their children if they do not care to infuse into their hearts the knowledge of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Our priests must also invite fathers to receive Christ and to draw him to themselves. From the Lord Jesus in this sacrament fathers should learn a sense of solicitude and vigilance over their families.

I would like pastors to convince parents to have three or four Masses celebrated each year for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their children. They should recall the example of Job: “Job would send for his children and sanctify them, rising early and offering holocausts for every one of them” (Jb 1:5). So, you should inculcate this beautiful practice, knowing that a good number of them will accept your advice, with great benefit to their families.⁴⁴

“When we educate for the faith, we educate also for true freedom”

Christian parents, the future of your families and your country is in your hands, You must choose whether you want to entrust your children -- who should be the sweet comfort and desired protection of your old age -- to the loving care of Jesus Christ, the divine teacher of truth and of all legitimate progress, or to condemn them to the hateful and inhuman discipline of people who teach rebellion of all sorts.

When I educate for the faith, I educate also for true freedom. For those who call me an unreliable friend of freedom because I cordially detest that vile licentiousness that claims not only the term

⁴³Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁴⁴Third address at the 3rd Synod, Aug. 30, 1899. *Synodus Dioecesisana Placentina Tertia....* Piacenza 1900, pp. 256-257 (translated from Latin).

“freedom” but also the right to do what it pleases, whether lawful or not, I have just one answer: I love freedom with a passion and am always ready to fight bravely for it as a sacred right granted me by the Savior to help me exercise my ministry of peace. As my bounden duty, I claim this right for all the Christians entrusted to me. For me, however, this freedom means that I can think, talk, and act free of unjust constraints; that, with all my respect for human laws, I am first and foremost committed to God’s rule alone. Regarding the other kind of freedom, which amounts to the mischievous right to bother everybody else to please oneself, I reject with disdain the term as well as the substance. Those who want and claim freedom only for themselves desecrate a sacred term when they refer to themselves as being free: they deserve to be slaves.⁴⁵

e) THE FAMILY

“The family is the second soul of humanity”

Here on earth, after religion, there is nothing so beautiful and enchanting as the family. The family has been called *the second soul of humanity*. How true! For it is in the family that human beings form their ideas, their emotions, their hopes, and their morals. The family is the first nest of the soul, the first school of the mind, the first abode of the faith, the first sanctuary of love, the first temple of God, the shrine of the most cherished traditions, the merry theater of our childhood, the first and last sigh of the heart.

What we love most in our country, what unites us to it with powerful and tender bonds and basically constitutes our fatherland is the sweetness and mysterious power of family love and family memories. Despite the distance of time and space, the sweet memories of the distant fatherland that haunt our minds and hearts have to do not just with the ground we walked on, the sky we first beheld, or the sun that shone on our crib but also and, above all, with the home, with the pure and holy affections that gladdened our childhood, and with the graves where our loved ones are resting. Mother, father, brothers, sisters, the most loving people, the tenderest care, the most generous sacrifices, the purest consolations, the most cheerful images, the most pleasant dreams: such are the memories the idea of family awakens in us. Few people can escape the fascination of these memories. How wretched they are, for it means that either nature has made them pessimists or that the hard experiences of life have dried up every spark of love and warmth in them.⁴⁶

“God himself created the family”

God himself created the family. Having come to earth to undo the harm brought upon poor mankind by the dreadful fall in the Garden of Eden, Jesus begins his saving mission by restoring the family to its original condition. Since he always follows God’s strategy of putting example before word, the Man-God is born into a family, grows up in a family and lives his life in a family. With the first miracle he performs at the wedding feast of Cana to prove his divinity, he clearly shows that the great work of human redemption begins with the sanctification of the family and its restoration to a place of honor. And so he communicates the supernatural life of his grace to the family.

But to make sure that such a gift of grace will never cease and to afford special defense and protection to the family, what does the divine Redeemer do? Admire his wisdom and goodness.

⁴⁵*I diritti cristiani e i diritti dell'uomo*, Bologna 1898, pp. 10-11 (Collective pastoral letter of the bishops of Emilia, drafted by Bishop Scalabrini).

⁴⁶*La famiglia cristiana*, Piacenza 1894, pp. 5-6.

Not content with making just the mutual consent or the simple human contract of marriage the foundation of domestic life, he also attaches to marriage the full dignity and power of a sacrament, the sacrament of Matrimony. As a result, the union of the spouses is blessed, their love sanctified, their living together guaranteed, their burdens lightened, their duties made easier, their reciprocal relations well defined, all activities ennobled, and the way to heaven made smooth.

There is more. After laying a solid foundation, the divine Artisan also assists in completing the edifice. Now, since human parents cannot transmit the life of grace along with human life, this divine Artisan, in his infinite goodness, finds a way to infuse that heavenly sap into all the members of the family through the mysterious channel of the other sacraments. In fact, through the sacraments, the crib is sanctified, childhood protected, adulthood strengthened, old age sustained, the last agony comforted, and the grave illuminated. Through the sacraments, Jesus Christ himself, author of grace and holiness, forever lives, grows, and abides in the family.⁴⁷

“The Christian family is a little kingdom founded on love”

The Christian family! It is a little kingdom founded on love, growing in love and ruled by love. The only law governing the life of the Christian family is the perfect harmony of hearts, the interweaving of the deepest affections, the most intimate union of souls. This love, sanctified by grace, purified by virtue, and ennobled by faith is no longer fragile. It is transformed from earthly into heavenly love and fills home life with a peace that, one might say, is a foretaste, here below, of the joys of heaven. How beautiful is a marriage fashioned after God’s plan, blessed by the Church and adorned with the beauty of religion! In it, the grace of Jesus Christ infused by the sacrament enters into two lives, two hearts, two souls and makes them one so as to form that sacred and permanent unity that no power on earth can break or loosen.

Who can separate two hearts that love each other in and with the love of Jesus Christ? The world with its seductions perhaps? In no way, because before this shrine, marked by the blood of the divine Lamb and closed with the seal of faith at the foot of the altar, the angel of the Lord stands guard to withstand all enemy attacks. Passions perhaps? In no way, because weeds do not grow in this garden nourished by faith. In this garden only that love thrives which, according to the Apostle Paul, is the source of all the most beautiful virtues. Tribulations perhaps? In no way, because just as true love shares joys, in the same way it also shares sorrows. In time of trials and misfortunes, you will see two hearts, deeply in love with each other, drawing ever closer together, pouring the balm of comfort over each other and finding their happiness in sacrificing for each other. Blessed is the man who, during the hardships and tragedies of life, can take refuge in the heart of his Christian wife! Time perhaps? In no way, because this inexorable destroyer of everything beautiful and mortal cannot touch or harm a love that is aflame with God. Springtime may pass, the rose of youth wither, and the tree of life lose its green branches, but Christian love will live forever because it is not nourished by this earth and is not an earthly thing. This love comes from heaven, is born of God’s love, and is made for immortality. The chill of old age can never diminish a love fed by the fire of divine love. So this love is always young. When two Christian spouses come to the end of their earthly life and take leave of each other in time (what a moving sight), with a warm and affectionate kiss they seem to be saying to each other: we will continue to love one another for all eternity with a better and more perfect love in the bosom of God.⁴⁸

“Blessed the parenthood that is crowned by religion!”

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 12-13.

Blessed the parenthood that is crowned by religion! Look at those two young Christian spouses on whom has descended the precious gift of fertility. Look at them with their baby, reborn by the grace of Jesus Christ in baptism, as they watch him cry or smile in the crib. That little angel, a gift from heaven, is earthly bliss, ecstasy, rapture. A new happiness, a new supernal felicity fills those two hearts. A mysterious force draws the two together and draws them to that crib where, I dare say, lies something sacred and heavenly they are called to safeguard and watch over. Notice the attention and care, the worries, the ecstasy of that man, who, blessed with the title of father, would never want to leave the house that has captured his whole heart. Look at that gentle creature on whose head rests the crown of motherhood. What ardent sighs, what joyful tears, what loving heartbeats, what expressions of gratitude and love she bestows on heaven and then on the crib, on God and then on the fruit of her womb! As the child grows, love grows and happiness increases. The smiles of that innocent child gladden the life of those two fortunate people. For them the house is more than a royal palace. They are enjoying a perpetual feast.⁴⁹

“Parents, train!”

To those of you who are parents I say: train! The training of your children should be your chief concern, your constant obsession. The Lord does not forbid you to increase your possessions, if you do so honestly, or to add new glories to your family name. He does not prohibit you from using the goods of this world for yourselves, as long as they are legitimate. Live in society and freely attend to your business. But always remember that your beginning and last end is God because you were created by him and for him; that you are not in the world to accumulate goods or money or to enjoy the pleasures of life but to save your soul. You cannot save your soul if you do not do your part to save that of your children. The Fathers of the Church teach that parents do not save their souls alone or lose them alone. In fact, dear mothers and fathers, the success or failure of your children depends on you. You, you alone are responsible for them.

Train, therefore, train. I insist on this point, dearly beloved, because it is supremely important. A Christian training is the most precious gift you can give your children. By itself, it is worth a large fortune. Are you poor? Give your children a good training and they will be able to acquire goods for themselves by an honest life and hard work. Are you rich? What are riches without formation? They are simply tools for evil, nothing more. Christian training is the best and surest guarantee. Laws are of some help. But you, dear parents, can do much more than laws. Law punishes evil, good training prevents it. Law forbids evil, good training uproots it. Law cuts off, good training plants. Law governs external actions, good training molds the heart and forms the character.

When you hear of terrible happenings that deeply sadden society and you look around for a solution, clasp your children to yourselves, give them a kiss, and be more determined than ever to give them a good education. This is the best answer, the surest solution.⁵⁰

“Your lives must always be an open book”

Your lives then must always be an open book in which your children can clearly read their duties and responsibilities. Speak often to them of God, taking your cue from everything that might make an impression on them. Make sure that their baby lips often pronounce the most holy name of Jesus with respect and confidence. Point out to them the imprint of God’s goodness, greatness, and

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 18-19.

omnipotence in all things. From the harmony uniting the various parts of the universe, make them understand the obligation people have to live in harmony with the purpose for which they were created. Teach them the first truths of our faith early. On Sundays and holy days, always take them to Sunday school, to holy Mass, and to the religious functions. At least on Sundays and holy days, read them a page or two from the catechism or the lives of the saints. Get them used to kissing the crucifix and the image of Our Lady with devotion and to saying their morning and evening prayers. Let them see you as good Christians and Catholics in everything, Christians and Catholics in your behavior; Christians and Catholics in making the sign of the cross before and after meals; Christians and Catholics in observing fast and abstinence; Christians and Catholics in giving first place to religion always and everywhere; Christians and Catholics in paying respect to the Vicar of Jesus Christ and to the sacred ministers; Christians and Catholics in contributing to the expenses of worship; Christians and Catholics in attending church, receiving the sacraments and hearing the word of God; Christians and Catholics in good times and in bad, in word and in deed, in public and in private.

Let your alms to the poor pass through their innocent hands. Let your children experience and taste, early on, the chaste joys and sweet consolations of Christian charity. No, religion must not be imposed on them like a heavy yoke. Rather, they should learn, early on, how to appreciate and enjoy the beauty and glory of religion and to experience within themselves their mysterious and endearing sweetness. Help them see proof of all this in the mantle of light surrounding religion and in the mark of truth religion bears on its forehead. If their religion is not based on reason, they will just be hypocrites.⁵¹

f) SUNDAY, DAY OF THE WORD AND THE BREAD

“Sunday! what sublime riches this word contains!”

Sunday is the holy day par excellence: holy in itself, holy in its institution, holy in its purpose, holy in the works it prescribes, holy in the effects it produces; and therefore so beneficial. Sunday is the day of true liberty, equality, and fraternity, the day of our ransom, greatness, hope, glory, and joy, the prelude of the blessed and joyous day that will never end.

Sunday is above all the Lord’s day, the day of his marvels, blessings, and victories. It was on Sunday that he created the light and brought into being the stupendous work of this universe (...). On Sunday he worked his first miracle. On Sunday he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On Sunday he rose gloriously from the sepulcher, giving us a sure pledge of our immortality. On Sunday he commissioned the apostles to preach the gospel to all peoples and conferred on them the power to forgive sins. On Sunday he sent them the Divine Paraclete and transformed them into courageous heralds and defenders of his teachings. On Sunday, finally, he founded his Church to last until the end of time.

Glory be to Sunday! exclaims St. John Chrysostom. This day is the monument God himself erected between heaven and earth as a perpetual memorial of his blessings and of our twofold alliance with him; a monument of infinite wisdom, on which human generations will find summarized in bright letters, until the end of time, the great events of religion and humanity, the wonders of nature and grace, the miracles of power and love, the name of the Father who created us, the name of the Son who redeemed us, the name of the Holy Spirit who sanctified us. Sunday is par excellence the Lord’s day!⁵²

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁵²*Santificazione della festa*, Piacenza 1903, pp.7-8.

“The day God has set aside for himself is sacred”

Just as a church is a place separated from all others and set aside for prayer, so Sunday is distinct from all other days and consecrated to divine worship. What a church is with respect to the rest of the city or town, Sunday is to the other days of the week. The place God has chosen as his dwelling place on earth is sacred and inviolable; hence, he who desecrates it is guilty of sacrilege. Likewise, the day God has set aside for himself is no less sacred and inviolable. Hence, he who desecrates it is no less guilty of sacrilege (...).

God certainly has every right to demand that we use exclusively for his honor at least a part of the time he has given us as a gift.

Is he not our Creator and Lord? Is he not the absolute master of time and space?⁵³

“The feast days of the saints are as inviolable as the days of God”

The desecration of Sundays has become, even among us, one of the most deplorable and heartbreaking scourges of our time, a real scandal.

Certainly, there are still very many Christian families, both in the city and in the diocese, who, notwithstanding the wickedness of our times and the efforts of the ungodly, give an example of truly edifying piety especially on Sundays and holy days. We ought to thank the Author of every good gift for this. But there are many more who could not care less for God’s command and even brazenly desecrate it.

You be the judges, my brothers and my sons and daughters. Are we not saddened at the sight of stores open and goods on display on Sunday, like any other day? Are not our ears wounded by the clatter of machines, the creaking of the carts, the bang of the hammers? Are we not heartbroken when, on Sundays and holy days, we often see poor workers, even children, forced to work without letup, just like on any other day of the week? On the farms, where certain landlords without faith and compassion are mostly at fault, do we not find people who plow, sow, or gather the harvest even on Sundays and holy days? Even among those who do not work on those days, how many unfortunately turn to revelry and abandon themselves to theaters, dances, games, debauchery, and worse! What do reason, heart, and faith have to say about all this?

Reason, heart, and faith raise their voices in protest against such depravity, and to each one of us they passionately repeat the solemn injunction: “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.” Remember to keep holy Sundays and holy days.⁵⁴

“Allow workers at least one day to attend to themselves”

Industry and commerce are undoubtedly sacred and noble things, and I earnestly hope they spread and multiply more and more. But they must never, never spread and multiply at the expense of much more sacred and nobler values, such as human dignity and freedom. Come now! Would you want to turn a man into a slave, into a beast of burden, just to multiply your possessions and increase your profits?

You barbarians! How can you forget that in that body tanned by the sun, in those limbs hardened by heavy work, there resides an immortal soul, just like yours? Do you not know that, in the eyes of science and of Christian faith, a worker -- except for rank -- is equal in everything to the noblest of

⁵³Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 9-10.

princes, to the most powerful ruler? In fact, precisely because he is a worker, he more vividly reflects the image of the divine Artisan of Nazareth, who by his example ennobled work and a life of poverty.

So do not destroy the poor worker; do not humiliate him; do not mortify him! Respect his dignity. Allow him at least one day to attend to himself. Allow him to have time to be instructed on his duties, to sit down at the family fireplace, to attend religious functions, to have a foretaste in time of the joys of the spirit, and to prepare himself for his eternal home. In a word, allow him his Sunday rest.⁵⁵

“On Sunday, the four fountains of divine mercy open up to us: the word of the Gospel, prayer, the Sacrifice, and the sacraments”

Compared to the other commandments, that of observing Sundays and holy days is really a yoke that is sweet and a burden that is light. In the words of an outstanding writer, it is a return to the blessings of the Garden of Eden, a suspension of the terrible law of bitter labor, a protection of the poor and weak against the oppression of the rich and powerful, a holy cry of liberty, an invitation from our heavenly Father who gathers his scattered family around himself and enters into intimate, loving communion with all his sons and daughters. On that day, the four fountains of divine mercy open up to every man and woman: the word of the Gospel, prayer, the Sacrifice and the sacraments. On that day, earth rises up, heaven stoops down, all creatures speak to us in the language of faith, hope, and love. And the soul experiences all its moral greatness and tastes the joys of heaven even in the midst of the bitter trials of life.⁵⁶

“A day when the soul will rise free”

Is not ignorance of religious matters, so common in many, many people today, especially among the working classes, more frightening than poverty itself? True, today, more than ever before, society is making vigorous and commendable efforts to educate the masses. However, under the guise of education, how often ideas are taught and disseminated that harm the people!

It has been and always will be one of the immortal glories of the Church that, in every age, she has been the great teacher of the people. While science may be the privilege of a few, the basic truths of religion must be everyone's birthright. In the words of an illustrious prelate, people may know nothing about the difficult problems of algebra, but they must know something about the problems of life. They may not know whether there are inhabitants on the various planets, but they must know that we are destined to be inhabitants of heaven. Now, Sunday answers the need for this kind of knowledge. On that day, all over the world, the churches throw open their doors to all people. From these churches, as from a universal school, the noblest and sublimest knowledge goes forth to one and all.

There is more. What is it, dearly beloved, that raises us up above everything around us? Undoubtedly, it is this: inside the fragile frame of our body, which is destined to die, there is something that gives life to inert matter, transcends space, defies time, and conquers death. There is thought, which mirrors the universe. There are sentiments that embrace the infinite. There is the will with its free powers. In a word, there is a soul made in the image and likeness of God, constantly thirsting and ever longing for him, like the deer longing for the spring, the needle turning to the magnet, the wave plunging back into the sea.

⁵⁵*Come santificare la festa*, Piacenza 1904, pp. 23-24.

⁵⁶*Santificazione della festa*, Piacenza 1903, pp. 20-21.

Now, should there not be one day a week when the soul, relieved of the burden of its earthly concerns, removed from the hustle and bustle of material life, is free to draw closer to God? One day, when the soul can rise freely to the endless horizons and enjoy a bit of peace?⁵⁷

“Sunday is the day of the family”

Sunday is not only the day of the Lord and the day of man. It is also the day of the family. The family! What tender thoughts, what delicate feelings this beloved word stirs up in us! Everybody is lamenting the fact -- and they are right -- that family spirit is growing weaker and weaker by the day in our modern society. But is not Sunday work, now more frequent than in the past, one of the principal causes of this deplorable situation? How could the members of a family somehow not become strangers to each other if Sunday did not come around to bring them together in the intimacy of the family home? On the other days, the family is more or less dispersed. Father is all taken up with his business, while mother is busy with her household work. And the children? They are either in school or at the shop. Only on Sunday can they all come together, visit with each other for a longer stretch, spend time with each other, strengthen the bond of mutual affection and enjoy together the bliss of family life. *To spend Sunday with the family*: this phrase so common in the mouth of our forefathers and mothers conjured up for them memories of undiluted joys and perfectly expressed their sense of moral propriety.⁵⁸

“On Sunday, all feel like masters of their time, their thoughts, their affections, their life, and their soul”

Observe Christians on that day. They all meet in church. Joy radiates from their faces and peace descends on all hearts.

For these people liberty, equality, and fraternity are not empty words but a comforting reality. Rich and poor, servants and masters, humble workers and powerful capitalists, simple clerks and illustrious officials, all are free to be themselves. On that day, all, without exception, feel they are masters of their time, their thoughts, their affections, their life, and their soul. They are all together in the arms of the same Mother, offer up the same prayers, kneel with the same sense of adoration, hear the same word of truth, profess the same faith, offer the same Sacrifice, sit around the same mystical table, and pray for the same motherland. By the fulfillment of the same obligation, they now feel more than ever like sons and daughters of the same heavenly Father. From that temple emanates a breath of love and peace that vivifies and restores all things.⁵⁹

“Attending Mass at one’s own parish”

The Church strongly recommends that her children attend Mass in their own parish as often as they can easily do so. In fact, the Sacred Council of Trent instructs bishops to remind the faithful of this obligation and elsewhere directs them to urge their people to attend Mass at their own parishes at least on Sundays and major feasts. And with good reason, for, as an eminent writer says, the parish Mass is really the family Mass, celebrated in the name of the whole parish gathered together and for

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 17-18.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

all the faithful who belong to it. This Mass usually is supplemented by special prayers, devotions, timely announcements, and explanations of the Gospel. In fact, the pastor is bound by Church law to celebrate the holy Sacrifice of the Mass for his parishioners on Sundays and holy days so that, by attending his Mass, his parishioners may enjoy the fruits of the Mass and accompany the pastor's intention with their prayer and devotion. In this way, the offerings and prayers of a united family gathered around its head will rise acceptably to God. Pastors will get to know their sheep better and will be able to call them by name, as the Gospel says.⁶⁰

2. CATECHETICAL APOSTOLATE

Pius IX called Bishop Scalabrini the "Apostle of the Catechism." Bishop Scalabrini's first concern as pastor and bishop was the religious instruction of young people in the catechism, for the catechism is the first, natural instruction, the complete synthesis of Catholic teaching, and the source of Christian life. The bishop devoted the First National Congress in 1889 to a catechetical renaissance.

The catechism must be taught "everywhere and always," from the pulpit and in school, in the family and in special schools of Christian Doctrine. The teaching must be gradual and cyclical and take in the whole formation period, from childhood to adulthood. It is vital teaching because it provides training in the faith, as long as the teachers pattern themselves after the "first catechist," Jesus Christ, and imitate his zeal and love.

Catechesis is eminently Christological: to make Jesus the Savior known and loved. Catechetical pedagogy is the most difficult of arts: it must be studied, tried, and refined according to the methodology best suited to those being catechized, who must apply their minds and wills, their hearts and senses. Catechesis is the most effective apostolate because it aims at forming Christ in the faithful,

The inadequate educational preparation of the people of his time made Scalabrini opt for a single catechism: "a handbook of the faith that is the same for all" Catholics and for all countries, so that geographic mobility will not jeopardize the certainty of the rule of faith and morals.

a) THE PRIMACY OF CATECHESIS

"The Apostle of the Catechism"

It breaks my heart to see so many young students getting lost, whereas we could so easily save them!... We must focus our most pressing and loving attention on them, my brothers. Let us save these poor young students. Let us save them, and we will have saved everything else!... It is not just because I am so fond of these young people that I dare set this challenge before you once more but also because I want to fulfill a promise I made to Pius IX of holy memory. One day he told me, in that typically fatherly way of his: "Your Excellency, continue to be the Apostle of the Catechism." As he said these words, perhaps so that I would never forget his exhortation, he presented me with this pectoral cross in the presence of several bishops.... Flustered by such unexpected and undeserved condescension, I do not remember what I answered. However, I remember this most vividly: that I resolved then and there to put those words into practice, as best I could, and also to repeat them to my confreres in the ministry every chance I had. So, let those of us here who are

⁶⁰*Come santificare la festa, Piacenza 1904, p. 14.*

pastors and priests, let us arm ourselves with an undaunted, enlightened, and steady zeal. Let us become Apostles of the Catechism.⁶¹

Though light years away from the zeal of St. Charles Borromeo, of St. Francis De Sales, of my glorious predecessor Blessed Paolo Burali, of the Venerable Robert Bellarmine and of other illustrious living shepherds, I am nonetheless burning with a passionate desire to follow, at least from afar, in their footsteps in carrying out this salutary catechetical work. I will never, never cease praying, working, and exhorting in season and out of season, with all patience, until I see this work perfectly achieved, so that our beloved Diocese will become, in this matter, an example and inspiration to other dioceses.⁶²

“My first concern was with the young people”

As soon as the Holy Father appointed me to govern this noble and illustrious diocese, my first concern was with the young people (...). In the name of God I implore you to keep careful watch over the religious instruction of children, to stoop down to their level and never lose sight of them, to work with their parents in leading them to piety, to teach them all the points of Christian Doctrine, and to root them firmly in the Catholic faith.

I see that my words on the teaching of catechism were received by you with approval. On my part, I am pleased to pay public tribute to your zeal and trust that the ardent desires of my heart regarding the catechism will be fulfilled.⁶³

“The catechism is the most natural and most basic teaching”

Though young, children -- if well instructed in the catechism -- do feel their God within themselves and turn to him with enthusiasm. They love him and adore him in the beauty that adorns the universe. Anyone with some experience in this field does not need to be convinced of this.

Talk to children about God in ways that suit their age and mentality, and they will show you that you are not speaking of a Being alien to their nature. The Supreme Being has made his existence felt in the depths of their souls at the very dawn of their lives. As this precious seed grows gradually with age through the catechism, God reveals to them the most beautiful and sublime part of themselves.

The idea of God emerges at the very dawn of human reason. The foolish theories of schools without catechism are refuted every day by mothers who speak to their little ones about the heavenly Father. To this Father in heaven the little ones offer their prayers. With their hands folded, their eyes raised to heaven, their voices trembling with emotion, they repeat the sacred words mother pronounces and their little hearts beat in unison with the heart of her who inspires them (...).

Train a youngster religiously and you will see that, as he grows up, he will still utter the name of God with respect, and, almost unknowingly, will make the principles of faith the basic law of his mind, of his spirit which is just beginning to become conscious of itself. As he listens with awe to the miracles of creation and to the stupendous blessings of redemption, he will understand with sheer joy the bond that unites heaven and earth, God and man. He will feel awakening in his heart love and gratitude for his Creator; and he will pray with love and faith. All this will powerfully influence his future, his spirit, his conscience, his character, and maybe the outcome of his whole life (...).

⁶¹*Atti e documenti del Primo Congresso Catechistico, Piacenza 1890, p. 120.*

⁶²*Il Catechismo Cattolico, Piacenza 1877, p. IX.*

⁶³*Sull'insegnamento del Catechismo, Piacenza 1876, p. 4.*

And so, while society has rightly awakened with real enthusiasm to the need for giving children the best possible physical and moral training, why can people not understand the even greater need for teaching them, early on, those rudiments of the faith that are the basis for the great work of Christian education, the foundation and base of their whole life? Without question, the teaching of catechism must be the first instruction children should receive.⁶⁴

“The catechism is the summary of all the Catholic Church’s teachings on faith and morals”

In general terms, the Catholic catechism is simply a brief summary of all the Catholic Church’s teachings on faith and morals. It is a marvelous summary that satisfies all the desires of the human faculties, all the needs of the soul; for the catechism illustrates and explains to the human soul the most difficult and profound questions affecting it.

Hence, the catechism is a book that guides consciences and teaches people about God, about the noble destiny of human beings and the sacred bonds that unite them with their Creator, their fellow human beings and themselves. It is a concise but comprehensive treatise on our faith. All the words in the catechism were weighed with such care that someone beautifully defined the catechism as “the pure essence of Christianity’s teachings on faith and morals.” It is elementary theology, a theology that is nonetheless deep, tailored to the intelligence of each one and very positive; for every formula in the catechism encloses a precise truth, which is expressed and sculpted with exact and clear words (...).

The catechism contains teachings that are utterly divine, where God himself is the teacher (...). The catechism raises human beings above all created things, leads them to the very throne of the Eternal Father, and reveals to them the generation of the divine Word and the procession of the Holy Spirit. In that ocean of marvels, it discloses to them infinite perfections, myriads of infinite perfections, ineffable mercies and stupendous mysteries: the Incarnation, the Cross, the sacraments, and many other truths that reveal to us the deepest mysteries of God.

Based entirely on the word revealed by God to his Church and, in embryo, wholly contained in the divine Master’s command to his apostles: “Go forth and teach all nations,” the catechism is a book that takes the place of all other books and all human wisdom, a book for the big and the small, for the learned and the unlearned (...). So, after Holy Scripture, there is no book that is more sacred, no book that can and should be of greater interest to society than the Catholic catechism.⁶⁵

“A real source of Christian life”

The catechesis of the primitive Church was a real source of Christian life, for through catechism the Christian life matured and flourished. Catechesis was not seen as a mere school of religion but as a family in which souls were brought to maturity for God, for the Church, and for Heaven (...). In this school the spirit of the listeners became attuned to Christian thoughts. Here the mind was trained to understand and judge things no longer according to the standards of pagan wisdom but according to the standards of the faith of the Gospel. With great love and generosity, catechists worked hard to form in those souls, still young in the faith, the spirit of Jesus Christ, nay, Jesus Christ himself: “Until Christ be formed in you.”⁶⁶

⁶⁴*Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, pp.33-35.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

“The fruits of the First Catechetical Congress have already been partially achieved”

Dear confreres, I cannot find words to express the deep emotions of my heart at this moment. The eloquent words expressed in this hall from the very first day, the many beautiful and consoling things heard here, the many useful proposals discussed, the many precious and timely considerations just applauded, have brought our work to a worthy conclusion and have shown how much your hearts are on fire with love for him who said: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” So to him, to him alone be all honor and glory. To him on this day be all our praise and thanksgiving.

Yes, let us thank him for not having brought us here in vain. We can say that the fruits of the First Catechetical Congress have already been partially achieved. Our people, in fact, could not be indifferent to our work.

What an extraordinary thing the catechism must be, someone recently exclaimed, if so many distinguished personalities have come together in this place for the sole purpose of making the catechism better known; if one of the most learned Princes of the Church, if so many illustrious bishops, if so many zealous shepherds of souls, if so many learned writers have come here from all corners of Italy despite sacrifice and inconvenience, if all these people have spent all their time during these days to give new life to the study and practice of the catechism! Do you not think, venerable confreres, that the discussions held here, and surely also in all the countries you come from, have not done a lot of good? Do you not believe that they are the seed of good and holy undertakings in the future? But we all know that “neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth.” To him, once again, be all honor and glory.⁶⁷

“Promote religious instruction with zeal and love”

With all my heart I urge you to promote religious instruction with passion and love and to ensure that it is regularly carried out in the *Catechetical Schools*. I beg you, beloved pastors and priests, arouse enthusiasm in all good and sincere people for this work of God. Shake up the sluggish, give confidence to the timid, encourage the hard-working. What joy you will bring to the angels! what edification to the faithful! what consolation to my fatherly heart, if you were to gather around you a select group of young boys and girls and teach them, with the love that only charity can inspire, to know, love, and serve the Lord. I will soon be able to see the results with my own eyes, when, with warm pleasure, I get to visit the *Catechism Schools* in every single parish. I want you to know that I fully expect to receive the sweetest and dearest consolations from these meetings. I will rejoice in the Lord with you and heartily congratulate the real shepherds. But I will not be able to hide, not even in public, my deep disappointment at those who have not done their duty, as best they could, in such a supremely important matter.⁶⁸

b) THE NEED FOR THE CATECHISM

⁶⁷*Atti e documenti del Primo Congresso Catechistico*, Piacenza 1890, pp. 236-237.

⁶⁸*Per la Visita Pastorale*, Piacenza 1876, pp. 15-16.

“Religious instruction -- in other words, catechism”

So we must have instruction, religious instruction! In other words, catechism. For the catechism is, in truth, the foundation of this instruction.

I wish I could make you realize all the greatness and importance, all the power this book deserves!

The catechism is the keystone of Christian life. In the beautiful words of one of the most learned writers of our times, it is the book of books. Though it looks like a rather modest booklet, yet, except for the Bible, it towers above all other books. The reason is simple: this book contains, in germ, the most holy and profound teachings left by Jesus Christ to the Church as the most precious of his treasures. So, not just everything the Pope and bishops teach today but everything they will ever teach, not just Christian dogma but also theology, philosophy, and Catholic literature are the fruits of those catechetical seeds or germs, without which all those fruits would never have come to light and from which, even now, they draw nourishment and life. Whoever wants to know all the goodness and beauty of the Catholic catechism must be like one who has a few seeds in his hands. He is not satisfied with just looking at the seeds but imagines the powers hidden in them. He considers that those seeds, planted in favorable conditions, will open up gradually and become immense trees, laden with branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits.

The catechism! Examine it briefly but closely and you will see that this marvelous book, this code of popular wisdom, though small in volume, contains in itself whatever we most need to know, namely, the knowledge of our purpose in life as well as the means to achieve this purpose. The catechism adapts itself to all ages, answers the needs of people of all conditions and intelligence, solves all the problems of life in a clear and sure way and is itself capable of forming good Christians and honorable citizens. With clear, brief, and precise formulas that gradually unfold and expand, this book calls forth faith in children, nourishes it in adults, strengthens and reinforces it in mature people.⁶⁹

“Catechize everywhere and always”

First Communion and Confirmation are the most common occasions. But they are not enough. You must catechize the children in church, at home, in the streets, in school, during domestic conversations, during sermons, everywhere and always. You must be concerned not only with the poor and the peasants, though for these you must have a very special love, but also with the high-born and the middle-class people because all are equally sons and daughters of Jesus Christ and of the Church. Before the minister of Christ, there are no rich or poor, highborn or plebeian.

Above all, however, you must overcome a serious misconception that has infected many people, namely, that catechism is taught only to children, as if, after having lovingly nursed us with the milk of holy doctrine when we were infants or children, Holy Mother Church were, later on, to leave us to our own devices. Actually, the Church does not leave us to ourselves, not even for one hour of our existence because her maternity is abiding, constant, and untiring. Every age and state of life needs special and more abundant doctrinal food. So keep catechizing the adults. The catechism must be a powerful weapon in their hands for winning the terrible battles of life. Above all, the catechism must teach them to flee from sin, to sanctify their afflictions by long-suffering, to live always with Jesus Christ, imitating his example, and finally to cherish the hope of eternal life. Catechetical instruction that does not achieve these fruits is not worthy of a minister of Jesus Christ and of the Church. This kind of catechesis is dead or almost dead.

But there are people who, in a special way, need very diligent and loving attention from you. These people, as I have told you before, are the deaf-mutes who happen to be in your parishes. With your

⁶⁹*Educazione Cristiana*, Piacenza 1889, pp. 15-17.

help, may they also rapidly achieve knowledge of the truth and be able to sit down reborn at this feast of the spirits.⁷⁰

“We must educate, we must educate!”

We must educate, we must educate! With Christian education we can do anything. Without it, of what use is everything else? If society wants to see the arts, literature, and human disciplines flourish, faith must once again give new life to them. If society wants true progress in science, it is important that the seed of heavenly teachings be scattered widely in the field of the Lord and that the teachings of the Catholic Church be instilled into the hearts of young people from their earliest years (...).

A false knowledge, which is the enemy of faith and of reason itself, must be countered with a knowledge founded on firm, unchanging principles that conform to reason and divine revelation because the dictates of faith and reason cannot contradict each other since God is the supreme Author of both. Now, the foundation of true knowledge is the catechism: do not forget it.

Catechism must be taught by the parents at home, by the priests in church, by the teachers in school. From the catechism the children will learn to love their parents, who are the image of the heavenly Father. From the catechism, subjects will learn to respect authority in their rulers, an authority that comes from God. From the catechism everyone will learn the love that makes us like God and makes us useful to our brothers and sisters.⁷¹

“Let the catechism return to the schools and God with it”

Allow me to speak with the freedom that no one can deny a bishop. Allow me to express a hope, nay, to address to all of you in the name of God, for the salvation of souls and for the good of civil society itself, a prayer that wells up from the bottom of my heart at this moment. Let religion return, let the priest return, let the catechism return to all our schools. Let the catechism return not like a beggar who is hardly allowed to cross the threshold of our home but like a faithful friend, like an old benefactor thrown out in a fit of irritation and unjust anger.

Let the catechism return to the schools and let God return with it! For where God is not present, there is only darkness. Where God is not present, there is only the thickest darkness of moral principles.⁷²

“Perfecting the human faculties harmoniously”

Instruction, even of the intellect alone, whose first step is the alphabet, is a blessing, a blessing to be spread as widely as, and even more than, other benefits, like a clean environment and personal hygiene. This instruction is an enrichment of the person, in fact one of the most noble enrichments. He who opposes it is guilty of treason to humanity. But just as there is a measure and purpose in everything, instruction must be adapted not only to the various classes of people but also be in harmony with all the perfection a person is capable of. Perfecting the human faculties harmoniously

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 37-38.

⁷²Address for the distribution of awards at the Brothers of the Christian Schools (AGS 3018/15).

is called educating, and education comprises body and spirit, the heart, the feelings, the imagination, the will as well as the intellect (...).

Whenever one does not try to religiously train human nature and human dignity in a child; whenever one neglects to form in a child the human being as God intended him, the human being as God created him, the human being as God wanted him to be formed and brought to perfection; whenever one does not pay attention to these things, he betrays, he violates the respect due to a child and to his original greatness. In fact, by nature human beings are born imitators, as well as free spirits. Anyone not acquainted with those great truths that find deep resonance in a sincere heart -- for the heart is naturally Christian, says Tertullian -- anyone not formed to examples of godliness and religious practices will grow up deformed, like a little wild plant bearing very bitter fruit. And this is a very hard situation to turn around. In fact, shaping a young heart to virtue and goodness is easy, but extirpating vices ingrained through the years is so very, very hard.⁷³

“Parents should wake up”

But all the efforts and pains of our pastors and our venerable clergy, all the efforts of our good and hard-working teachers of Christian Doctrine will continue to bear very little fruit until such time as parents wake up, realize their sacred responsibility to their children and do something about it. So I turn to the parents and with all my heart implore them to wake up and remember the serious obligation they have to educate well the children Divine Providence has entrusted to them as a precious deposit. “Teach your son,” says the Holy Spirit (Eccl 30:30). And St. Paul writes: “Bring up your children with the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). Parents are always to remember that success or failure in training a human being depends mainly on the first years of a person’s life. God has assured us and experience confirms it every day, one might say, that, once a child takes a certain path, he will never stray from it, not even when he is old (Prov 17:6).

So, fathers and mothers, with the very heart of Jesus Christ, I implore you: do not be like those miserable parents who are concerned with educating their children for temporal comforts and benefits and with making them learn foolish and perhaps harmful things but do not care about their real spiritual and eternal good. They are more concerned with forming their children to the spirit, the ideals and all the ways of the world than to sentiments of religion, piety and faith.⁷⁴

“You parents are to be the first teachers of catechism”

The new needs of the people call for new methods and ways for instilling the Christian spirit into children, strengthening their will for good, illuminating their consciences and turning them toward virtue, refining the children’s sentiments, forming -- in the sublime words of the Apostle Paul -- Jesus Christ in their souls, and lifting up their souls even unto God. Youngsters are the men and women of tomorrow. In a few years they will be the fathers and mothers, the workers, the well-to-do, the merchants, and the judges in our parishes and throughout the whole Diocese. The easiest and surest way to reform everything is to win them over to God. In times of peace and faith, good, ordinary pastors with average virtue will do. But in our day, the cry of the ungodly is no longer heard from afar but is hounding us and wreaking havoc all around us. The violent hurricane is raging and rampaging and, like an overflowing torrent, threatens to sweep everything away in its flood waters. So it is necessary that the religious formation of children, stirred up by God in other

⁷³*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, pp. 42-46.

⁷⁴*Premessa alla ristampa del Catechismo Diocesano*, Piacenza 1881, pp. 10-11.

periods, be brought back to life again in all its strength and that our zeal at least match the corruption of the times.

But, by and large, all the efforts and pains of the clergy will be utterly useless if you do not wake up, dear parents, and realize your obligation to your children and do something about it. This responsibility, in our wretched times, falls exclusively on your shoulders. You know that, even where we would expect to find seriousness of thought and good sense, we find instead frivolous and superficial people in abundance who despise all the ancient wisdom of their forefathers and mothers and tread underfoot the history and experience of past generations. They look on the catechism as a mere nothing, as an old household tool that is now outmoded, an impediment and an obstacle to the prosperity and glory of nations. As a result, many young people, perhaps brought up on other values, either do not understand the catechism as they should or, with unbelievable foolishness, soon forget it or despise it altogether. So, parents, you must be the first catechists of your children, because, when you got married, you took this very serious obligation on yourselves. You became the parents of your children according to the flesh so as to be their parents according to the spirit.⁷⁵

“You fathers and mothers have the office and duty of communicating the Church’s teaching to your children”

Mothers, I especially remind you that you are expected to give the first religious instructions to your children. Since they are constantly with you and listen to your voice, they will believe you and obey you over anybody else. I speak to you, mothers, because, in that mysterious instinct that adorns motherhood alone, you find the resources that make you better suited for this task than anyone else. As you make sure your children have food for their body, you must also make sure they have food for their spiritual life as well, by giving them their earliest catechetical instructions. Those great truths received from the lips of mother will not be erased so easily from the minds and hearts of your children. By fulfilling this glorious part of the Catholic apostolate entrusted to you, dear Christian mothers, you will make yourselves well-deserving of their souls and of the Church. But engrave deeply in your hearts and minds, dear parents, that children live by imitation and that your example will do them more good than all your words.

So do not be content with sending your children to Christian Doctrine classes, but take them there personally and on time. Attend Christian Doctrine yourselves so as to be better prepared to instruct them. Even if you happened to know everything there is to know about the faith, remember that the more often you hear the truths of religion and reflect on them, the more you will discover in them heavenly light that illuminates and delights the soul. Remember, too, that you must give your children an example of respect and obedience to the Church, of religious sentiments, and of Christian edification and thus prepare them for a blessed future. Let these beautiful words of St. Augustine be the norm of your conduct: Priests have the office and obligation of teaching Christian Doctrine to you, dear fathers and mothers, in the house of God, which you are obliged to frequent. But, in turn, you fathers and mothers have the office and duty of communicating the Church’s teaching to your children and those who are entrusted to you.⁷⁶

c) THE SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

⁷⁵*Sull’insegnamento del Catechismo*, Piacenza 1876, pp. 18-19.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

“We must set up Schools of Christian Doctrine everywhere in the Diocese”

We recognize the serious problems and the many efforts needed to achieve this goal. But nothing is impossible when there is love and zeal, for love and zeal are the great inspirers and teachers of all good things. I know of some pastors who, even in very difficult circumstances, were able to do exactly what I proposed, precisely with love and zeal. Some, in fact, went even further. They set up catechetical festivals with examinations and awards. They organized little retreats for the First Communion children, which they considered very important. They prepared the catechism teachers over a long period of time and used everyone and everything to make this work of the Lord successful.

With St. Augustine I will tell you that with love and zeal one can do great things and do them without much effort because zeal is fruitful, creative, patient, and untiring, while love fears no efforts, nay, loves them and feels blessed by them: “Where there is love there is no effort; and if there is effort, effort itself is loved.” With love and zeal, one thinks of everything, tries everything, perseveres at everything; and one initiative follows another. Through it all, one finds strength and encouragement in God’s infallible promise: “And those who teach the many in justice shall shine like the stars forever” (Dan 12).

I hereby decree the full restoration of the Society and the Schools of Christian Doctrine. These Schools, already established by my predecessors and repeatedly restored by diocesan synods, faded away in some parishes to the point of having left no trace. As bishop and shepherd appointed by the Holy Spirit to feed the flock with the salutary food of heavenly doctrine, I HEREBY ERECT AND DECLARE ERECTED THE SOCIETY AND THE SCHOOLS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE FOR THE ENTIRE DIOCESE for the sake of my conscience, for the greater good of the souls entrusted to us and for the greater glory of God.⁷⁷

“In every parish there will be four classes”

In every parish there will be four classes:

Class I: The Little Catechism

Class II: First Communion

Class III: The Big Catechism

Class IV: For Adults

1. Class I is for the youngest children who have to learn the main truths of the faith. In large parishes, this class may be subdivided according to the number of teachers available and the youngsters registered.

Separately instructing those who are preparing for First Holy Communion is an excellent thing because children are deeply and beautifully impressed when they are separated from the others for a religious and holy purpose.

2. Class II -- the First Communion Class -- is for the boys and girls who are scheduled to make their First Communion within the year. Regarding their age, we will follow the teaching of St. Charles and accept those who are more or less ten years old (...).

One whole year and, for those who are slower, even two years is not too much; rather, it is necessary and extremely useful.

3. Class III is for the boys and girls who have made their First Communion. In this Class, which may be subdivided into various classes according to need, the religious instruction must be brought to completion with an explanation that is clear, noble, dignified, always easy, and simple. This instruction should be solid, well prepared and convincing and should develop and strengthen the faith. It should turn a youngster into a sincere Christian with genuine and

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 24-25.

honest judgments, a youngster who will receive from his faith not fleeting but lasting impressions of deep truths and holy habits, a youngster who can stand up against the raging winds lashing his faith and against the waves roaring all around him.

4. Finally, Class IV is for the adults. This is the class for the people and ordinarily takes place prior to the instruction from the pulpit. Many provincial and diocesan synods prescribe that also the priests who give this instruction must read the questions and answers of the catechism, explaining them with utmost simplicity of words and concepts. The purpose of this instruction and of this Class is to help parents and, generally, all adults to understand the same catechism and explain it faithfully to their children. The success of this goal is so important for the religious future of our families that I am sure everyone, including the priests and pastors who are in charge of Class IV, will abide by these rules for the sake of the instruction.⁷⁸

“Those who are not aflame with this heavenly fire cannot really call themselves Christians”

Those who have faith, who live by faith not only love God but feel driven to make him loved by others as well because love can never put up with indifference. Hence the thirst of the saints in wanting to sacrifice everything for the salvation of souls. Hence those prodigies of love and zeal that we read about in their biographies and that arouse the admiration and awe of the centuries. Zeal for God’s glory consumed them and never allowed them a moment of rest. Those who are not aflame with this heavenly fire cannot really call themselves Christians or true Catholics. Genuine Christians and Catholics are not those who daily say with their lips: “Lord, thy kingdom come,” but those who devise all kinds of strategies, use all conceivable means and employ all their energies so that this kingdom will spread ever more widely and be established on this earth. True Christians and Catholics are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and try to make others know and love it, especially by promoting religious instruction and personally dedicating themselves to it.⁷⁹

“Jesus Christ, the eternal model”

The ineffable love and tender concern of Jesus Christ for children are the glory and eternal blessing of Christian childhood. Hence the catechism teacher cannot and should not have any exemplar other than Jesus who catechized the whole earth (...).

The greatest catechism teachers, the best ones, became such only because they copied in themselves, better than anybody else, the image of this divine model (...).

So, catechism teachers, you must ignite in yourselves the sacred fire of love that burned in the heart of Jesus for children. Be convinced that you will never be worthy of your ministry if you do not love Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ those little lambs of his mystical flock (...).

Jesus Christ must be adored not only as a model for the way children are to be treated but also for the way they are to be taught. The method used by Jesus Christ in teaching is divine, hence the most adapted to children.

In the immortal pages of the Gospel we see Jesus Christ teaching with all authority but, at the same time, with the greatest simplicity. He uses examples and stories from history. He narrates parables and uses allegories. Jesus asks questions and lets himself be interrogated, gives explanations and brief answers. In the temple, on the banks of the Jordan, in a boat, on the mountain top, he instills the deepest doctrinal and moral truths with down-to-earth instructions. He often interrupts his talks and quietly asks: “Do you understand everything?” Sometimes he starts with a question.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 47-49.

⁷⁹*Ai Maestri e alle Maestre delle Scuole Catechistiche*, Piacenza 1877, p. 33.

Sometimes, in order to impress the truth more vividly on their minds, he engages in animated dialogue with his hearers (...).

We might say that the Gospel is the catechism book of Our Lord Jesus Christ. His instructions are divinely ample, solid, magnificent, and extremely simple. His instructions fill people with light, stir them up, touch them, and attract them with the fullness of truth and authority. Christ's instructions will be the eternal and adorable model for all Christian teaching, just as Jesus Christ is the eternal and adorable model for the tender love catechism teachers must have for children.⁸⁰

“The school of catechism does not confine itself to teaching but also trains in the faith “

The school of catechism does not confine itself to teaching children the truths of the faith but also trains them in the faith. It not only teaches children catechism but also trains them in Christianity. We must not only teach but also train; we must nurture and develop not only the mind but also the heart. The catechist, whom St. Paul calls father rather than teacher, must bring up those young students for God, for the Church, and for heaven. He does so by developing in them intelligence, heart, character, and conscience by means of exhortations, examples, spiritual practices, and religious devotions.⁸¹

The goal is not just to teach the little ones the main truths of the faith but also to form and develop a conscience and a Christian mentality in them. The goal is to prepare them for the major religious practices and for the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Confirmation. The goal is to get them used to speaking the language of faith, as well as fearing God and putting their hope in him.⁸²

It is not enough to instruct. This catechism of perseverance must impart strong and authentic Christian training. This catechism must be not only a good school of religious instruction but also a great religious institution. It must not only teach and inculcate the principles of the faith but also implant them in the heart and make them a part of the everyday habits of life.⁸³

“Teachers must be filled above all with zeal”

St. Bernard wants true zeal to be animated by charity, informed by knowledge, and made invincible by steadfastness. He wants true zeal to be careful in the choice of means but earnest and relentless in applying them. When a teacher is armed with such zeal, he does not follow any particular way of acting. He is calm, strict, flexible, courageous, and kind as long as he can save souls. Driven by this zeal, he teaches everything he can so that the little ones may grow in true piety and disdain the illusory and noisy joys of the world.

St. Charles says that, to preserve and expand a work of such importance day after day, teachers must be particularly zealous. They will achieve this if everyone tries earnestly and eagerly to do his or her duty well, sparing no effort that may be needed for that work.⁸⁴

⁸⁰*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, pp. 95-102.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁸⁴*Ibid.* p. 86.

“Joining solid piety to one’s teaching”

To bear abundant fruit, the teaching of catechism must be imparted with extraordinary piety since neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but it is God alone who causes the growth. True, grace does not destroy nature but perfects it. It does not exclude human efforts but presupposes them, just as form presupposes matter. Still, it is always grace that blesses the labors of the catechist and makes them fruitful. Hence the catechist must join solid piety to his teaching so as to draw down on himself and his pupils heaven’s choicest blessings.⁸⁵

So you must pray, dear catechism teachers; and he who is rich in mercy will answer your prayers beyond your fondest hopes. Pray with devotion: this is how the saints lived; this is the life hidden with Jesus Christ in God. With piety and prayer you too will become columns in the house of God, the delight of the Church and the salvation of the children, who will find in you a powerful support and a radiant light.⁸⁶

“Let your pupils know that you love them”

Let your little pupils know that you love them and that, if you are working hard, you are working hard just for them. Then they will readily accept even your admonitions and be happy to listen to you. Remember one thing: more than anything else, children need affection, a godly affection. So, away with that harsh and stern demeanor, that domineering tone of voice that disgusts them so much.⁸⁷

The catechism teacher must have a very pleasant disposition, which must not degenerate into weakness, which at times may change into prudent severity but never into harshness. It is hard to achieve this delicate balance, but one can achieve it if one considers the great benefits it confers.⁸⁸

Teachers should always keep in mind that leniency with children is always fairer than excessive severity; that they should not expect too much from the children; that there is such a thing as perfection with moderation, something very hard to attain. Without it, however, every rule, even the wisest, is worth very little. Finally they should know that the nature of a child -- who is naughty more on the surface than down deep in his heart -- must be guided and helped, never violated. Teachers must aim at their goal with vigor but dispose all things with kindness.⁸⁹

The teachers should show their solicitude even outside the school of Christian Doctrine. They should keep a watchful eye on their pupils’ behavior, remembering that these souls have cost the blood of Jesus Christ and can be molded to the Christian life with little effort and with great benefit to their families. In so doing, the teachers will prepare a crown of glory for themselves. Teachers should inform parents on their pupils’ conduct, their progress, and their shortcomings and always display prudent zeal and warm interest in the success of their youngsters.⁹⁰

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 93.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 85-96.

⁸⁷*Ai Maestri e alle Maestre delle Scuole Catechistiche*, Piacenza 1877, pp. 23-24.

⁸⁸*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, pp. 88-89.

⁸⁹Ibid. p. 127.

⁹⁰*Sull’insegnamento del Catechismo*, Piacenza 1876, p. 46.

“It is easier to train an eloquent orator than a good catechist”

Since, as the saying goes, it is easier to train an eloquent orator than a good catechist, the pastor or whoever takes his place should not hesitate to call the catechists around him and read some lesson to them himself, explaining the meaning of each single word in it (...). He must not do this just once in a while. Rather, he must keep doing it for weeks and even years until the proper teaching method has been learned and well understood.⁹¹

“I consider catechetics one of the most necessary sciences

People usually think that teaching catechism to children is the easiest thing in the world. On the contrary! Obviously, to make children repeat the catechism lessons parrot-like is very easy. But the science and the art of catechizing, the gift of making children understand the teachings of the catechism, the ability to mince these teachings and adapt them to those little minds, in a word the capacity to reduce these teachings to milk for the little ones, ah! “this is an accomplishment, this is work.” Its success depends, however, on much study, diligence, effort, and a good store of knowledge. Personally, I consider catechetics a science priests most need to cultivate because catechizing is one of the most important duties of their sacred ministry.

What am I trying to say? I am trying to say exactly what my venerable confrere from Ventimiglia alluded to yesterday morning, namely, that to revitalize the teaching of catechism and ensure the abundant fruits required by the present-day needs of our Christian people, a school for qualified catechists is indispensable (...)

There are schools to train elementary school teachers. Why could or should there not be a school to prepare and train teachers of the most sublime of all sciences, of the most difficult of all arts, namely, the art of teaching catechism?

My first proposal, in fact, deals with the establishment of a school for catechetics.⁹²

“A great Association of Catechists”

Among various proposals I plan to submit, there is one which is really the implementation of an idea Your Holiness expressed in such a wise and timely fashion in your memorable encyclical, *“Humanum Genus,”* which remained a dead letter. I propose that a great Association of Catechists be established in Italy with the purpose of promoting religious instruction in parishes, families, and schools; collecting offerings for catechetical celebrations and First Communion Days; and distributing awards. In a word, it would be a means to curb the prevailing Freemasonry (...). For sure, this Association would get off the ground at once if, in the forthcoming Congress, I could announce that you, Most Holy Father, have not simply blessed the idea but also concretely encouraged its implementation. Oh, if I could only close the Congress with this simple announcement: Our great and generous Pontiff, Leo XIII, has donated one hundred thousand lire as seed money for this Association.⁹³

⁹¹*II Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, p. 103

⁹²*Atti e documenti del Primo Congresso Catechistico*, Piacenza 1890, p. 187. The “venerable confrere from Ventimiglia” was the Servant of God, Bishop Tommaso dei Marchesi Reggio.

⁹³Letter to Leo XIII, Sept. 12, 1889 (ASV-SS, Rub. 12/1889, ff. 242-243).

d) CATECHETICAL PEDAGOGY

“Knowledge of Jesus the Savior and love for him must have pride of place”

Knowledge of Jesus the Savior and love for him must have the top place in the life of a Christian. So, from their earliest years, we must instill into children’s hearts a lofty idea of Christ and arouse in them a very tender love for him, a great confidence in him, a lively and fruitful devotion to him.⁹⁴

So those who teach catechism must always remember that religious instruction has one purpose: to make God and Jesus Christ known, because this knowledge is eternal life, as the Gospel assures us.⁹⁵

Besides explaining the section of catechism assigned to a particular class, catechists should constantly put the person of Jesus Christ, the Church, and her august Head before the eyes of the youngsters: Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith, the heart of religion, our only hope, and what he is as God and man; the Church, his immaculate Spouse, column and foundation of all truth, mother of all the faithful, outside of which there is no salvation; the supreme Shepherd, the bishop of bishops, the infallible teacher of truth, the Pope.

All three must be the object of the children’s faith, of their knowledge, and of their most loving and deep respect. Since the faith of this developing generation is threatened in many ways on these points, it is necessary to foster a solid, strong, and enlightened faith. For faith without a solid foundation and piety based on habit and feeling could hardly withstand the torrent of errors that is causing havoc among the Christians of our day.⁹⁶

“The meaning of each word of the catechism must be understood in the context of all truths”

Teachers will hold the catechism in their hand and clearly read the questions and answers, explaining the meaning of each word clearly, simply, and very briefly (...). Children, in fact, do not understand those words; and if they get used to pronouncing them mechanically, they will not derive any benefit from them. It is necessary to explain each and every word of the catechism with utmost simplicity and informality, with lively ideas and images, so that they can understand the sublime doctrinal and moral truths of our faith. We often hear youngsters blissfully reciting by heart things they do not understand. This is the fault of the teachers who give them too much credit for understanding the words and expression of the catechism.

So, after explaining the meaning of each word, the teacher starts from the beginning, illustrating the meaning and sense of the answer and presenting the matter again from different angles. Sometimes he gives wrong answers on purpose to give the children the pleasure of correcting him. He distributes praise and reprimands in timely fashion. He tries to hold the children’s attention until the meaning of each word of that section of the catechism is understood in the context of the total august truth it affirms (...).

A catechist must not move on to new ground until he senses from the children’s tone of voice and the gleam in their eyes that the proposed truth has touched them (...). A teacher who does not abide by this rule would betray his or her mission to the great detriment of the youngsters entrusted to him. So a teacher must be careful not to get bored or tired of repeating. He must not be in a hurry to move on, mindful of St. Augustine’s magnificent statement: “The teachings of our Christian faith are

⁹⁴*Piccolo Catechismo proposto agli asili d’infanzia*, Como 1875, p. 34.

⁹⁵*Ibid*, p. 14.

⁹⁶*11 Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, p. 111.

so deep that, had I studied nothing else from infancy to old age and devoted all my attention, effort, and time to them, I would have learned something new every day.”⁹⁷

Their capacity is rather limited; their memory, reflection, and intelligence untrained, their speech very poor. Yet the answers of the diocesan catechism are often too complicated for them because, in the words of the Apostle Paul, they need milk not solid food; that is to say, they require an instruction that is expressed in very simple words and phrases that do not exceed their childlike capacities. In the nursery schools, as a rule, catechists use a few questions and answers taken from the Little Catechism. These in no way constitute a gradual or interconnected body of teachings that could help the child develop the seed of faith and Christian life deposited in him or her by the grace of baptism.⁹⁸

“Make it almost indelible”

Every student should have a catechism of the class he or she attends. The teacher should make them learn it as exactly as possible (...).

An important truth is contained in each formula. The words and phrases are weighed with such care that to replace them with other ones may often change the substance of things (...). Hence the importance of assigning a brief lesson every Sunday, one that is to be learned and recited word for word: a child should not be allowed to change even one word, not even one syllable (...).

This kind of study impresses the text of the catechism so vividly on a child’s memory as to become almost indelible, to the great benefit of people. Even if they stray, they will always find the catechism formulas -- almost indelibly engraved on their hearts -- rebuking and condemning them. We have heard of people who, having lost their faith and gone through all the stages of unbelief, returned to God after forty or fifty years of very irreligious life and still remembered all the catechism answers, to their supreme benefit and consolation.⁹⁹

“The imagination must come to the assistance of the intellect”

We must see to it that the imagination comes to the assistance of the intellect by setting before the children’s minds images that will explain the truths of the catechism. The book of nature, St. Francis de Sales used to say, is a good source of images, comparisons, examples, and a thousand other things. The ancient Fathers of the Church are full of these, and the Holy Scriptures are also teeming with them. St. Francis de Sales did not just give advice but, when he himself taught catechism, used many, many surprising images. From his mouth came forth the most marvelous comparisons. Teachers ought to follow the example of this noble model. If they do, their work will be blessed with rich and abundant fruit.¹⁰⁰

But, when it comes to heaven or hell, a teacher must make sure not to instill into the hearts of children ideas that are too material, inexact, or false, in hopes of making an impression on their imaginations. When it comes to religious instruction, we must always stick to what our faith teaches and not be carried away by the imagination, not even for good reasons. Though a material idea

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 105-109.

⁹⁸*Piccolo Catechismo proposto agli asili d’infanzia*, Como 1875, p. 8.

⁹⁹*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, pp. 104-105

¹⁰⁰Ibid. pp. 110-111.

might make a vivid impression on children, once they grow up and realize it is false, all too often, together with the false idea, they also despise and reject the most sacred truths.¹⁰¹

If at all possible, teachers should use stories. Though these stories would seem to lengthen the instruction, they really shorten it very much and remove the boredom from it (...). God, who intimately knows the spirit of human beings created by him, has couched religion in popular stories that do not bore simple folk but help them understand and remember the mysteries of religion.¹⁰²

“The whole child, body and soul, should be involved in what he studies”

A teacher must always remember that, even in the religious instruction of little children, she must never separate the heart and will from the mind. Rather, the whole spirit, namely, mind, heart and will, should be molded to the good and the true which the Christian faith presents to us. In a word, a teacher should use every occasion, even recreation, flowers, everything to make the children admire the greatness, the goodness, and the perfection of God and to nurture in them the sense of God instilled into them in holy baptism, the divine seed of baptismal grace infused into their souls so that they could bear fruit.¹⁰³

The teacher should awaken warm feelings in her youngsters, gently touching all the chords of their hearts and making the most of all their good qualities. In this way, they will entertain gentle, joyous, and religiously beautiful ideas of their religion, such as to make them happy and cheerful in the simplicity of their faith. Singing is one of the most effective tools to gladden the hearts of children and make their religion dear to them.¹⁰⁴

The teacher should use the posters found in nursery schools showing the heavens and the earth to make the children understand in some way the grandeur and the laws of the universe and to fill their hearts with awe and wonderment.¹⁰⁵

The teacher should often tell the story of the passion and death of Jesus Christ to her little pupils. To impress these mysteries ever more vividly on their hearts, the teacher should make use of the image of the crucifix and other images of the passion, which time-honored experience shows are very useful in the religious instruction of children.¹⁰⁶

“Prudence and patience”

Prudence, this precious virtue, will show teachers how to act with the various characters and different temperaments of their pupils. They should use prudence in correcting at the right time and in the proper way children who are frivolous, proud, or unmannerly, making them understand that they need to be sensible and behave. They should use prudence in giving loving support to the first efforts a child is making to mend his ways (...). They should use great prudence and never allow

¹⁰¹*Piccolo Catechismo proposto agli asili d'infanzia*, Como 1875, p. 22.

¹⁰²*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, p. 109.

¹⁰³*Piccolo Catechismo proposto agli asili d'infanzia*, Como 1875,

¹⁰⁴*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, p. 12-13.

¹⁰⁵*Catechismo proposto agli asili d'infanzia*, Como 1875, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.* p. 37.

themselves to do anything that is less than good. They should not convey the slightest hint of evil in their person.¹⁰⁷

So, have a lot of patience, dear teachers. Enrich a child's memory with good ideas. The time will come when these ideas will fall into place by themselves. Have lots of patience and bear with their vivacious, restless, and impetuous dispositions.¹⁰⁸

One should give out punishments sparingly and prudently. Otherwise, youngsters will easily become annoyed and disgusted and develop an aversion for the catechist, for catechism, and for religion itself. History records the names of people famous for their unbelief and cynicism who confessed that they started down the shameful road of godlessness during their childhood when they were punished too severely during catechism classes. Then and there, they lost all interest in, and love for, this kind of teaching and, once on their own, never wanted to hear about it anymore (...).

Punishments are necessary. But a wise educator once said that joy and trust should be the ordinary disposition of children. Otherwise we impoverish their spirit and demolish their self-assurance. If they are lively, they become irritated; if calm, they become quite silly. Harsh punishment -- a drastic and violent remedy for desperate illnesses -- cures but, at the same time, alters a living organism and frustrates it.¹⁰⁹

"A form that attracts and captivates"

We must make our religion known in all its primeval beauty and make it known especially to young students. We must offer them religious instruction in the form best suited to the needs of our times, in a way that attracts and captivates them and -- as an illustrious speaker put it so well -- in an environment that is not the church, if you will, but still continues the work of the church. To meet extraordinary needs, we must not get bogged down in empty discussions: we must come up with extraordinary means.¹¹⁰

We must engrave the dictates of the faith on the hearts and minds of young people and prepare them to answer the masters of unbelief, who are everywhere. We must also show them all the vileness, the folly, and the misery of unbelievers. We must do so, however, not in a polemical way but with a clear, lofty, and dignified exposition and with a solid, well prepared catechesis that reassures, develops, enlightens, and strengthens their faith. In this case, to quote the Gospel, this faith is founded not on sand but on rock and, as a result, will victoriously withstand all the assaults of the enemy.¹¹¹

"Teach with love"

We are dealing here with nourishing not the material life but the spiritual life of children with the bread of religious instruction. You must convince yourselves, beloved brothers, that in our day there is perhaps no work that is holier and more precious in the sight of the Lord, more necessary and useful for society, more consoling and meritorious for yourselves than religious instruction.

¹⁰⁷*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, p. 91.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹¹⁰*Scuola di Catechismo per la gioventù studiosa*, Piacenza 1890, pp. 6-7.

¹¹¹*Il Catechismo Cattolico*, Piacenza 1877, pp. 141-142.

With every ounce of energy, enlighten minds, fight ignorance, destroy prejudice, make our religion known and loved, and begin to do so with the little ones.

With the wise and practical words of an eminent Italian bishop, I will say to you: welcome children with love and fatherly kindness when they come to you. If they do not come, like the divine Shepherd inquire about them and go looking for them on the streets and in the squares. Challenge the laziness and negligence of parents. Put pressure on the parents and implore them to send their children to religious instruction. Away with punishments and reprimands! Away with harsh and stern methods, which would drive them away from you. Make yourselves children, too, if this is what it takes to win them over to Jesus Christ.

Cover up for their flightiness and restlessness. Bear with them if they are coarse, if they are slow in learning what you are trying to teach. Never grow weary of them or be annoyed with them. With a love that is unlimited, continuous, creative, patient, and kind, with a love that bears all things and hopes all things, we have to make up for the lack of means and for that measure of authority which the times and society have taken from us (...).

In your instructions be brief, clear, and simple. Your manner must be kind and ingratiating. Relieve the boredom of your teaching by interspersing pleasant moral stories. In this way, you mix the pleasant with the useful and induce them to attend your instructions diligently. Where pastors do not have associates or the latter are not capable, the pastors should turn for help to some good laymen, to some pious women who will gather the boys and girls, bring them to church, and keep order.

I beg you: instruct the children the Church has entrusted to you and let your instruction be formative, because -- please pay close attention -- by themselves, conceited and sterile words achieve nothing unless you transform them into sentiment. Instruct with love and charity and instruct always.¹¹²

e) A CATECHISM FOR ALL

“A manual of the faith for all”

Today, more than ever, the most separated and distant countries have been brought closer together and have merged, as it were, due to so many roads and such easy and varied means of transportation. Besides, either for lack of work or the desire for enrichment or in hopes of a better future, many people move from city to city, from province to province, and from country to country without ever having a fixed residence. Never like today was the number of emigrations and emigrants so great.

What does this all mean? Unfortunately, it means that children, in whose hearts it is necessary to sow the seeds of Christian virtues early on, are forced to follow their parents and, as a result, are often deprived of the religious formation they would get at home and are hardly ever instructed in the things of the soul.

Listen to me. Some of these people often emigrate from their native country to another country with a different language and thus have to face two problems: the first one from the difference in language, the second from the lack of uniformity in the teaching method of the doctrine to be learned. Others move from one diocese to another, where the language is the same, and this happens practically every day. But everybody can see then how the diversity of texts confuses and upsets these simple souls.

It is true that the same truth can be expressed in different ways without changing its substance. But children and the unlettered do not understand this. In fact, experience shows that their

¹¹²*Educazione cristiana*, Piacenza 1889, pp. 26-27.

memory is mechanical. That is to say: in their mind it is not things that suggest words but words that suggest things. Nay, we see that for them, if the words change, things also change because, in their simplicity, they cannot tell the difference between substance and accidents. If they listen to the same teaching expressed in a different way from the way they already learned it, they think they are also being taught a different doctrine. And so the confusion, the annoyance, and the thought of having to make new efforts dishearten and humiliate them and turn them away from the school of catechism, with the obvious danger that they will never learn their catechism. There is also a problem for the person who has to teach catechism to children from another diocese, because the teacher must overcome their reluctance and guard them against the scandal they might experience when they hear the explanation of a doctrine which, according to them, is so different. The teacher may also have to start catechism all over with these children, with much effort and loss of time, to the detriment of the other children. Oftentimes this time and effort are time and effort wasted. Besides, there are children who have to follow the fortunes of their parents, as I have said, and so, after some time, in the middle of the program, are forced to cut it short and go to other provinces where the text changes once again and where they will have to face new and harder problems.

Finally, we all know how much the correct understanding of the divine mysteries depends on the accurate choice of words. Leaving aside the variety of catechisms for the moment, it is so easy in the course of time for the faith of the Christian people to suffer as a result of this, especially now that the faith is being undermined on all sides. And so I ask: what will happen to the new generation, already so poorly prepared and so ignorant of the things of the soul and of God? These, it seems to me, are the main drawbacks stemming from a variety and multiplicity of catechisms, drawbacks that could easily be removed if there were one identical catechism for the whole Catholic world.

What great benefits would accrue to the Church! I can think of three: integrity of Catholic doctrine; a stronger and wider unity among all the faithful; a deeper attachment and greater devotion to the Apostolic See whence light radiates and diffuses unto the ends of the earth and whence charity, which is the bond of perfection, and the infallible Magisterium, which rules over us, have always emanated.

Indeed, a manual of faith, once approved, promulgated and sanctioned by the supreme and universal Head of the Church, would be a precious and marvelous handbook, one that would also frighten the enemies of the faith. To this manual could be added the same morning and evening prayers for all, especially the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition, plus all the acts the faithful should perform before and after Holy Communion.

So we fervently long for the day when, with the coming of peace, the reigning Pontiff will be free to turn his attention to such a salutary project. How I wish such glory and honor would crown the already illustrious pontificate of Leo XIII.¹¹³

¹¹³“*Necessità di un Catechismo unico e universale,*” a rough copy from the year 1889 (AGS 3018/14)

3. THE DEAF-MUTES

An apostle of the Word and the catechism could not be indifferent to the drama of those who do not have the gift of speech and cannot communicate with others through this “marvelous medium.”

Deaf-mutes are among the most unfortunate and wretched of all people. They are orphans in their own family, hermits in the midst of people, excluded from society, exiles in their own country. Faith and love dictate that we not only help them but also admit them to civil and ecclesial society and that we do so through instruction that will help them communicate with people and, through human mediation, with God. Priests are to be “a tongue for their muteness and an ear for their deafness.” Church and society must help the deaf-mutes “speak.”

*The **Apostle of the Catechism**, that is, the apostle of the communication of faith through language that can be understood and assimilated, becomes the **Apostle of the Deaf-mutes** in order to restore the basic human communication of language. He becomes the **Apostle to the Emigrants** in order to restore the communication of human beings, isolated by emigration, with society and the Church. One single thought drives him: “Go and teach.” He works for one goal: the communion of human beings among themselves and with God.*

“There was born a family of deaf-mute girls”

It was the day before I was scheduled to bid a final farewell to my beloved birthplace and come to take possession of this beloved diocese. How could I forget the dear deaf-mute girls who for several years had been the object of my care and of my sacred ministry? So I paid them a visit to encourage them for the last time, to commend them personally to the goodness of God, and to give them my blessing. I cannot describe that farewell scene. Educated deaf-mutes feel an intense, passionate, undying gratitude to all those who love them. Those good girls were used to seeing in me their spiritual guide, their catechist, the father of their souls, one of their protectors. After having expressed their exquisite and marvelous sentiments to me, they ended their little speech this way: “We are sad unto death at your departure, but our sadness will turn at once into rapturous joy if you promise to promote, in your diocese, the training of our sisters sharing our affliction.” I promised and left in tears, determined to do all I could to keep my word.

I placed this institution under the protection of the Blessed Mother. In 1880, on the feast of her Nativity, as you well know, I addressed an appeal to the priests and people of the city and diocese, asking my sons and daughters for help. The word of the shepherd was blessed by God and, in part at least, achieved the desired result. As he was dying, a man of charity directed his wife, the lone heir, to give me a sum of money to carry out several of his charitable projects, last but not least, the project for the deaf-mutes. This was how I was able to buy this house and bear the considerable expenses for furnishing it. Blessed be the holy memory of the pious gentleman, Giuseppe Rossetti!

At once, from all corners of the diocese we invited the adult deaf-mute women who were no longer capable of full training to come here. We tried to teach them at least what they had to know to receive the sacraments and a few months later sent them back home, hopefully with good results. God surely took into account our good will and theirs.

Here was born a family of deaf-mute girls who, although they have completed their formation, often do not know whom to rely on for support. This is a charitable institution of sorts, where they live together almost like religious, praying and earning their bread with various kinds of work, especially producing church goods.

Here we began regular classes for the girls capable of receiving instruction. Gentlemen, in a moment you will witness their progress. Their achievements, with which I am already somewhat familiar, make me very happy. At the same time, my heart bleeds at the thought that, according to statistics gathered at my request, there are some two hundred deaf-mutes in our vast diocese, most of whom have grown up with no training at all.

I conclude by thanking and saluting these good Sisters who, in the immensity of their hearts, would be willing to take them all. I hope and pray that this Institute for the poor deaf-mutes may also prosper together with the many other charitable institutions enriching our city. So, even in this field, Piacenza will no longer have to envy the many Italian and foreign cities where the deaf-mutes of both sexes are well trained and returned to their families as well educated members, to society as useful citizens, to the Church as loving sons and daughters, to God as faithful worshippers.¹¹⁴

“There is no greater tragedy than that of a deaf-mute”

There is no greater tragedy on earth than that of a poor deaf-mute. Though blessed with the faculties divine Providence generously bestows on every human being, the deaf-mute is deprived of that marvelous instrument through which harmonies enter the soul, the dearest expressions of family affection are heard, the noblest sentiments of faith are nourished, and the doors are opened, as it were, to that shrine where one’s conscience is sovereign.

Speech -- this power which is co-created with thought and reveals a world of ideas, this mysterious bond which unites the intangible with the physical, intellect to intellect, and heart to heart -- strikes his ear, but without a sound, like an arrow shot against a stone.

So, though growing up in the midst of society, this innocent child of adversity is almost a stranger to it. The storehouse of common knowledge, from which all can enrich themselves, is shut tight to him. The experience of past centuries does not speak to him, and his fund of knowledge is reduced to the little that his own needs, impressions, and experience have taught him. He is like a primitive man in the forest who knows only what he observes around him.

Besides, if the condition of the deaf-mute is exactly like that of a primitive man when it comes to intellectual ignorance, he is infinitely worse off when it comes to anguish and distress of heart.

Someone has said that hunger for truth is no less vehement than hunger for one’s daily bread. How true this is! For example, look at a child who has the gift of speech: he never gets tired of asking you questions, sometimes on this topic, sometimes on that. In fact, he gets upset, makes a fuss and cries if he is not satisfied at once.

What then must be the deaf-mute’s torment, feeling within himself the same hunger for knowledge, yet seeing himself deprived of even the chance to ask questions! He sees others talking among themselves and -- depending on the conversation -- laughing, crying, or acting surprised, while the deaf-mute cannot figure out what is going on. He passionately desires to understand and be understood, yet has no way of even making known this desire! You understand that he will be in a state of constant agony, of painful exasperation. How painful indeed! You who often like to hold pleasant conversations with others, imagine what that day would be like when you would be forever condemned to absolute silence! This is but one of the sufferings the deaf-mute must bear all his life.¹¹⁵

“A hermit in the midst of people”

For most people, an uneducated deaf-mute is a rational being that does not reason, an orphan in his own family, a hermit in the midst of people, a primitive man within civil society. For us in the Church of God he is, above all, a person who is going without the bread of life, an infidel when it comes to actual faith, one who does not know all the revealed truths, all the truths, even the most rudimentary ones he absolutely needs to know. Oh, yes indeed, from this point of view, the deaf-

¹¹⁴Address at the yearly performance of the deaf-mute girls, July 27, 1885 (AGS 3018/17).

¹¹⁵*Intorno all’istruzione dei sordo-muti*, Piacenza 1880, pp. 5-7.

mute's need is extreme. What we are doing for him is not simply a charitable and humanitarian deed but an act of religion and justice.

The deaf-mute does not have any idea of God nor of the things of God! If children blessed with hearing do not arrive at such knowledge without proper instruction; if we often see children who unfortunately so neglect the study of their catechism that they do not know the main truths of religion despite the fact they have heard them explained so often, then how can we expect the deaf-mute to get to know them, without any means, isolated as he is within his family and society, with perpetual night enshrouding his intellect and the silence of the tomb all around him? (...).

The natural world will just be a mystery for the deaf-mute, just as human existence is a mystery for him. In fact, the terrible onslaught of suffering, the tears of virtue, the hypocrisy of vice, the dictates of duty, the power of contrition, the hope of forgiveness, the beauty of noble affections, the restraint of the passions, the martyrdom of poverty, the disagreements of false friendships, unjust persecutions: these cannot be understood without God. What would the day of the final farewell be for us if the ray of immortality were not to shed its light on the grave? Indeed, only religion can comfort the human heart in times of excruciating trials.

But religion, as you know, is revelation and revelation is the word, because the divine intellect can communicate with the human intellect only by means of the word, that is, by means of the purest and least material of the forms compatible with human nature. We listen to this word, calling blessed the poor, the persecuted, and those who weep, and promising them the kingdom of heaven: and our soul finds comfort in God its Lord. We listen to this word on every occasion, at all times and in all places, even on our deathbed: and our hearts are filled with the hope of the joys of heaven. But for the unfortunate deaf-mute this is not so. Unlike us, he cannot relate the present and the future, the visible and the invisible, nature and grace. He is continually exposed to illusions, deprived of solace, condemned to live in this exile without guidance, hope, or love. Here below, then, the deaf-mute leads a life of resentment, anger, depression, loneliness, tears, and envy.

He is condemned by those who could provide him with religious instruction, but they neglect to instruct him out of laziness or on the false pretext of economizing.¹¹⁶

“Society may not refuse him the blessing of education”

By law the people's education has become obligatory so that truth might enter and shed its light even in the workshop of the poor man or the craftsman. We take such great pains to protect everyone's right to enjoy all the precious blessings society offers. Why then do we exclude the deaf-mute from enjoying these blessings? Is he not a human being and a citizen as well? In fact, does he not have an even greater claim to our fraternal compassion and to the concern of society precisely because misfortune has dealt him such a cruel blow? Society may not refuse him the blessing of education, since divine Providence imbued human nature with the ability and means to stamp out ignorance. Society must not refuse him this education, because it has the serious obligation to make all its members fit for the common good. Municipalities, Provinces and those in public office therefore have the duty to make every effort to provide education for the deaf-mutes and to help them not with empty compassion but with a concrete and practical love, a love that will allow them to enjoy the gifts and privileges of human beings and to be a part of society and active members of religion and country.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶Ibid., pp. 8-12.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp, 20-21.

“A sad situation”

In 1879, I often found myself thinking of the sad story of these precious young deaf-mutes. During that frigid winter a deaf-mute was found lost in the snow in the countryside around Carpaneto, half dead from the cold. He was brought to the city. But after administering first aid to his frozen hands and feet, the authorities did not know where to put him. Do you know what they did? They put him in prison, where he remained for several months. A magistrate of that time read my pastoral letter about the deaf-mutes and immediately came to talk to me about the case, asking if I could do something about it. “Yes,” I answered. “I shall keep him with me in my house.” So I kept him in my house for some time. He did not know anything, nor could he understand anything. Since he was already up in age and quite slow in learning, he did not profit very much from the little time I could spend instructing him. Despite all investigations, we could not find out anything about him. Oh, the poor mother who gave birth to this unfortunate man who, from certain signs, did not seem to be of humble birth! Oh, the poor mother who would perhaps die with the premonition of her son’s misfortunes and miserable end, thus taking along to her grave a sorrow more cruel than death itself. You who are mothers, you do understand me. Was he Italian? Was he a foreigner? What a mystery lay hidden in that person! Poor soul! Had he been educated, had he been able to speak? Who knows what a mystery of iniquity one single word might have revealed. But he died without ever speaking that word!¹¹⁸

“One cannot love without first knowing”

From the religious point of view, an uneducated deaf-mute is destitute of any solace. Human beings are equally religious and perfectible: these two great truths go wonderfully hand in hand. One confirms the other. That is why the more a person perfects himself, the more he becomes religious; and the more a person becomes religious, the more he perfects himself (...).

Here we see a family gathered together in the intimacy of the domestic church. The mother offers her children to Almighty God and the father blesses them. The children give thanks to the Lord, whose protective Providence they understand well and liken to their earthly parents. A deaf-mute watches this scene, but his heart does not throb with emotion because his mind does not grasp the mystery.

We see an assorted crowd of people gathered in church. Everybody is there, with soul and spirit intent on the same vision. The concert of hymns bespeaks a concert of hearts (...). All hearts reflect on their destinies, making ready for them in glorious hope. All look forward with eyes fixed on the eternal center of good. Everyone is rejoicing. But the uneducated deaf-mute watches this spectacle of love with indifference, just as he watches the spectacle of life with disinterest. Yes, to feel attracted to the beauty of religion, one must love; but one cannot love without first fully knowing the object that attracts him (...).

Is there some ray of light that will so enlighten the soul of the uneducated deaf-mute as to dispel the darkness of his ignorance, revealing to him the joys of righteousness and kindling in him the consoling hopes of the life to come? Yes, there is: education. And the new educational methods are, in fact, giving speech to the deaf-mute. He reads your lips and he answers. Of course, he answers as only a deaf-mute can, according to his special organic characteristics. But he does answer, and the redemption of the deaf-mute prophesied by the Gospel is accomplished: “the deaf shall hear and the mute will speak.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Address at the annual performance of the deaf-mute girls, Dec. 9, 1886 (AGS 3018/17).

¹¹⁹Ibid.

“Others have to look after them”

After all I have said, is there anyone of you who does not see how much help these unfortunate people need? The Gospel itself has some very eloquent passages in this regard.

The lepers, the lame, the sick, and the blind themselves are aware of their wretched condition, but they can go looking for the divine Doctor or, if nothing else, are able to cry out when he happens to pass by: “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on us.” Instead, none of the deaf-mutes can help himself in his tribulation. None of them finds his way to the Savior by himself. Hence others have to look after the deaf-mutes and lovingly lead them to Jesus.

But even after being led to Jesus, they do not recognize him and are unable to address any request to him. So, while Jesus Christ expected a plea, an admission of misery, an act of faith from all those who had recourse to him, he never had any such expectations of the deaf-mutes but wanted those who presented them to him to plead for them and kindle faith in them.¹²⁰

“Tongue for their muteness and ear for their deafness”

One last word to you, venerable priests, my cherished co-workers in the Lord’s vineyard. Surely none of you will allow a boy or girl, afflicted with muteness and deafness, to grow up in your parishes without making every effort to prepare them for the sacraments of the Church through religious instruction. Surely none of you wants to betray his ministry or be guilty before the Church and God of the loss of those souls entrusted to your care. You cannot take care of them personally? You can and should take care of them indirectly until you are morally certain of their salvation.

So search out these unfortunate souls among the families, where they are often kept hidden, and notify the Chancery Office, using the enclosed form. Tell parents of their obligation in conscience to have them instructed. Make them aware of the existence of this Institute (...).

In a word, consider yourselves -- as indeed you are -- the ones chosen by divine Providence to be, in the words of the Sacred Books, tongue for their muteness and ear for their deafness.

Venerable brothers, this is a new apostolate the Lord is offering you (...). Divine Providence then does not abandon the deaf-mute to his pitiful misfortune. God places him in the arms of the faithful, entrusts him to their compassionate hearts. Clothing him with the precious mantle of divine sonship, God turns to all of us and says: what you do for the religious upbringing of this person so dear to me will show me how much you truly love me.¹²¹

“They no longer live as outsiders in society or in their families”

Gentlemen, for me the deaf-mute is the most unfortunate of human beings. In fact, the sense of hearing is not just an instrument whereby a fleeting sound enters the human spirit. It is the mysterious vehicle for the Word that came down from heaven to lead humanity to its eternal destiny. For an individual as well as for a nation, there is no moral life without a tongue. Human thought looks at itself through reflection, which, in turn, narrows down ideas and sorts them out through signs. But the words of the mind, whereby the spirit dialogues with itself, need exterior words, as well as human interaction. So, for an individual, the word is the main source of truth and knowledge; for nations it is the golden chain that ties together minds and hearts; for humanity it is

¹²⁰*Intorno all’istruzione dei sordo-muti*, Piacenza 1880, pp. 13-14.

¹²¹*Ibid*, pp. 22-24.

the marvelous link that joins it to heaven. What then is a human being without the word? There is no heart, howsoever frigid, that can bear the sight of a deaf-mute abandoned to himself. Like us, he too lives in the hustle and bustle of the world but does not hear himself or others. An eternal silence envelopes him. That ear which is forever closed to the gentle harmony of music; that eye that looks with awe and enchantment on the wonders of nature and seems to be eagerly searching out other worlds, another fatherland, other creatures and the supreme Maker of the universe; those lips sealed in silence -- all speak to us of the gloom and monotony that weigh down on him like an eternal punishment. O you most wretched of the wretched, you poor deaf-mute, are you not able to melt the hearts of those who look at you?

Seeing these children of misfortune, usually left to vegetate like plants, my heart would seethe with tumultuous emotions and desires. Why, I would often ask myself, why did divine Providence not provide me with the means to rehabilitate the deaf-mutes, especially those of Italy who are not yet educated? Here, where divine Providence has appointed me Father of a cultured and gentle people, may at least a humble shelter rise to house poor deaf-mute girls and women, exposed as they are to greater dangers and therefore more desperately in need of help. May the deaf hear and the mute speak. May Piacenza, too, behold in its midst this new miracle of Christian charity. Gentlemen, this very morning you will have another modest sampling of it, modest indeed, because you must not forget that the institution is still a baby, if I may say so. It was born just a few years ago.

Still, I am happy to tell you that, besides those receiving a regular education, as many as sixty other deaf-mute girls so far have left this place with some instruction. With some instruction, I say, because after a few months we had to send these deaf-mutes back to their families, as some were up in age and others were not capable of learning. But we were satisfied with having tried to kindle in their hearts Christian and social sentiments. God surely took into account our good will and theirs.

Our little family is made up of another group, namely, the deaf-mute girls who have no father or mother, or do not have support and sustenance, or feel called to a religious life of sorts and love to spend their days here, though they are always free to leave. At the moment, there are eight of them. They wear a special habit and live a secluded life, in recollection, prayer, and work.

Gentlemen, we have a third group that deserves all your attention: the group of young deaf-mute girls that have just been presented to you. These are the deaf-mute girls that are capable of regular education. Some, admitted just a few days ago and hence still unable to speak a word, will appear before you in all their misery and almost untamed condition. The other girls can't wait to show you that they too have a heart and mind, that they have opened up to the light of truth and the most godly sentiments, that they, too, can understand you and make themselves understood. Gentlemen, these are the results of the formation they are receiving here. In this way, they no longer live as outsiders in society or in the family but become a great boon and blessing to both.¹²²

"We made them talk"

Gentlemen, it is always a marvelous and deeply moving experience to watch these girls, thirsting and hungering for knowledge, as they hang for long hours from the lips of their patient and devoted educators; to watch them, often with tears in their eyes, with joy on their faces, and with enthusiasm and gratitude in their hearts, as they receive religious instructions from their tutors; to watch these girls as they seriously try to mend their ways, to love and help each other, to live the Gospel, and to practice the faith that sustains and strengthens them.

I have often heard parents and relatives tell me that their deaf-mute girl, now capable of speaking, is the joy, the consolation, and the moral support of their families. When the deaf-mute girls themselves write to me, they often tell me how much they bless the Institute "especially for having

¹²²Address for the annual performance of the deaf-mute girls, Dec. 6, 1888 (AGS 3018/17).

enabled them to speak,” because now they find themselves restored to family and society, more respected, their work more appreciated and better paid. As a result, they enjoy not only a more peaceful life but one that is less destitute as well.¹²³

“I founded the Institute for Deaf-mute girls”

In this city, about twenty-two years ago, I founded the Institute for Deaf-mute girls. The Institute has a building where the deaf-mute girls reside and an estate with a large and beautiful country villa where the poor girls go for their health during certain months of the year. I personally contribute 1,500 lire a year for the support of the deaf-mute girls, a subsidy that will continue even after my death. Another 1,000 lire come from the girls’ room and board and an equal amount from the girls’ manual work. Divine Providence, which sees everything and provides for everything, will do the rest. And, in fact, divine Providence has seen and provided whatever we needed.

The annual budget is between 11,000 and 12,000 lire.

At this time, we have fifty female deaf-mutes, young and old. With their work, the older ones are able to cover some of the expenses for their support.

The young girls are trained by special teachers, chosen from among the Daughters of St. Anne, who staff the Institute. The girls are taught religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, house work, and whatever they need to know about taking care of a family or, if necessary, earning a living.

In a word, the main task of the teachers is to impart to the deaf-mute girls that store of knowledge that the law on compulsory education calls for.

We know these poor girls have profited from their education because all the girls who finished the course of instruction and left the Institute, either to devote themselves to their families or to work in other people’s homes, have done very well.

I also have the pleasure to tell you that in a few months I will see one of my fondest dreams come true: the opening of an Institute for the male deaf-mutes of our diocese and province. I am convinced that everybody will give the new institution the necessary support. God’s help will surely not be lacking.¹²⁴

¹²³Address at the annual performance of the deaf-mute girls, June 10, 1897 (AGS 3018/17).

¹²⁴Letter to the Prefect of Piacenza, in answer to the Prefect’s letter of March 20, 1903. Queen Margherita di Savoia had asked the Prefect for information on this matter (AGS 3033). The Institute for male deaf-mutes was, in fact, founded by the Servant of God, Monsignor Francesco Torta in November 1903.

PART IV

MAN FOR MEN AND FOR MEN

Bishop Scalabrini wanted to be a man of his times, not a nostalgic dreamer of faded and irreversible periods of history. He wanted to keep abreast of history, to be attentive to the signs of the times, to have a realistic knowledge of the problems and needs of the People of his day, and to be eager to prepare a future that would be more human and truer to God's plan in history.

He faced the main "concerns" of his times with courage, energy, and concreteness. During the period of associationism, he enthusiastically supported Catholic associations, while disagreeing with the political ideology of those who aimed at monopolizing Catholic Action.

Society was becoming rapidly unchristian: and so it was important "to bring Christ back into society." These were the indispensable conditions: unity and concerted action, courageous efforts, and dependence on the Shepherds; for Catholic Action is an apostolate, not politics.

The formidable obstacle to unity was the Roman Question. Because Catholics were not allowed to take part in political elections, the Roman Question was blocking effective pressure on the centers of power and legislation, with the result that the anticlericals had a free hand in their attempt to destroy the people's Christian way of thinking. Because of his pastoral concern, the bishop of Piacenza did not believe in protesting but in seeking a reconciliation of two sentiments, both equally legitimate: religion and country. The Church must be free, within and without, to exercise her authority, which is all spiritual, as well as her rights, which are evangelization and charity.

Reconciliation is an ideal that dominates all facets of Scalabrini's life. He reconciles the realism of lived history with intrepid love for the truth; freedom and frankness with obedience; love for God's beauty and goodness in creation with friendship for human beings

1. CATHOLIC ACTION

Illuminism, rationalism, materialism, and anticlericalism take Christ away from society. It is necessary to promote a return movement, especially among the people. Only in unity is there strength and only in organization is unity effective.

Associationism is on the verge of becoming the sole right of the enemies of the Church. Instead of whining, people must wake up, go out into the open and work, under the leadership of Pope and bishops.

"Jesus Christ was ostracized from society"

Since modern unbelievers are now convinced that not even they can overturn the throne of Jesus Christ, they have thought of confining, within the four walls of the church, this eternal King of souls, this invisible Sovereign of the universe, removing him from all aspects of life, private and public. They employ every possible trick and have recourse to every possible stratagem to achieve their diabolical goal. Unfortunately, thanks to the laziness of believers, they have succeeded.

Little by little Jesus Christ was ostracized from schools, ethics, families, and society. But (...), with Jesus Christ gone, we realized that the soul imparting life to all things had also been removed and that no foundation remained for the scientific, domestic, and social edifice. We realized we were on the edge of the abyss!

They had said: every school that opens is a jail that closes. But, as a matter of fact, the enemies of the Church could not find enough convents and castles to contain the ever increasing number of criminals. They had said: catechism in the schools is an offense against freedom of thought. So they replaced it with the handbook of the rights of man and then a book of natural obligations in which there is no mention of God. The result of all this? They have brought up a bunch of bomb-throwing radicals with whom society will really have to fight the last fight. They had said: secular science will purify the environment and infuse new blood into the veins of the new generation. But the statistics of suicides, duels, adulteries, fraudulent bankruptcies, bank robberies, public immorality, and heinous crimes have cut short the joyful hymns extolling the new godless morality.

In our families, the devastation of the bridal chamber, the lost peace and harmony, rebellious children, have all shown with great eloquence that only the Crucified One can save family life.¹

“To bring Jesus Christ back to society”

The sight of the abyss before our eyes has made us recoil with horror, and we all instinctively feel the need to return to the holy traditions of our forefathers and mothers. The blows to the edifice and the dust from the rubble have frightened us, and we all feel the need to bring things back into balance by making Jesus Christ the foundation.

Now the purpose of Catholic action is precisely this: to promote this return movement through an organization that answers the needs of our times. The need to put Jesus Christ back in the school, in moral behavior, in the family, and in society has by now entered into the consciousness of all good people.

Hence, we have no intention of engaging in politics, as our adversaries would have people think. We wish, above all, to work for a moral renewal and then to get busy about the legitimate economic concerns and aspirations of the working class especially. The

¹*Azione Cattolica*, Piacenza 1896, pp. 5-6

exploiters of the poor people have made magnificent promises up till now, but they have kept none of them.

They promised bread and justice, and today the people have neither bread nor justice.

Now, it is precisely for these people that we want to organize and expand assistance and mutual aid societies, to promote the development of industry and commerce and to develop the charitable works that are most suited for our time. Above all, we want respect for the religion of our fathers and mothers and for their wishes. We want respect for the Lord's Day, for our rights, for the sacred rights of the Church and her Supreme Head, respect for the rights of all.

We want the priesthood to be given its proper respect, young people to grow up with sound principles and good morals, and public offices to be held by upright and God-fearing people.

We want genuine greatness for our country. Hence we want freedom for righteousness, not for evil; or at least the chance to enjoy as much freedom as evil does. We want bad literature to stop disseminating errors and spewing blasphemies. We want public scandals removed and the people no longer fooled and betrayed.

We want to open for every child the book that teaches him or her how to be a Christian and a citizen. We want to tell the worker that he will never be happy, not even on earth, if he follows the dictates of socialism but that he will have at least a foretaste of real happiness if he follows the dictates of the Gospel. We want to tell people in power that, unless the Lord protects a country, those who have its fate in their hands will labor in vain. In a word, we want society to be once again what it really ought to be, that is, Christian: in its laws, institutions, and customs and in its public life.²

"We must organize, we must unite"

The need for Catholic action is indeed urgent and clear. But to be effective, this action must be disciplined and concerted.

Yes, we must organize and we must unite because only in unity is there strength. Unity alone is the secret of victory.

Hence the importance of, and the need for, Catholic associations and parish committees.

I will not repeat what I have often told you before in this regard, publicly and privately, by voice and in writing. Rather, I will tell you what the Pope desires, for he is the sure interpreter of the will of God (...).

²Ibid., pp. 6-8,

The Pope wants all the parishes in Italy to have their Catholic committee. This committee must definitely be set up in every parish of the Diocese of Piacenza. It must not only be set up but, once set up, be kept alive and active.

This time my word to you is not a word of exhortation but of command, and I address it mainly to you, my venerable co-workers in the salvation of souls, because to you especially the Pope solemnly addresses those weighty words: “In the present-day conditions of the Church, priests have to take upon themselves also this task of leading the faithful with their authority; they must do so publicly; they must do so by their example.”

I have witnessed your proven filial devotion and perfect docility to the Vicar of Jesus Christ in all things. I know you will roll up your sleeves, if you have not done so already, and get down to work with energy and determination.

Dearly beloved, let us do away with discussion, hesitation, and fear!³

“The hour for action has struck”

In every country of the world, the working class makes up the great majority of the population. To imbue the workers with the essentially peaceful and salutary spirit of Christianity is to save society.

Workers are the favorites of the Church, for in the Carpenter of Nazareth she discerns and venerates her own Founder (...).

I am indeed happy that in some places in our diocese, especially in Piacenza, these *Workers’ Organizations* have been set up. I beg the Lord to bless the wonderful priests and lay people who have promoted them. Now I turn to all of you, beloved and venerable confreres, and I repeat that it is my consuming desire that in every parish or, where the parishioners are too few, at least in the more important centers of the vicariates, a *Workers’ Organization* be organized and that it grow in activities, in numbers, and in fellowship (...).

Impatient to fall on its prey, Socialism raves and rants, trying to scare the whole world with its menacing roar! It is the voice of heaven warning us that the hour for action has struck and that you can no longer lull yourselves into thinking you can save yourselves, your children, and your possession without erecting a solid dike against the impetuous torrent. And what will this dike be if not a far-reaching, united association of people formed in the school of the Gospel (...)?

Association and Catholic action: these are the characteristics of the true children of the Church in our day; association and action which must have as their aim to endorse all the wishes of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to restore the necessary freedom to the Church and her Head, as well as greatness, prosperity, and peace to Italy, by making families, communities, schools, laws, the people, and the workers above all, Christian once again (...).

³Ibid., pp. 12-13,

To achieve this goal more readily, it would be very useful for you to have the *Parish Committees*, which I have already recommended to you in the past and which, once again, I strongly urge upon you today. What an immense good they do! Make every effort to set up these committees in your parishes and get personally involved in them. God's blessing cannot fail to descend upon institutions blessed by his Vicar!

We must unite! We must unite! If all the Italians who have kept the faith were to unite and work together, what great achievements they would attain!

If *Parish Committees* were to be set up in all Italy and if, instead of just two thousand committees, as there are at the present time, there were ten thousand -- as many as there are parishes -- what marvelous results would accrue to our religion and our country.⁴

"Catholics are coming out into the open"

In fully closed ranks, Catholics are coming out into the open with their banners proudly gleaming in the sun. They debate, make plans, take decisions, fight, and work.

And, thank God, this reviving spirit has penetrated even here among us.

The jubilant voices of the participants at the fraternal meetings of Alseno, Bedonia and Chiaravalle are still echoing in my mind. Thanks to the enthusiasm of some very zealous pastors, we saw several Catholic Committees come to life in a short time. We too now have our youth clubs, our Sunday oratories, our workers' organizations, and our credit unions.

But let me say it at once and say it clearly: all this is precious little compared with the needs of the present hour.⁵

"The priest must come out of the church"

We must be deeply convinced that what was good enough in the past is no longer so today. For new times there must be new ways of doing things; for new evils, new remedies; for new forms of war, new forms of defense. Today, as I told you before, the priest, the pastor especially, has no choice but to come out of the church if he wants to do something worthwhile within the church. However, let us be clear: the priest must come out of the church but only after having drawn light and strength from prayer and meditation there. Let the priest come out of the church but let him keep his eyes always on the church. Like the sun coming forth from its pavilion, the priest too is to come forth from the church radiant with the light of God and the fire of love that illumines, warms, and engenders life (...).

⁴*Associazioni Cattoliche. Discorso del Santo Padre, Piacenza 1885, pp.4-7.*

⁵*Azione Cattolica, Piacenza 1896, pp. 3-5.*

In our priestly minds and hearts there must be no hatred, no passion, no harsh zeal, no rash outburst against people, only love that suffers, weeps, and grieves over the sins the people commit to their eternal ruin.

It is with these sentiments, venerable brothers, that we must enter the field of Catholic action. I repeat: we have no choice but to enter there because today this is our principal and essential task. He who judges otherwise shows himself to be very superficial, very thoughtless, not to say, of little faith!

We must not fool ourselves. If we do not act, others will act without us and against us. I could not care less if some people accuse me of ulterior motives and worldly designs.

Some hurled this accusation against Jesus Christ before hurling it against us. Even though he taught that we should give to Caesar what is Caesar's, Jesus was still called a seducer of the people. It just is not possible to do one's duty and be at peace with everybody. You can be sure of that.⁶

“With all my heart I recommend the young people to your care”

Once again, with all my heart I especially recommend the young people to your care.

Once you have admitted the children to First Holy Communion after loving care and preparation, you have surely fulfilled a very serious duty. But a pastor's responsibility does not end there. In fact, now is the moment when it becomes heavier, because now is the time when the passions begin to awaken in the heart of a young man or woman. Now is the moment when error, prejudice, scandal, and the allurements of the world begin to severely test the virtue of the young. Woe to the pastor who is so careless and heartless as to leave these young people to their own devices!

If at all possible, we must stand at their side. We must enlighten them, support them, encourage them, and spur them on to goodness, gently holding them close to the Church and to their religious practices.

The best thing to do is to organize a Youth Section alongside the Parish Committee. Some, even among us, have tried this and have had excellent results. I urge all of you to follow this example.

Of course, you will run into aggravations, but you will be repaid with great consolations. If you do not do this, how will you replenish the Committee itself and the other Catholic associations?

To keep these associations flourishing and active, it would help very much if every dean were to appoint some able priest to give these associations simple conferences several times

⁶Ibid. pp. 13-14.

a year, going from parish to parish in the Vicariate. Better still, the dean himself might want to take this task himself.⁷

“Dependence on the shepherds”

If we want our action to be truly Catholic, we must remember to act, at all times and in all things, in a disciplined and orderly way. Soldiers must not presume to go ahead of their officers. In our field, especially, discipline is everything. Without discipline, without that full, strict, and constant dependence on their shepherds, priests can easily fall into an excess of individual zeal, which, in turn, brings about discontent and discord, divides and weakens people of good will, leads astray and disgusts the better people, and corrupts with the disintegrating venom of self-love the reasons for giving orders, as well as for obeying them.⁸

“Strict dependence on the hierarchical principle”

I want everything to be done in the strictest dependence on the hierarchical principle. If they want to be instruments of salvation in the hands of God, lay Catholic people must keep to their place. They are not officers in the Church but soldiers, not teachers but disciples, not shepherds but sheep. Their eyes should be fixed on the bishops, especially on the Bishop of bishops, the Roman Pontiff, and on no one else. We do not know Paulinus; we do not know Meletius. I do not want to hear any ifs, ands, and buts, objections, disagreements, or mental reservations of any kind. God never blesses works that have not first been blessed by his legitimate representatives. A parish committee acting against or without the approval of the pastor, a diocesan committee daring to assume the slightest initiative or taking the smallest decision independently of the bishop would ipso facto cease being Catholic and at once incur my denunciation.⁹

“Two hundred Seventeen Parish Committees”

Count Paganuzzi suggested I send you a brief report on the *4th Regional Meeting of the Catholics of Emilia*, held here in Piacenza under my chairmanship on June 14 and 15. I do so willingly, knowing that Your Holiness will be pleased to receive this report.

Because of the presence of almost all the bishops of the Region and the attendance of so many priests and lay people, the meeting could not have been more successful.

⁷Circular letter of Feb. 7, 1898, pp. 23-24.

⁸Opening of the 4th Regional Assembly of the Opera dei Congressi, June 11, 1897 (AGS 3028/18).

⁹First Annual Session of the Parish Committees (1882?) (AGS 3018/18).

Pursuant to my Pastoral Letter of Oct. 16, 1896 (of which I respectfully submit a copy), in addition to the Youth Sections, the Workers Associations, etc., we organized in our Diocese two hundred seventeen parish committees, all of them well represented at this meeting. The priests of the city and diocese were also very well represented at the meeting. In this matter, as in all others, they were truly exemplary and worthy of praise.

Everything went along in peace and harmony, with great order and discipline. The decisions regarding Catholic Organizations, Decent Literature, Administrative and Political Elections, the establishment and expansion of Rural Banks, etc., were eminently practical and timely. Even more importantly, they were imbued with a spirit of sincere submission to the bishops, which is so necessary especially in our day and so dear to the heart of Your Holiness.¹⁰

¹⁰Letter to Leo XIII, June 18, 1896 (ASV-SS. Rub. 100/1899, fasc. 4, Prot. N. 52038).

2. THE WORKING CLASSES

The rise of atheistic and anarchical socialism has put fear into Church and State. But it is the “voice of God!”

Atheistic socialism must be opposed by Christian social action rather than by sterile condemnations that would also strike at its “valid postulates.”

We must fight the Marxist propaganda seducing the working class through an analysis of the social problems and their moral and religious implications and through initiatives that answer the real and legitimate needs of farmers, workers, and proletarians. It is a work of justice and social vindication inspired by charity and accomplished harmoniously by all classes. To save the working class is to save the people.

“The causes of socialism

For some time now, society has been prey to anarchical forces. Now that every authority has been shaken, social and family ties loosened, the religious principles sanctifying human sufferings denied, made fun of or ignored, society is daily becoming more and more a wild jungle where everyone does his own thing and looks after himself, where the good of one becomes the evil and privation of another. And thus is fulfilled and realized the savage program contained in the aphorism of the Scottish philosopher: “*Homo homini lupus*” (man is a wolf to man).

From this comes the fever for immediate gain, the anxious acquisition of power, the envy of other people’s well-being. It is this that drives one to supplant others, to cheat them, to remove every inhibition or obstacle standing in the way of one’s cravings and pleasures. This is the sole goal of an atheistic and materialistic society.

As if these terrible evils were not enough, now we have the pangs of economic hardships, painful for all but unbearable for the common people. With the loss of the consolations of the faith and of Christian hope and with the achievement of new rights and the awareness of their power, these poor people feel more starkly than ever the emptiness they live in and thus become gullible and fervent followers of all things new.

To this great economic crisis and moral decline we must add the power of big capital, which is so powerful and overwhelming in the present social and industrial setup as to draw off a very large percentage of the profits from labor without risk or effort. It can be compared to a gigantic tree which, with its thousand tentacles and thick branches, robs of nourishment, air, and light the smaller plants that are withering at its feet. Here you have the causes for the rise and expansion of socialism.

Socialism has recruited its converts from the shops, the fields, and the universities, from the nobility and the common people, from the common people especially. In just a few years, socialism has become an imposing army. All the simple folk, all the oppressed and the unfortunate feel attracted to it by the hope of something better, just like all those

insubordinate and restless people who want to change the present order of things at any cost. Joining these as allies or associates are the people -- and they are perhaps the most dangerous and certainly the most respectable -- who feel a deep compassion for the unfortunate and experience a revolting and loathing disgust for the corruption that penetrates and permeates all governmental bodies up to the very top. These people cannot tolerate, without protesting, the social injustices, the well-fed laziness of the few, and the poverty of the workers, as well as the wealth, power, and unworthiness found together in one individual.¹¹

“Personal experience”

What I am about to tell you is the fruit of personal experience. I did not learn these things from reading books but from seeing with my own eyes so many social wounds and so much misery, over which I poured the balm of faith and the alms of charity.

In the early years of my priesthood, during the months I was not teaching, I served in various towns in my native diocese and had the opportunity to observe at close quarters the life of farmers in its different forms and varying degrees of well-being, as well as the farm contracts with their economic and moral consequences.

I used to walk among those rich fields -- the property of a wealthy gentleman known for his display of civic charity -- made fertile by hard-working people, a number of whom suffered from pellagra. I went into their damp, shutterless hovels with a heavy heart.

I was also pastor in a suburb of Como for several years. Among my parishioners there were several thousand silk workers, weavers, spinners, and dyers. During those years, I was able to observe at close range the miserable condition of these workers, miserable in itself and because of its potential dangers. Every political or financial crisis, however distant, which slowed or halted industrial activity -- what an effect that had on their lives! How deeply they were affected by every small event -- for example, by a sickness or an accident that kept them from daily work! In addition to these brief interruptions -- each of them taking a loaf of bread from their poor tables -- there were from time to time those great industrial crises when there was no work at all. The result was sheer misery, hunger at its worst, barely disguised for a while by credit at the local store or a salary advance from the employer. There followed a mad rush of men looking for jobs and of women pleading for help.

Oh, the sadness of the days when, as I climbed the rickety stairs to visit sick workers, I failed to hear the dry, rhythmic clack of the loom. They were sad in every way because disorder and dishonor often came into the family with poverty. As I observed all their sufferings and heard their complaints -- knowing as I did the tireless employers who were wrongly accused of exploiting the poor, and that kind, charitable landowner whose field hands were infected with pellagra -- I came to the conclusion that the evil lay not so much

¹¹*Il socialismo e l'azione del clero*, Piacenza 1899 (1st edition). pp. 3-4.

in the will of individuals as in the way work was organized and that it would be good for everyone if more equitable conditions could be created.¹²

“The basic principles of socialism”

If labor gives value to capital, why should it not have a greater share in its profits, enough at least to assure a decent, secure, and healthy livelihood for the workers? If labor is a physical law and a moral duty, why should it not become a legal right? If education is a duty, why is the worker not given time for it by fixing the age of his employment and limiting the hours of work? If hygiene is a social obligation, why are certain jobs poisoning and shortening people’s lives permitted without due preventive measures? Why is the worker not insured against eventual accidents and why is not some dignified provision made for his helpless old age?

This is what I used to think, and this what many of you must have thought on seeing and touching the social miseries.

Now, those demands, happily translated into law by Parliament recently, contain certain basic principles of socialism.

In these principles there is some truth and justice, which all people of good will should accept and try to carry out as best they can. In fact, truth and justice do not change character by the fact that they are espoused also by the wicked or are mixed in with evil. Besides, in so doing, we remove from what is evil and false its greatest power of spreading, a power founded on the fact that what is evil and false is served up along with the truth, thus giving the appearance of justice.

So we must not be fooled by names or appearances.

We must calmly examine the basic principles of socialism. With the confidence that comes from possessing the truth, we must set Catholic social action against socialist action, for Catholic social action is society’s tonic and medicine.¹³

“The economic question gives rise to moral, political and religious problems”

In itself, modern socialism is an economic question. However, as in all questions that touch human beings individually or collectively, the economic question intertwines with other questions and so changes nature and form. A human being is one. Everything having to do with this inseparable oneness gets intertwined, intermingled, and integrated in such wise as to reflect the many different aspects under which a person may be viewed.

¹²Ibid, pp. 6-8. Pellagra is a chronic disease caused by a deficiency of nicotinic acid in the diet and characterized by gastrointestinal disturbances, skin eruptions, and mental disorders.

¹³Ibid., p. 8.

The social question, essentially an economic one, becomes in its immediate consequences a moral, political, and religious question.

In fact, the formula common to socialism, communism, and collectivism -- the three main branches into which socialists split up -- is this: all that produces wealth (namely, capital, lands, and instruments of labor) is the property of the State, which distributes its benefits with perfect equality, according to some; or according to individual needs, according to others.

Now, when put into practice, this social formula will wound human nature at its very roots and in what is dearest to it, namely, religion, family, and individual freedom.

Though basically economic, modern socialism cannot ignore religion because all theoretical and practical questions affecting people are closely connected.

It is true that socialists, either out of real indifference or for tactical reasons, never, or hardly ever, talk of religion. Sometimes they even invoke the example of Jesus Christ and of the first Christians: Jesus Christ as the precursor of their teachings and the first Christians as those who first practiced them. But all this must not fool us about their real feelings for religion. Their revolutionary background and their altogether materialistic scientific underpinning make them intrinsically irreligious. At the top of the page of his newspaper, Blanqui had these words: “Ni Dieu, ni maître” (neither God nor teacher), and these two ideas pervade the whole socialistic ideology.¹⁴

“To point out the causes and find appropriate remedies “

The present state of the social question and the progressive dissemination throughout our city, towns, and countryside, of ideas that are either purely socialistic or akin to them should make your work even in the social field more active, more suited to the needs.

Now, such work, to really succeed and be effective and not worsen the evil we want to cure, calls for prudence, serenity of spirit, fair-mindedness, sure knowledge, and awareness of what we must oppose as well as of what we may properly accept.

So, dearest brothers, go to your books and get ready to refute (using their very jargon) the sophistry with which the books, newspapers, and speakers of the socialist propaganda are filling the minds of workers and farmers.

With the recommendations I have just given you, I have wanted to show you how to go about this task. They are meant to give you encouragement and guidance.

Not everything the socialists say is bad, as I have shown you. The effectiveness of their propaganda is found precisely in a deplorable situation, that is, in the spiraling misery of the

¹⁴Ibid, p. 13.

majority of people amidst a real upsurge of industrial and farm production that should signal increased wealth. Hence, you must take pains to point out the causes underlying this situation and find appropriate remedies for it, accepting and recommending the ones that work, without asking who thought them up or who is espousing them.

In this way, you will in fact show that what is really good in socialism either conforms to the teachings of the Gospel and can be put into practice without destroying society or is actually useless and not commensurate with its stated goals.¹⁵

“Modern ways of doing good to one’s neighbor”

Every care must be devoted to the societies, varied in their form and purpose, flourishing among us, so that the spirit of association may increase and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, supply what the weakness of the individual cannot, and remedy the unexpected blows of misfortune: “A brother helped by a brother is like a fortified city.” Rather than opposing this new spirit of association that is spreading and reaching everywhere, you must keep promoting it and make every effort to direct it into the right channels when inexperience or bad advice seem to be diverting it.

You must also support and champion social welfare and mutual aid societies. Social welfare and mutual aid societies are two modern ways of doing good to one’s neighbor. They combine the benefits of charity and those of education because, by taking part in the beneficent activity, the beneficiaries acquire the habit of thinking of the future, of being provident and foresighted.

One of the scourges of the countryside is usury, practiced under the guise of an advance offer of food, seed, or money for the purchase of animals, etc., to be repaid later at a high interest or in kind through a given quantity of products, something even more profitable for the creditor.

Now, most and the best of the poor peasants’ produce ends up enriching the suppliers. The peasants, compelled by necessity or misfortune to resort to them, see their meager profits go up in smoke in a very short time and have little or no chance to recover and balance their budget. Against this situation one of the most effective tools is found in the cooperative societies for production and consumption and in mutual insurance companies that have had much success in Italy and elsewhere. Most of all, the Catholic rural banks provide the little farmers with the small amounts of capital they need at a reasonable rate of interest.

Recommend these institutions and promote them to the best of your ability wherever they exist. Encourage upright and intelligent people to take part in them. His Excellency Von Ketteler, the illustrious bishop of Mainz (who first studied the labor question from the Catholic point of view), correctly observed: in the past the rich endowed the Church with convents and public charitable institutions; today they could do something more pleasing to God if they headed organizations of workers, producers, consumers, and cooperatives in

¹⁵Ibid., p. 41.

order to improve their conditions, because a work of benevolence is indeed an act of charity.¹⁶

“I have set up agricultural professorships in my seminaries “

Some of you have already acted as mediators in smoothing out the frequent conflicts between employers and workers. During my pastoral visitations, I myself, together with you, did what I could to eliminate certain customs and impositions of the past.

Follow this policy with prudence and firmness and, as far as you can help it, do not allow abuses and immoral practices to make the life of workers and of the poor even more arduous and burdensome than it is. You can secure other benefits for the peasants by inquiring for them about the new agricultural inventions and methods that are meant to greatly increase the produce of the farms, almost without cost or major effort (...).

During these last twenty years I have seen many parish properties in my diocese, formerly hardly productive, transformed into vineyards and fertile fields through the praiseworthy initiatives of the pastors. Following their example, whole tracts of land were recovered and made productive by more intense and functional cultivation. I should like to see this work now being done by a few become everyone’s task in the future. To this end I have set up agricultural professorships in my seminaries so that the young clergy will have the necessary knowledge to give the people entrusted to their care bread for their bodies as well as for their souls.

In the meantime, it should not be hard for anyone, who so desires, to learn from books those few notions one needs to be able to give the peasants -- too often attached to old habits -- suitable recommendations and practical advice that are easily understood and put into practice and are really the results of long years of study and costly research. The *Agricultural Seminars* are also very useful for this purpose and I strongly recommend them.¹⁷

“Do work of social justice”

I have briefly outlined some of the economic needs of our farms and the corresponding remedies found to be effective in many places. But the evil is multi-faceted and the remedies have to be adapted and modified according to times, places and persons and always applied with great prudence and never for partisan reasons. You must never forget that you are the spiritual fathers of all the souls entrusted to your care. Your intervention in affairs outside of church, which you might undertake for the common good, must not stir up anger or partisanship but unite everybody in the holy desire to do good on behalf of the poor.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 42-43.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 43-44.

Fundamental principles of modern socialism are the following: limitation of the hours of work, the minimum wage for workers as fixed by law, the right to strike, and so on. Now, all these principles, taken in the abstract, are good and in no way contradict either divine or human laws. These principles are like those regarding arbitration, pensions for the incapacitated, protection for working women and children, and safe working conditions, all of which have already been translated into law even in our country and will surely bear much good fruit (...).

However, beloved co-workers, your efforts will be more useful and practical if applied not to matters of a general nature but to the particular and local problems you have before you every day. In a word, you will help and advise the poor, work with others to extirpate abuses and injustices, and teach the uninformed many useful and beautiful things (...).

The evil that afflicts society is not purely economic, as the socialists assert, but also moral: moral, above all. This evil is found not just in the way society is organized but even more so in the individuals themselves.

So, my beloved pastors, when you call people's attention to the observance of evangelical love and the precepts of our faith, you are doing the work of social justice, because the well-being of society is found first of all in a religious and moral rebirth of individuals. The rest will follow automatically.¹⁸

"A marvelous encyclical"

As minister of peace among peoples and Vicar of a God of love who became Father of the poor and the abandoned, the Pope has the most loving consideration, the most delicate concern for the poor and abandoned, without distinction of race, customs, or religion, because they are in the greatest need of help and protection.

Unfortunately, the working class fits this description. A worker is a valuable instrument in somebody else's hand, a force creating somebody else's wealth. But in our day and age he sometimes lacks the very necessities for survival. And while at least half of a nation's commercial and industrial development and of its economic well-being is due to him, the worker is not allowed to share in it. This explains the bitter hostility between landowners and workers, the frightening discontent of the working class, incited in international circles by political passions. We see this discontent in today's strikes and partial uprisings, which, however, could, in a moment, flare up into a huge conflagration (...).

The Pope quite clearly points out the various responsibilities in this question. He denounces the destructive doctrines in this matter and indicates the means to be used. I dare not try to summarize this document, magnificent among the many magnificent documents emanating from our present Holy Father's wisdom and love. Leo XIII does not limit himself to

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 45-47.

preaching charity to the rich and resignation to the workers. In his admirable Encyclical there is much more. With his penetrating gaze, he has carefully examined the labor question and understood that if the fires of revolt are burning among the working class, it is not entirely its fault. Unjust laws and greed have made a work-slave out of the laborer, who is struggling with the present, is disheartened by the future, and is wearing himself out in order to earn a piece of bread that is not even enough to satisfy his hunger.¹⁹

“It is a work of justice that we must begin”

The child, weighed down from his earliest years under the burden of work, grows up sad and tired. The woman, busy from early in the morning to late at night, no longer has time to take care of her little family, which therefore grows up without love and morality. It is a work of justice that we must begin if we want to restore confidence to the working class and, with confidence, peace and tranquillity itself.

Workers have duties, but they have rights, too! Society must make sure that their rights are respected, unless we prefer to let the workers provide for themselves through violence (...).

Catholics have the duty to study the social question and get deeply involved in it. Unbent either by age or by length of battle, the Holy Father sets the example for us to follow.

This is a new field of action he entrusts to the zeal and initiative of his children. It is a question of doing the opposite of what the revolution does. The latter did whatever it could to turn the masses -- the workers especially -- away from the Church. We must now guide them back to the Church! I insist: we must strengthen the minds and hearts of people with the great truths of the Gospel.

Whether we like it or not, this is the only remedy for the present evils and the one defense against impending greater perils. Let there be, if you wish, a steady progress of machines, industries, discoveries, and the conquests of science!

It is only right that people, by dint of their hard work, make progress and try to improve their lives as much as possible. I rejoice over this wholeheartedly. In the last analysis, all this redounds to the greater honor and glory of the work of God.²⁰

“A mission of peace and social rebirth”

We men of the Church ask only that the Gospel be called upon to lead these economic and industrial transformations; that the sincere practice of its teachings purify and ennoble

¹⁹*Centenario di S. Luigi - Enciclica del S. Padre - Obolo dell'amore filiale*, Piacenza 1891, pp. 6-9. Scalabrini is here presenting the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

material progress and thus prevent the fomenting amongst the masses of the brutal instincts that are the source of discord and fratricidal struggles.

Such a mission of peace and social revival clearly belongs to us men of the Church as possessors of God's mandate and resources.

If all of my clergy would only understand this! In our day it is practically impossible to lead the working class back to the Church if we do not keep in constant touch with it outside of the church! We must come out of church, my Venerable Brothers, if we wish to carry on a fruitful apostolate within the church. We have no choice but to be men of our times.

Certain new or revived forms of propaganda successfully employed by our adversaries should not scare us. We must live the life of the people and reach them with the press, associations, committees, mutual aid societies, public conferences, conventions, workers' circles, oratories for the young, and with all kinds of public and private charitable institutions.

We must forcefully oppose their biased ideas. But, with equal enthusiasm, we must support their interests and encourage their legitimate aspirations, being always careful not to deceive them with empty promises or incite them to despise the rich or the employers. Rather, let us do our best to bring these two classes together and put them on friendly terms with each other. After the example of Catholics in other countries, let us be the leaders of today's movements and work hard rather than grumble on the sidelines.

My dear ones, the world marches on. Let us not stand back because of formalistic concerns or out of a false sense of prudence. If we don't work with them, they will work without us and against us! Let's not forget that!²¹

"Harmony among all classes"

My beloved people of Piacenza, it is with heartrending sorrow that I address my word to you this time!

My sincere and deep love for you, which in good times and in bad has never diminished during the twenty-three years of my episcopal ministry, gives me the right to speak to you like a father to his children.

I wept and prayed for all of you during these days! I wish I could have been at the side of each one of you to help you in your needs, to speak to you words of comfort and hope, and to restore your spirit to the peace lost because of the sufferings and unrest of the moment!

²¹Ibid. pp. 10-12.

The economic difficulties, the higher cost of living, and the lack of jobs have all deprived you of that customary tranquility of life that has always been the pride of our city. You were not wrong to rebel against these evils.

But since your grievances have now been satisfied and the municipal and political authorities have done what they could to take care of the most urgent needs and have promised you even greater concessions for the future, any further resistance would only increase the enormous harm already done and the already great number of victims.

My dear sons and daughters! Think of the terrible consequences of an urban revolt. Think of the dead and wounded, of the families deprived of their dear ones for whatever reason; and let peace return, I implore you in the name of God.

Peace and harmony among all the classes of citizens is the surest way to remedy a situation that all of us, without exception, deplore.

In this sad hour, I find comfort in the thought that the voice of your Shepherd, whom you have always listened to, will enter your hearts even this time and bring them peace.²²

“The work of assistance to the rice-field workers”

In the memorable meeting of the Catholic Associations held in the Bishop’s residence on July 4 of this year, I proposed, as a perpetual remembrance, in agreement with my venerable and zealous confrere from Bobbio, the establishment of a committee to assist the young boys and girls who, during some months of the year, usually because of poverty, emigrate in swarms from my Diocese to the plains of Piedmont and Lombardy to harvest and husk rice.

The proposal was warmly received by all. Prominent people from both the Diocese of Piacenza and the neighboring dioceses of Bobbio, Lodi, and Pavia promptly and generously volunteered to help.

We are dealing, as everyone understands, with a magnificent and extremely important charitable work. In fact, those poor unfortunates encounter many very serious moral and physical dangers and evils easy to imagine. We must urgently find remedies and take measures so that they will not fall victim to greedy speculators, will be able to keep the Lord’s Day, be protected from immoral designs, and be better paid for their labor, in short, that they will find defense, protection, and comfort also when far from their families.

To achieve this wonderful goal, we must, first of all, find out how many in each parish are the young boys and girls in these conditions.

²²Letter to the people of Piacenza, published in the local newspapers on May 4, 1898, on the occasion of the “insurrection of May 1, 1898,” which in Piacenza took place from May 2 to 4 and caused three deaths (see Biografia, pp. 826-833).

Please fill out the enclosed form as accurately as possible and send it back to me with your signature.²³

²³Circular letter of Aug. 22, 1903. For the Organization on behalf of the Rice Field Workers, see Biografia, pp. 847-852.

3. THE ROMAN QUESTION

If reconciliation between “labor and capital, freedom and authority, equality and order” is possible, it must then be possible also between Church and State.

Human beings have the right and duty to love their religion and their country. The conflict between these two sentiments causes terrible harm to religion and unsettling problems of conscience. The “disastrous conflict” must cease as soon as possible, “especially for the good of souls.”

The illegal seizure of legitimate rights must be condemned; the usurper must make reparation; and the Pope’s freedom must be restored in full. But in a parliamentary system, people cannot expect reparation and validation from the State if honest and upright men and women do not enter Parliament, men and women who truly care about their people and represent them in their identity as people traditionally and culturally Catholic. To dream about a miraculous restoration is antihistorical; to call for it from outsiders would be fatal. Only the participation of Catholics in the public life of the country can prepare the reconciliation between the Holy See and Italy and remove the political obstacles to freedom of evangelization. Regaining society to Christianity was uppermost in Bishop Scalabrini’s mind when dealing with the political and social questions of his time.

a) THE FUNDAMENTAL REASONS FOR RECONCILIATION

“Reason in harmony with faith, nature with grace”

God wants it! (...). God wants reason to go hand in hand with faith, nature with grace, earth with heaven, the work of creatures with the rights of the Creator. He wants labor and capital, freedom and authority, equality and order, fraternity and paternity, conservation and progress to echo each other, to reply to each other as in a musical counterpoint. God wants all the elements of civilization, the sciences, arts and letters, industry, every legitimate interest and aspiration, to find incentive, standards, help, ennoblement, and heavenly approval in religion, in the Church, and in the Papacy.²⁴

“Religion and country!”

Our earthly homeland and the heavenly homeland! Oh, yes, let us love the earthly homeland, for it is a gift of God. To love it, to work for its prosperity and greatness is to observe the sublime precept of charity commanded by the Gospel. But to truly love this earthly homeland we must join love for it to love for religion, which, in turn, guides us to our eternal homeland.

Religion and country! These two supreme loves of our forefathers and mothers, these two aspirations of every noble heart must, like daughters of the same father, give each other the

²⁴Address for the 8th Centennial of the First Crusade, April 21, 1895 (AGS 3018/26),

kiss of peace, must love and help each other: “What God has united man must not separate.”²⁵

“Italy, sincerely reconciled with the Holy See”

Religion and country: these two supreme aspirations of every noble soul are intertwined. They complement each other in this work of love and redemption, namely, the protection of the defenseless. They blend into a wonderful harmony.

The odious barriers created by hatred and resentment will disappear; arms will open to a fraternal embrace; hands will shake in a warm sign of love; and lips will open to a smile and a kiss. When all class and party discrimination will have been eliminated, we will experience in all its Christian splendor the meaning of the aphorism: “homo homini frater” (man is a brother to man) (...). May Italy, sincerely reconciled with the Holy See, emulate its ancient glories and add another imperishable glory, that of setting her estranged sons and daughters back on the bright path of civilization and progress.²⁶

“Religion and country -- two sacred loves

After the terrible way in which our troubled country has been governed by those who have usurped the prerogative of calling themselves its lovers, it really takes a great deal of nerve to call enemies of the country those of us who have stood up to all the injustices, abuses, iniquities, deprivations, and crimes that have led this country to its present state of destitution. We feel we deserve the title of good Italians all the more for our not having been involved in the misdeeds of the people who have betrayed and ruined Italy.

Still I say: love of religion and love of country are sacred loves.

These two great, noble ideals blossom together in our hearts with our first breath of life and endure till our dying breath. But the noble enthusiasm of one should not smother the sublime aspirations of the other.

Justice must not be stifled by patriotism. The fortunes of a homeland we all must leave behind cannot be more important than the immortal destiny awaiting us. But this immortal destiny cannot be attained without those necessary means that society -- through its observance of the laws God has given humanity for its present and future good -- must provide us.²⁷

“Faith is rapidly dying out”

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶First conference on emigration, Feb. 8, 1891 (AGS 5/3).

²⁷*Unione, azione, preghiera*, Piacenza 1890, p. 8.

There is no consistency of principles, no awareness of the times, no clear and cohesive policy. What confusion, what sophistry (...). Meanwhile, faith is rapidly dying out, charity is growing cold, and the hatred of lay people for the clergy is increasing. The results will be catastrophic. Who knows how long we will have to endure them?²⁸

“A painful fever “

But I have been left with another fever, one that comes from seeing so many people leaving the Church at the hands of those who, instead, should be making every effort to get these people close to the Church. You know how painful this fever can be (...). It doesn't make sense! Catholics must stay out of Parliament and then are urged to foster and promote petitions to present to Parliament! If this is logic, I don't understand it.²⁹

“To set consciences at rest”

Holy Father, I very well understand the difficulty of the matter. But I beg Almighty God and I implore him to grant you the light and strength you need to make the most of this moment, so that you may not miss this opportunity, a most propitious one, to do what sooner or later must be done. In this way, the consciences of so many poor workers, farmers, and office employees will be set at rest, that is to say, the consciences of all those who, because of their situation, will be forced, as it were, to disregard the prohibition of the Holy See. To tell the truth, I do not see how this prohibition could possibly be reinstated in the present state of affairs without endangering the good faith that excuses the great majority of these people before God, with the added risk of running into all kinds of trouble with the Government. Frankly, humanly speaking, this is the only way left for us to claim, with some hope of success, the sacred rights of the Church and the Holy Apostolic See.³⁰

“We desire to see this harmful conflict come to an end, especially for the good of souls”

Holy Father, not content with speaking of peace, you also point out to Italy the means for achieving it. In fact, you state that the Catholic Church, as a perfect and juridic society, has in itself the power to bring happiness to peoples and nations of all ages and therefore must not be subject to any earthly power but should enjoy absolute liberty. You rightly conclude

²⁸Letter to G. Bonomelli, Nov. 1, 1886 (Carteggio S.B., pp. 188-189).

²⁹Id., Aug. 16, 1887 (ibid, p. 220).

³⁰Letter to Leo XIII, August 1882 (ibid., p.66). For Scalabrini the only way to resolve the “Roman Question” and ward off the harm it was causing the Church in Italy was through reconciliation between the Holy See and the State of Italy, a reconciliation to be prepared by the participation of Catholics in the political life of the country, a participation prohibited, however, by the *non expedit* of the Holy See.

that its Supreme Ruler, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the legitimate successor of the Prince of the Apostles, should enjoy the same independence and freedom.

You teach us that, without this independence and freedom, the activity of the Church is hampered, so that she cannot exercise her sublime mission in the world, a mission of holiness, knowledge, and charity. With sadness you proclaim that in these times you are not your own master but are under the mastery of others: “Truly, we are under the power of others rather than under our own.”

You suffer from all this, Holy Father, and so do your sons and daughters! Italy, too, suffers, this first-born of nations, which you rightly love with a love of predilection.

As the worthy representative of him who wanted to be known as the *Prince of peace*, you go forth to meet her and, with a father’s love, make every effort to reconcile her to the Roman Pontificate, the marvelous source of all her greatness, her most splendid glory, her preeminent dignity. This loving design is clearly shown in your Consistorial Address of May 23 of this year and, even more brightly, in your letter of June 15 to your Secretary of State.

We, the Bishops of the Province of Modena, together with those of the Dioceses of Parma, Piacenza, and Borgo S. Donnino, pledge our full support to these two important and admirable documents. For we have the freedom of the Church and her august Head very much at heart and with you are anxious to see this dreadful conflict come to an end, especially for the good of souls.³¹

b) THE HISTORICAL REASONS BEHIND THE ROMAN QUESTION

“The 25th anniversary of the occupation of Rome is at hand”

The 25th anniversary of the occupation of Rome will soon be here. At variance with the better judgment of wise statesmen who view them as something in bad taste, plans are under way for ostentatious festivities to celebrate an event that brought so much evil to Italy and sadness to the Catholic world.

As Catholics and Italians, we consider them unwise and harmful for the same reason that everything causing discord, fomenting partisan anger, exacerbating the harmful conflict between Church and State, or dividing the people of our country is unwise and harmful.

Think of the Pope’s sufferings in all this!

³¹Letter of the bishops of the Province of Modena to Leo XIII, 1887 (AGS 3019/2), drafted by Bishop Scalabrini. The document was written pursuant to the address of Leo XIII on the “disastrous conflict” and to the subsequent Circular Letter of Cardinal Rampolla (see Biografia, pp. 685-688).

Shall we not try to soothe this bitter sorrow of the Pope? Are we not members of the great family of which he is the Head? Is he not the father of our souls? Do we not owe him everything we are and have in the spiritual order? Besides, when we think about it, do we not owe him very much also in the material order? Woe to society, woe to us if there were no Pope in the midst of this chaos of ideas and of this upheaval in the social order!

As Catholics and Italians, we cannot and must not remain on the sidelines nonchalantly watching the war that is being waged against him and, in his person, against everything that is glorious, noble, and great in our motherland. What an honor it is to stand up for him, to fight with him, especially now when the Pope is Leo XIII.

So, let us be more and more devoted to him. And since what is uppermost in his mind is the allegiance of all peoples to his Throne, wanted by God as the center of truth on earth, we too should work toward this end by being the first ones to offer him the obedience he is fully entitled to on account of his supreme authority and infallible magisterium. Let us offer him an obedience that is prompt, cheerful, and generous, an obedience suffused with love, the only one worthy of great and noble souls; an absolute obedience that unites the faithful with their pastor; the faithful and their pastor with their bishop; the faithful, the pastor, and the bishop with the supreme Shepherd.³²

“A horrible crime”

I am referring to the horrible crime which sullied our country on the infamous night of last July 13. Was there a decent person that was not overwhelmed with horror and shame?

At once a cry of indignation burst forth from the hearts of millions and millions of people in every corner of the world! As a bishop and an Italian, I too deemed it my duty to make my protest known to our common Father, and I did it in the certainty of interpreting your feelings as well, Venerable Brothers and beloved children, who have always been so devoted to the immortal Pius IX and to his worthy successor!

I exhort you to give yourselves no rest but to stir up in yourselves more and more such spirit of action and sacrifice, of zeal and courage as is necessary in our days for the defense of the sacred rights of the Church and her august Head.

We must not fool ourselves. A speculative or intellectual Catholicism, a religious neutrality are not enough. This is no longer possible in our present society and in the present state of affairs. We have to come out of our anonymity and openly declare who we are, namely, proud, unabashed, unmitigated Catholics. Why be so afraid, why so worried about what others think? (...).

³²Pastoral Letter of Sept. 16, 1895, pp. 2-3.

All of us have the duty to oppose publicly for what is evil with a fruitful, wholesome, and holy publicity for what is good.³³

“Freedom: this is all the Church asks for”

The Church accepts and blesses all forms of government because all of them, from absolute monarchy to pure democracy, are in themselves equally legitimate. She knows only too well that peace and harmony in a country and the true well-being of people depend not so much on the form of government as on the quality of people called upon to govern. She considers first the man, then the citizen; the man in the hands of God, the citizen in those of the State.

As a heaven-bound pilgrim, she not only accepts all kinds of civil and earthly arrangements but also welcomes them and works with them as long they do not obstruct her way to heaven. She does not want to be the judge in matters peculiar to any social system but demands that her laws not be violated, her teaching authority not trampled underfoot, and people not think they can live without God, because without him we would be left with just arbitrary rule and arrogant power.

The Church would actually infringe on the rights of the State if she were to meddle in alliances she thinks might best be suited to this or that country or interfere in such things as the armed forces, commerce, taxes, or finances; in a word, in what has to do with the economy, defense, industry, or commerce. But when the Church looks at all political, economical, and administrative questions from the moral point of view and judges that certain alliances made to deny the rights of others or to oppress the weak are unjust; that partisanship, favoritism, and corruption in the administration of justice are an iniquity; that teaching errors and unwholesome doctrines to young people is a betrayal; that overtaxing commerce, industry, labor, and property does serious harm to people; that perjury and revolt are horrendous crimes; that working and doing business on Sundays and holy days are reprehensible scandals; that the so-called civil marriage is a shameful concubinage; that divorce is invalid and despicable -- and the same for other depravities -- the Church is keeping within the strictly religious field. In so doing, she does not exceed her rights. She is simply performing her solemn duty (...).

The Church, of course, does not encompass all knowledge, all human progress, or all political life, but she is always able to contribute a seed and a breath of life that can bear fruit in all things human. He who rejects her rejects life (...).

Freedom: this is all the Church asks for; the freedom with which her divine Spouse endowed her; that noble freedom that is her natural daughter; that legitimate and holy freedom for which millions of her sons and daughters did not hesitate to give up their lives.

³³*Lettera Pastorale di Monsignor Vescovo di Piacenza 15 Agosto 1881*, Piacenza, 1881, pp. 5-6. During the night of July 13, 1881, the anticlericals of Rome tried to throw the dead body of Pius IX into the Tiber River while it was being brought to the Basilica of St. Lawrence outside the Walls.

Yes, this is the freedom the Church is asking for! Freedom for her altars and her holy days, that is to say, freedom to offer God the supreme worship due to him, not just within the church walls but also out in the open; freedom of the ministry and of the Gospel word, that is to say, freedom to teach truth and virtue to the world and watch over people's integrity and purity; freedom of the holy hierarchy, that is to say, freedom of vocation for her priests and of the necessary interchange between the bishops and their supreme Head; freedom to tend to perfection and live common life; freedom of ownership, that is to say, freedom to own and administer what the faithful generously contribute -- which constitutes her legitimate patrimony; finally, the great, fruitful freedom of Christian education and instruction.³⁴

"Freedom and independence for the Roman Pontiff"

Finally, you must proudly declare that you too want the well-being of your country and that, for this very reason, you passionately desire a quick reconciliation of the State with the Church and her Supreme Head because the years of greatest faith have always been for Italy the years of her greatest glory. In the same way, Italy's freedom and independence have always gone hand in hand with the freedom and independence of the Roman Pontiff.³⁵

There is no bishop who does not bitterly deplore the intolerable conditions the august Head of three hundred million Catholics is forced to endure; no bishop who does not join him in frequent and most formal protests against every ancient and modern assault against the Pope; no bishop who does not proclaim with him that it is impossible for Italy to prosper unless, as common sense demands, provision is made for the dignity of the Roman See, for the freedom and independence of the Roman Pontiff.³⁶

"Italy's independence is something wanted by divine Providence"

Italy's independence is not only something consecrated by the will of the people and by the inevitable course of history but also something wanted by divine Providence. I know of no bishop who contests the legitimacy of this solemn birth of the nation of Italy. Resolve the Roman Question and you will have a clergy that will be a model of devotion to the institutions of the country...). The Church has never condemned these sentiments. By virtue of her divine Constitution and the admirable equanimity that characterizes it, the Church has always been open to all sources of historic changes, changes that come to rest and find discipline within her. The Church has always followed the unbroken evolution of civilization step by step and become its secure repository and strongest bulwark. The Holy See is not an institution that can ignore the need and the beauty of a reborn Italy. She very

³⁴La Chiesa Cattolica, Piacenza 1888, pp. 18-22.

³⁵Pel suo ritorno da Roma, Piacenza 1882, p. 15.

³⁶*Cattolici di nome e cattolici di fatto*, Piacenza 1887, p. 23.

well knows that Italy's right as a nation expressed through plebiscites and actual exercise of power is not something to be easily undermined and invalidated.³⁷

"The Church has not placed its trust in kingly thrones"

The Church's mission is to lead people to the highest degree of moral perfection possible. Hence, everything having to do with religion and morality is necessarily part and parcel of her domain. For what purpose? The Church, a modern apologist writes, avails herself also of kingly thrones for the freedom and independence she needs but does not put her trust in kingly thrones and in their poor claims. She has a much more noble mission than that of earthly authorities, a much more sublime power than theirs. She distributes riches and treasures not of this world. She dispenses diadems and crowns that are imperishable and eternal. Of the things of this world she wants only what is necessary or useful to further the dissemination of heavenly goods with freedom and independence.³⁸

c) THE WAYS TOWARD RECONCILIATION

"The Pope has the right of free communication"

The Church is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, while the Bishop of Rome is its sovereign. To fulfill his divine mission, the Bishop of Rome must freely rule over everyone and direct everything and thus keep unity of faith and government. A father is never a stranger to his children wherever they may be or to whatsoever rank they may have been raised; nor is a Shepherd a stranger to his flock or a sovereign to his subjects (...).

Those who are opposed to the Shepherd's communicating with his sheep and lambs, with the faithful and the bishops, are opposed to a divine right. Their contention is that, before decrees go into effect, the approval of the secular power is needed by the Teacher of all Nations, namely, decrees safeguarding the integrity of faith and morals, of discipline, and of all other Church matters regarding the direction of souls. This weakens the authority of the Apostolic See, disturbs the faithful and their consciences, subjects a divine right to human power, and nullifies the effectiveness of the Primacy itself.³⁹

"For the Pope we claim the freedom of a Sovereign"

With reference to the teachings of the Roman Pontiff, we solemnly declare that we specifically accept and support those having to do with his temporal power. We want the

³⁷G. Borelli, *Il clero cattolico e le condizioni politico-sociali d'Italia. Un colloquio con Mons. Scalabrini, Vescovo di Piacenza*, "L'Alba," July 15, 1900.

³⁸*La Chiesa Cattolica*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 16-17.

³⁹*Il Concilio Vaticano*, Como 1873, pp. 204-205.

Pope to be strong, morally great, and sovereignly free. He alone is the judge of the form, scope, and degree of freedom he needs to rule the universal Church.

In the present circumstances, there is no way to ensure his autonomy other than by effective and real sovereignty. Otherwise, in the exercise of his rights as Primate, the Pope will have to be subject to another authority, as experience has taught us in these last few years.⁴⁰

“Let the Government have the courage to face the question”

The Government of Italy should appeal directly to the Holy Father’s wisdom and love of country. I deeply believe the Pope would accept the invitation and find in it the supreme joy of his glorious life. It is absurd to think the Roman Curia would want to put the Church in a situation in which one day it would have to apologize for not having saved Italy. Let the Government, therefore, have the courage to face the difficult question, and we will all rejoice.⁴¹

“Reasons of supreme importance, not dogma”

The Holy Father assures us that, for the good of Italy, reasons of supreme importance suggest that Catholics not vote. Even though we are unable to clearly ascertain these reasons in the Chair of Peter’s inspired judgment, I, a bishop, will follow the norm set down by the Head of the Church (...).

We must not confuse things. This is not a question of dogma. None of us would accept such a thesis even if called by a different name. I am free to ponder the wisdom and effectiveness of this decision within myself. But I peacefully accept the word of the Pope because I understand, as I have understood during all my years as bishop, the absolute need to observe discipline, which is the hinge of the unbreakable unity of the structure of the Church.⁴²

“Participation of Catholics in political elections”

I beg you, Holy Father, to enlighten me soon with regard to a matter closely related to the good government of my diocese as well as all the dioceses of Italy, namely the participation of Catholics in political elections. While awaiting the new electoral laws, is it licit for them to participate? I confess, Holy Father, that I have been asking myself this question for some time. Having closely examined before God the arguments on both sides of the question, I think the time has come to try something in this regard. But I must not forget that it is up to you alone to decide.

⁴⁰ *Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, p. 5.

⁴¹ G. Borelli, op. cit.

⁴² *Ibid.*

The reason why I feel obliged to inform Your Holiness is the fact that in my diocese all the landowners without exception (and there are very many), as well as the managers of shops and factories, have had all their workers registered as voters. So I greatly fear that the *non expedit* of the Holy See, which was not observed very much in the past, will be even less so in the future, with great harm to individual consciences and to the detriment of the very authority of the Church.

So permit me another question: could not the change that just occurred in Italian law regarding political elections serve, in God's plan, to justify -- in the face of everybody, Italians and foreigners, good and bad -- a change in the Holy See's policy concerning the participation of Catholics in political elections?⁴³

"To help the Catholic candidate win"

Regarding the question of the elections, I was informed that, after much hesitation, they had decided to keep the *non expedit*. But this did not deter me from submitting a query to the Sacred Penitentiary: "Should there be -- as frequently happens -- several candidates in an electoral district, of whom one is a well-known Catholic strongly in favor of the rights of the Church, the others more or less hostile to her, could one approve or at least tolerate the situation in which voters respectful of religious values go to the polls in good conscience to help the Catholic candidate win the election?"

The query, together with a long accompanying letter which I will send you later, was not badly received. Yesterday I was called and told orally that, in these cases, with due reservations, I should let things ride and later on write to the Cardinal of the Sacred Penitentiary to request permission for the elected Catholic to sit in Parliament. I believe that, if other bishops were to submit the same query to the Cardinal of the Sacred Penitentiary, they would receive the same response. This doesn't mean much, but at least it is something. But I can assure you that our writings on this matter were much appreciated and that the Holy Father was quite pleased with them.⁴⁴

"To sacrifice the divine law to the non expedit?"

Your Holiness, I do not want to weary you by repeating what I have already stated. You know how I feel even about political elections. God knows the purity of my intentions.

In the early part of last month, in agreement with several other bishops, I sent you a letter on this matter along with two queries I had already submitted to Cardinal Bilio of holy memory. In my letter I asked if I could make use of the favorable responses I received on

⁴³ Letter to Leo XIII, August 1882 (Carteggio S.B., pp. 65-66).

⁴⁴ Letter to G. Bonomelli, Oct. 9, 1882 (ibid., p. 75).

that occasion for the coming elections. Monsignor Boccali answered as follows in your name:

“As in 1882, you Excellency may this time too make use of the private responses received from the Sacred Penitentiary regarding certain queries submitted by Your Excellency to that same Congregation, etc.”

Holy Father, I made use of that response in the particular cases that were brought to my attention. How could I do otherwise?

In this electoral district of Piacenza the radical party presented as candidates for Parliament certain men who are notoriously opposed to the Pope and the Church. These are men who during these past years have been exasperating the city and main towns with their speeches, vicious and blasphemous beyond words. Thinking they had already perverted my people, they presented themselves with one of the most irreligious and subversive programs imaginable. To no one’s surprise, the good people became alarmed. Were these candidates to be elected and become absolute masters of the field and continue to destroy every principle of authority among our people; were they to alienate the faithful from their shepherds and disseminate all kinds of errors against the faith, what would soon happen to the Church of Piacenza? This is what the more devout and enlightened priests and lay people were asking themselves, many of whom naturally began to wonder whether it would not be better in our particular case to go to vote precisely in order to keep the aforementioned candidates from winning, especially since we secured public and firm declarations from their opponents that they would respect the rights of Catholics.

In these circumstances, Holy Father, how could I in conscience remain in peace? How could the shepherd not be concerned at the sight of the wolf threatening to raid his flock? Still, I did violence to myself, Holy Father. With remorse, if I may say so, I gave the divine law second place after the *non expedit* and kept absolutely silent. The only thing I did was to make use of Monsignor Boccali’s eminently wise response in the particular cases that were brought to me.

Before I left for my pastoral visitation, which (please note, Your Holiness) kept me away from the city, in fact from the Province of Piacenza, from May 7 to June 8 of this year, some outstanding Catholics came to me privately to ask me if, convinced as they were of the need to vote, they could do so in all good conscience. With an eye on our local circumstances as well as on the reasons some of the people presented, such as those concerning family and work, I simply said to each one individually and altogether privately that voting was not wrong in itself, that the *non expedit*, however, was still in force, that I did not advise either for or against voting, that they should follow the dictates of their conscience.

Could I as a shepherd of souls, as a bishop, as a director of consciences, answer in any other way? Could I say anything less than what I said?⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Letter to Leo XIII, June 24, 1886 (ASV-SS, Leo XIII, Miscellanea, D.D. Albertario, IX, A.).

“The participation of Italians in the political elections”

I was convinced that the participation of all Italians in well planned and orderly elections would contribute to the legislature a contingent of Catholic deputies which in time would get stronger. Though numerically inferior, this contingent would nonetheless morally represent the preponderance of decency, honesty, and influence over certain social classes; hence the probability of preventing the presentation or approval of laws inimical to the Church and the hope of abrogating those already in existence or making exceptions to them.

The example of Belgium and of the Center Party in Prussia confirmed this conviction of mine. There the struggle of the Catholics ended up in victory. Even though they have made only partial gains so far, we can be sure that the efforts and hopes of the undaunted ranks of the Landtag and of the Reichstag will be crowned with full success.

As a matter of fact, our ideas were also shared by public figures of great integrity, whose only desire was to make available to religion and country the services of the most brilliant minds, the most illustrious scientists, and the most capable administrators found among Catholics.

But when we were given to understand that, for reasons of the highest order, the only elections in which, for the present, it was permissible for Catholics to participate were the municipal ones, we reverently accepted the august verdict and withdrew from the discussion of a hypothesis considered inexpedient. We worked constantly and diligently, however, for the municipal elections and tried to have elected to the city councils, at least in large numbers, citizens of unquestioned faith or, at least, those who would surely never attack it. Our candidates could not always prevent an evil but they often succeeded in mitigating it at least in its consequences. Certainly the present and future generations ought to be grateful to them for having seen to it that religious instruction was retained in the elementary schools.⁴⁶

“To have our rightful representatives in Parliament”

In response to your letter of Nov. 29, I am happy to tell you that what you asked me to do I have already carried out in all the religious institutions over which I preside and have taken pains that the presidents of the other institutions should do likewise.

I must add that, despite all this, I have absolutely no hope we will succeed. Until such time as we have our rightful representatives in Parliament, we will be beating the air.

All Catholics, of course, must comply with the “supreme reasons” forbidding them to take part in political life. But there isn’t an intelligent man alive who does not deplore from the bottom of his heart the existence of those supreme reasons paralyzing these precious forces

⁴⁶ *Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, pp. 31-33.

that are more vigorous in Italy than elsewhere. If nothing else, let us do our best to be at peace with our conscience, knowing that we did all we could do.⁴⁷

“Reasons of expediency and reasons of substance”

Last night I had my farewell audience with our beloved Holy Father (...). The matter of the elections came up twice. He gave me his reasons of *appropriateness* and I gave him my reasons of *substance*. I think he was impressed by my contention that the dissension in Bologna will continue to boil until the *non expedit* is removed. Frankly, I have the impression the Holy Father isn't quite sure what to do but inclines to the abolition of the *non expedit*, though not for the immediate future, of course. I concluded this way: Most Holy Father, I would be so happy if you promise to pay attention not to the reasons of expediency, which change from day to day, but to the substance of the question. And he answered: Yes, I promise you. With these words he embraced me with deep emotion. I left him with even greater emotion in my heart.⁴⁸

We prefer dynamic politics to static politics”

Is it compatible with one's duties as a Catholic and a citizen to let everything -- religion, morality and country -- go to rack and ruin rather than extend a compassionate hand to prevent the loss of souls, the corruption of many youths, the approval of a law contrary to religion? Are political systems perhaps superior to the rights of religion, or shouldn't the interests of the former defer to the supreme rights of religion? It is very easy and comfortable to settle into a passive policy of inertia and await the cataclysm which, by some unknown law of history, will drag the world back to prehistoric times. Such a system will probably have to wait till the day of the earthly cataclysm, to be followed by the great restoration or regeneration. Personally, I prefer dynamic politics to static politics. If we ever manage to make modern society Christian in the best sense of the word and to avert the great evils that threaten humanity, I am convinced we shall have deserved well of Church and country.⁴⁹

“Slowly but surely”

What about reconciliation? It seems to be moving ahead very, very slowly but inexorably, like fate itself. And then? He who was wrong will prove to be right. *Fiat, fiat.*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Letter to a marquise, undated draft copy (AGS 3021/17).

⁴⁸ Letter to Cardinal D. Svampa, Nov. 29, 1903 (quoted by L. Bedeschi, *La Curia romana durante la crisi modernista*, Parma 1968, p. 225). The 19th National Catholic Congress of Bologna, held from Nov. 10 to Nov. 13, 1903, was disturbed by heated debates between the outgoing president G.B. Paganuzzi and the incoming president G. Grosoli.

⁴⁹ *Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁰ Letter to G. Bonomelli, Jan. 19, 1892 (Carteggio S.B., p. 292).

Ideas move ahead at such a desperately slow pace, especially when they run counter to certain interests and passions, but the pace is relentless when the ideas put forward are right and truly beneficial. So, we must press on because every progress, however minimal, brings us closer to our goal, as long as fatigue does not defeat the supporters of those ideas.⁵¹

My Institute, born in such a marvelous way through the harmonious blending of religious and patriotic sentiments, would fall short of its purpose and be unable to overcome the innumerable obstacles in its path or meet its many moral and material needs without the concerted help of all people of good will. This is the reason, my good friend, why I call this cherished Institution to your attention and, through you, to the attention of the Government and of all those who are concerned with the good of the country. I do so not only because I see in my Institute a fruitful means for fulfilling my episcopal duties on behalf of so many unfortunate people but also because in this work religion and country join hands. This, in my judgment, is a beginning, a practical way to start that reconciliation of hearts and minds which is one of my fondest desires.⁵²

4. CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

In Scalabrini St. Pius X saw the “learned, mild, and strong bishop, who even in difficult times has always defended and loved the truth and made it loved, and never abandoned it because of threat or flattery.”

In fact, the Bishop of Piacenza had the “holy courage to tell the truth” to one and all, to friend and foe, and believed it his episcopal duty never to keep it from the Pope.

Love for the truth leads one to realism, which can give rise to suffering but not to skepticism, because the light of truth is faith. “The practical knowledge of human beings and of things” brings one to prudent discernment of when to keep silent and when to speak out. It is not right to anticipate the judgments of the Church: “honest freedom of thought” dovetails with obedience, which imposes the sacrifice -- heroic at times -- of one’s convictions, in an act of faith.

A person with such an open mind opens his heart to all human values. Friendship is a need of the heart; it is enduring unity; it is self-sacrifice for the friend’s sake. “Deep and reverent” friendship is founded on love, which in turn is founded on the truth.

Whoever is full of the Holy Spirit, who is Love, loves not only human beings but also everything that is good, beautiful, artistic, poetical, and harmonious, in “fullness of love.” The symphony of creation has its deepest echo in the symphony of the spirit.

⁵¹ *L’Italia all’estero*, Torino 1899, p. 12.

⁵² *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, p. 46. The “dear friend” was the Honorable Paolo Carcano, a Socialist deputy and former classmate of Scalabrini back in Como.

a) LOVE FOR THE TRUTH

“A soul that is full of the Holy Spirit does not fear the world”

The spirit of the world is a spirit of duplicity and dishonesty. Since the spirit of the world is rooted in self-love, it seeks the truth only if it is pleasing; it stands up for religion only if religion has approving supporters; it extols virtue only where virtue is fashionable. This, unfortunately, is the spirit guiding people, a timid and conniving spirit. Some people are afraid to belong to God. Whenever there is the opportunity to openly side with him, they vacillate. Whenever they have to expose themselves to ridicule and criticism for his glory, they pull back. Cowardice is called prudence. Whenever they have to displease someone in order to be faithful to their duty, they feel a transgression is justified. Their first concern with the demands God makes of them is whether the world will give its seal of approval. So as not to lose the favor of the world, they pretend they are worldly: they speak the language of the world, acclaim the standards of the world, and take pains to conform to the ways of the world.⁵³

“Love for the truth even to the shedding of blood”

The harshest combat of all in this world is that of speaking the truth of Christ to friend and foe alike and telling it in good times and in bad, secretly and openly, to prisoners and kings, to plebeians and patricians, in private and in public, without compromises or shame, not with a fearful heart but with a sublime disregard for dangers, which is the privilege of great souls.

This is the terrible combat Jesus Christ referred to when he told the Roman governor: “For this was I born, for this have I come into the world: to give witness to the truth.” The combat Jesus received from the Father and left as a heritage to his friends is love for the truth even to the shedding of blood!⁵⁴

“You cannot but love the truth”

Holy Father, you know my frankness and the heavy sacrifices I have made to promote the glory of the Church and to be wholly committed to you and your cause, which is the cause of God.

So, kneeling at your feet, I ask one favor: call to order that extra-hierarchical group, especially the journalists headed by the *Osservatore* of Milan. They make a show of devotion to the successor of St. Peter but have none. They cloak themselves with it so as to give free play to their partisan ideas and defend their own private interests. In the

⁵³ Homily for Pentecost, 1881 (AGS 3016/6).

⁵⁴ Homily for Pentecost, 1880 (AGS 3016/6).

meantime, they affront the supreme authority of the bishops, bring dishonor to the Church and, with their vicious and scandalous controversies, make the Church contemptible in the eyes of well-meaning people. They are also demolishing that marvelous unity among the shepherds, which till now has been one of her finest glories. They are reducing Catholicism to a handful of fanatics and keeping out some of the finest minds.

How was the celebrated Father Stoppani, glory of our country and of the Church, treated? Like other institutions, priests, and lay people? My God, save your Spouse, so horribly disfigured!

You have a brilliant mind and a heart patterned after that of Jesus Christ, whose Vicar you are. As such, you cannot but love the truth. You cannot but desire that the truth be told to you, as the Saints desired. So I am more than sure, Holy Father, that you will pardon the frankness of this letter of mine. It is inspired solely by my strong zeal for the glory of your immortal pontificate, which has been marred and diminished by the unpunished arrogance of a blind and petulant faction.⁵⁵

“The holy courage to speak the truth”

My dear Fr. Luigi, continue to come to the aid of the Church with your writings because, especially in our day, she really needs people who will bring minds back to the study of the Gospel and Christian doctrine and thus bring Christ back into our families and into society.

I am personally convinced that this is the greatest need, the surest means, indeed the only means, for achieving what some people have vainly thought and still think they can achieve with other means. We have too many charlatans, as St. Augustine would call certain people. I say this because there are now few people left who have the holy courage to speak the truth, according to the Gospel maxim: “yes, yes; no, no.” Too lightly do some truly learned and worthy individuals keep to the sidelines because of the brainless hue and cry of certain individuals who think only of themselves.⁵⁶

“Woe to religion when bishops are forced to keep silent”

There are no two ways about it: I must either justify myself or be justified.

Telling me to keep quiet would add another outrage to the outrages of that sacrilegious slanderer. It’s like saying that it doesn’t matter if the bishops’ authority is thrown into the mud. This would lend credence to the rumors that we are afraid of the hidden power of

⁵⁵ Letter to Leo XIII, Sept. 26, 1881 (AGS 3042/2). For the relations between Scalabrini and Stoppani, see *Biografia*, pp. 700-709.

⁵⁶ Letter to L. Arosio, March 11, 1884 (AGS 3022/2). The Rev. Luigi Arosio wrote popular theological books.

certain cunning individuals and therefore unable to control them. Woe, a Doctor of the Church would exclaim, woe to religion when bishops are forced to keep silent!

Your Eminence, am I wrong? Tell the Holy Father to correct me and, as always, he will find in me a most submissive, a most obedient son. But if I am on the side of truth, of justice and of right, how can anyone allow a bishop, albeit the least and most unworthy of bishops, to be publicly dragged before the tribunal of one who has only the cassock and the appearance of a priest?

To conclude: once again I earnestly request the favorable judgment I have the right and the duty to ask for. I call for it, I await it.

Your Eminence, please pardon me if I am annoying you; but, believe me, I find it even more annoying to have to annoy you once again.

I hope you will listen to me this time so that, undisturbed by other matters, I may attend quietly and peacefully to matters of greater importance and thus channel all my poor energies to the salvation of the souls entrusted to me and to the defense of the sacred rights of the Holy See, the two things that are dearest to my heart.⁵⁷

b) REALISM AND CONSISTENCY

“Deeds are what counts”

Your kind letter of the first of this month caught up with me quite far from Piacenza, where I was making the pastoral visitation, the only consolation of my awesome ministry, because the sight of a lively faith, seemingly impossible in our day, helps me forget for a moment the painful situation of Church and society.

I am happy for you and share in your consolations, but you know I don't take documents too seriously or -- even less -- good and beautiful words. Deeds are what counts, public and solemn deeds. Those people have jeopardized religion, the episcopate, and the Holy See in the eyes of well-meaning non partisan people. So it is supremely urgent that everybody know that those people have no mandate and that their foolish and scandalous excesses have no standing.⁵⁸

“Now I believe only in deeds”

⁵⁷ Letter to Cardinal L. Jacobini, April 8, 1883 (Carteggio S.B., pp. 120-121). The “priest” to whom Scalabrini is referring is the Rev. Davide Albertario (see Biografia, pp. 562-565).

⁵⁸ Letter to G. Bonomelli, May 7, 1882 (ibid., p. 54). “Those people” are the radical “intransigents.”

If I were to consider all the compliments I received on my return from Rome from the people down there, I would believe a lot of nice things. But what can you expect? Now I believe only in accomplished deeds. I read somewhere that men of talent are ordinarily naive. I also must have had some talent once because I easily believed people. But now I must have used it up completely because I am almost skeptical, *salva fide* (except for the faith), of course. By the grace of God, this faith vividly and increasingly enlightens and gladdens my heart, which is often perturbed at the sight of so much wickedness.

And you, my dear friend, how do you stand in this regard? Really, you have so much talent that no matter how much of it you might lose, you will always have more than enough left to retain an ample supply of -- what shall I say? -- of good faith and wise naiveté, which lend charm to your austere person.⁵⁹

“The politics of puny expedients”

I sit down at once to answer your letter which I received today. I thank you very, very much for the good news you give me. I’ll try to put into practice the words: “he hoped against hope,” even though I have no hope whatsoever in the politics of puny expedients prevailing down there and instead fear bitter disillusionment. I hope that, after hearing you out, I will change my views, which are somewhat skeptical.⁶⁰

“The politics of the Gospel”

I was saddened by what you tell me in your letter, but I’m not surprised. When one acts in all things according to the dictates of human politics and not to the teachings of the Gospel, when one says and unsays with the same ease, does and undoes, praises and blames at the same time, when more weight is given to the divisive outcries of scandalous individuals than to the solemn testimonials of bishops, who are solely motivated by the desire for good, when the most solemn acts of the bishops are treated almost like the work of thoughtless children, Your Excellency, what else is not possible?

But we must take heart in the knowledge that in Leo XIII we have a great Pope who knows how to hold high the prestige of his and our authority. He will surely not permit that his prudent directives, both private and public, in this regard be de facto nullified. He is too wise.

The cunning of certain people will not prevail. He will be in firm control, I’m sure. I remember very well what he told me orally in this regard. Confident as I am in his word, I can assure you that, as soon as he can, he will provide a remedy for the very serious

⁵⁹ Id., Nov. 25, 1882 (ibid., p. 80).

⁶⁰ Id., Dec. 30, 1882 (ibid., p. 84).

problems of Northern Italy. *Fiat, fiat.* Oh then we will be able to cry out in truth: “The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered!”⁶¹

“Your work is blessed by God, and that is all that counts”

What you confided to me in your letter of the 18th of this month has deeply saddened me, first of all because of what it does to you, whom I truly love, and then because of the festering wound of which it is a symptom. It is really excruciating to see the holiest of works opposed by those who regard themselves as champions of the faith.

Dear Fr. Giuseppe, you are still young. Get ready to see even worse things. I know the world and I know whereof I speak. I am becoming more and more convinced that we must do good for the sake of good, for love of God alone, without seeking the approval of human beings or caring about their disapproval. This is the only way to succeed in our work, believe me. I have great hopes for your work, because it is being opposed (...). Your work is blessed by God, and that is all that counts. No matter what people say or do, it will prevail.⁶²

“The practical knowledge of people and things”

A few days ago my vicar general, who was traveling through Italy, had a private audience with the Holy Father. The Pope asked him with great concern about my health and expressed a desire to talk to me and to discuss “a well-reasoned proposal he (Scalabrini) has submitted to me. You could write to him and ask him to come here if he can.” But after having been assured by my vicar general that I would be going to Rome toward the end of the month, the Pope answered: “Oh, well, if you assure me of this, then don’t write.”

What do you think, dear friend? Would he dare invite a bishop to travel to Rome just to tell him that the *non expedit* remains in force? Or perhaps the Pope wants to change direction and desires some clarifications? My common sense inclines me to the second alternative. But my experience with, and concrete knowledge of, the present cast of characters and of the current situation do not leave me too hopeful.

I will bring along two thick volumes of documents, a veritable arsenal of powerful weapons. But, if after this gigantic effort to bring order to the various religious, political, and philosophical questions -- I want to discuss all of them with the Holy Father -- I don’t get anywhere, which is quite probable, I will weep over the evils afflicting the Church and dedicate myself completely to prayer and my sacred ministry, doing by myself what I think

⁶¹ Id., Feb. 1, 1883 (ibid., p. 95).

⁶² Letter to G. Alessi, September 1891 (AGS 3022/12). Mons. Giuseppe Alessi, founder of the School of the Science of Religion for the university students of Padova, had been opposed by the “intransigents” but had the support of the Bishop of Padova.

best for the good of souls. I won't concern myself about anything except to prepare myself for death, fighting bravely the known enemies of peace, love, and religion.⁶³

"Ideas advance; let them advance"

You come out with certain monkish ideas.... I know you are kidding!

The cells of Egypt...? Not at all! Let those who have brought harm to so many souls go and bury themselves there, not a bishop like you who has spoken, written, and done so much to prevent it. Come, come! God has placed you on the battlefield and you must stay there, even if enemy bullets are coming at you from all directions. You are a glorious wounded soldier. Besides, ideas advance. They are ideas of truth, love, and peace. Step back and let them advance. Victory is inevitable, and you will be able to say that you opened the road for it.⁶⁴

c) "DEDICATED WITHOUT MEASURE AND FREE WITHOUT MEASURE"

"The intolerant factions are the dreadful scourge of the Church"

I fully share your fears regarding the effects of a condemnation of Rosmini. Though not a Rosminian, I now fear a condemnation with great anxiety. If it happens, we will have many secret apostates and many public rebels.

Rosmini will truly become an extension of Jansen, and the turmoil visited on the Church by the followers of the latter will be renewed with greater force by the followers of Rosmini. I am convinced this is entirely the work of a certain faction -- and unfortunately some have played into their hands -- a faction that is hoodwinking the Pope in this matter that has nothing to do with either faith or morals. I feel we must oppose these people (...). The Church is threatened by a great misfortune. The extremist, intolerant factions are the most dreadful scourge of the Church. Every day I pray and impose on myself certain penances, begging God to send us another St. Francis De Sales, who will put a stop to this unfortunate philosophical question, just as he did with the fiery question *De Auxiliis*.

More than two hundred of my priests studied Rosmini. In anticipation of an eventual condemnation, my concern over the last few years was to win their trust and to prepare them for submission, whenever the Pope should make his decision, while allowing them, in the meantime, the liberty granted by the Church. With the help of God, I believe I have succeeded. Moglia, who is the head of the Rosminians, has reassured me many times about himself, as well as about all the others. But this is not the case everywhere. Last autumn, when I was visiting in Como, I heard some very discouraging news in this regard,

⁶³ Letter to G. Bonomelli, Sept. 19, 1882 (Carteggio S.B., p. 71).

⁶⁴ Id., June 6, 1889 (ibid., p. 255).

especially about certain dioceses where things were rashly pushed to excess, in line with the thinking of the newspaper that pretends to be the guiding light of all minds. Enough! We will talk about this to see what approach to adopt with the Holy Father. Meanwhile I have written to several Rosminians reproving them for the excessive boldness of recent pamphlets.⁶⁵

“A time to speak and a time to keep silent”

We must not confuse cowardice with prudence. There is a time to keep silent, and I kept silent for six years. But there is also a time to speak and I have spoken, as my sense of duty dictated. Please assure the Holy Father, Monsignor, that the results of this decision were more widespread and salutary than one would have expected, both in my diocese and elsewhere. The disheartening silence of the whole episcopate -- whether intimidated or misled -- in the face of the continuous attacks of certain newspapers putting on airs of deep respect for the episcopate itself and especially for Holy See was looked upon by serious and well-meaning people as a sign of extreme weakness and of collusion with the ensuing disorders. Somebody had to raise his voice; and, by force of circumstance, I happened to be that person.

And here, Monsignor, I want to point something out. Some people were bent on turning a very simple and private matter into a Rosminian question. This is the secret of all the ruckus they wanted to stir up. But there is nothing more false. I tell you frankly: I don't follow the philosophical system of Rosmini. If his system were true, I would be loudly proclaiming the opposite. My few writings and the decisions I took regarding education in my diocese a long time before the appearance of that marvelous encyclical, *Aeterni Patris*, speak all too eloquently. I confess, however, that I esteem, respect, and love in the charity of Jesus Christ all people of good will who work with pure intention for the holy cause of God and the Church, whatever their opinions, as long as the Church has left them open for discussion.

I am more than ever convinced that many noble and sincere people -- quietly weeping under the accusation of being enemies of that Church for whose defense they would give their last drop of blood -- that many beautiful minds -- which bring honor to the clergy and to the Catholic laity -- would break their pens at once and give an edifying and marvelous example of gracious submission to the Holy Father's final decision but would refuse to submit, and rightly so, to the false authorities who with incredible audacity try to impose themselves on others.

At least regarding the priests of my diocese I don't have the slightest doubt. But I ask, why do people want to make the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ tyrannical? Why shouldn't we allow learned people the honorable freedom allowed them by the Church, which has always been its jealous guardian?

⁶⁵ Id., March 28, 1882 (ibid., pp. 52-53). The “newspaper” was *L'Osservatore Cattolico* (see Biografia, pp. 704-711. “Dedicated without measure and free without measure”: this is how Antonio Fogazzaro defined Bishop Scalabrini.

A calm, serious, and dignified discussion that safeguards charity, notwithstanding the clash of different opinions, this is what we should aim at. Isn't this what the Roman Pontiffs have always recommended, something our glorious Holy Father himself has done in his brilliant Brief to the Archbishop of Malines? Oh, how I wish he were listened to!

But, unfortunately, we are living in times when brazen and shrewd individuals have learned how to get impunity by yelling at the top of their lungs against writers and people they believe the Supreme Pontiff views with suspicion. These individuals openly boast of forwarding their insinuations and demands to the Pope through a well-known religious. This paralyzes the bishops because they cannot make public the reasons for measures taken against certain people who shrewdly cover themselves with the mantle of Thomism, and who, the more insolent and arrogant they are, the more they claim protection (...).

This is why I had intended to publish a little book entitled *Revolution in the Church*. The idea is very simple. Revolution is essentially destructive and has already destroyed everything in the civil order with its wiles, starting with the principle of authority. If we look closely, we see that the same thing is happening in the Church at the hands of a certain faction, which, resorting to the same wiles, sometimes with even greater cunning, has taken it upon itself to viciously vilify individuals and communities, prelates and bishops, depending on what is more or less suitable for its purpose, namely personal interest. It hurts me to think that not even the Holy Father was spared when he indicated he had no intention of playing favorites (...).

More and more I admire the provisions the Pope took with regard to the *Osservatore* of Milan. I am sure they would have met with everyone's approval to the great benefit of the Holy See. But who ever heard of them? Surely none of those who could most profitably learn from them! This is so true that people still think or are made to believe -- I don't know why -- that I and others have been dealt the harshest reprimands from Rome, with me practically excommunicated! With what harm to the episcopal dignity and my sacred ministry, I leave it to your imagination, dear Monsignor.

It was for this precise reason that I candidly asked the Holy Father in his kindness to give me at least a word of encouragement. He has not deemed it proper to give it to me, at least not so far. I adore the judgments of God and will go ahead "in good fame and in bad," seeking to save my soul and the souls of the flock entrusted to me.

I beg you, Monsignor, to let the Holy Father know how I feel, since I don't want to hide anything from him, not even the most intimate secrets of my heart, as behooves children. In this way, if I make a mistake, he can correct me and I will always accept his corrections with the same joy and gratitude with which I would accept his commendations, because he is my shepherd, my Father, and I am his most devoted son.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Letter to Mons. G. Boccali, Nov. 29, 1881 (ibid., pp. 41-43). Scalabrini is explaining to the private secretary of Leo XIII the reason why he had to publicly protest against the interference of the *Osservatore Cattolico* in the internal affairs of his diocese (see Biografia, pp. 496-531). The "well-know religious" seems to have been the Rev. G. M. Cornoldi, S.J.

“Freedom in philosophical matters”

You want to know the truth from me about rumors on what the Holy Father personally is supposed to have told me concerning the question of Rosmini’s philosophy. I am here to satisfy you. I am guided always and in everything I do, not by what I read in the newspapers, not even Catholic ones, but by him who alone has the authority to regulate in one way or another the discipline of the universal Church. Therefore, also regarding freedom in matters of philosophy, I wished to pose the question personally to the Supreme Pontiff. “Holy Father,” I said, “there are many in my diocese who follow Antonio Rosmini’s philosophical system, of whom the most notable is the Provost of St. Anne’s, Father A. Moglia. A student of that system for years, he supports and defends it vigorously also in his published writings. According to some people -- ever quick to play the teachers and pass judgment in your name on everyone and everything -- the supporters of Rosmini and his system should be considered nothing more than rebels against your teachings; and, as bishop, I should not only forbid all discussion of the subject but also have recourse to censures...”

“Oh no!” the Holy Father answered in that grave manner of his, so full of kindness. “No, dear Bishop! Tell your priests that I never intended to take away anyone’s freedom to discuss arguable teachings. Also with regard to Rosmini, his supporters may certainly continue their debates in all good conscience provided, of course, they always observe the rules of moderation and charity which I have often recommended and are disposed to submit to whatever decision this Holy See may deem proper to issue in this regard.” These are his exact words. I asked permission to divulge them if and when the occasion arises, and I received permission to do so. I wrote them down immediately so as not to forget, change, augment, tone down, or otherwise alter them in any way whatsoever.⁶⁷

“It is not right to anticipate the judgments of the Church”

While the Roman Pontiff was urging that the teachings of St. Thomas be presented and recommended as the best suited for the defense of the true faith and religion against the rampant pronouncements of unorthodox teachings, he also demanded that the faithful be protected against teachings that, drawn from impure sources, could prevent the attainment of the desired goal, especially when a person, illustrious for integrity of life and brilliance of intellect, was conferring on these teachings a certain authority. In fact, Antonio Rosmini’s renown is great. But, in some way, he is a prisoner of the defects of his times.

No one should be surprised that a man outstanding for learning and piety could have taught certain doctrines that, in the judgment of the Church, are at variance with the analogy of the faith. No one should be surprised that many could have followed this doctrine, as long as the Church permitted it. That people gravitate around an illustrious person is something

⁶⁷ Letter to V. Papa, January 1886 (AGS 3043/1). The Rev. Vincenzo Papa was director of the Rosminian review, *La Sapienza*.

that happens by the Providence of God and because of human nature. For this reason a legislator is needed, according to the dictum: “Grant, O Lord, a legislator over them, so that they remember they are human beings.”

All teachers are flags around which the lesser folk in need of a flag rally. Hence, in the Church there is the tradition of allowing anyone to follow without criticism the ideas of modern teachers until the Church makes a pronouncement.

Others with different ideas are likewise permitted to follow the path of their ancestors and to champion, within the limits of moderation, the opposite teaching, to draw conclusions from logical reasoning, and to refute and reject the new teachers. But no one was ever allowed to call an adversary a perverter of the truth or to defame him. Indeed, it is not right to anticipate the judgments of the Church. One must presume that both those in favor and those against a teaching are acting in good faith and with the right intentions.

But no person of good sense rallies around a particular flag without implicit dependence on the Holy See, the only banner raised by God, to which all the faithful, especially priests, must always and in all things say: “I never went astray by following your teachings.”

Now, when the Church speaks and says that a certain doctrine is not safe, her children may no longer follow it but must accept the judgment of the Church without reservation.⁶⁸

“I have always left them the freedom of thought permitted by the Church”

Veni, vidi.... I wish I could add the rest! I asked Professor Stoppani to come and see me. I tried to attack him on all fronts and with all possible ammunition, but to no avail. Truly the arguments he set forth were such and so many that I confess I would not know how we could reasonably not take them into account.

Among other things, he told me that, since the periodical “Rosmini” does not belong to him, he has no authority to suspend its publication. He said that the founders and collaborators of the periodical are mostly believing lay people from all the cities and main universities of Italy, united in the goal of Christianizing science and defending religion from the attacks of modern rationalism. He thought that even if all the ecclesiastics were to pull out, these people would not necessarily put an end to an effort they believe is, in our day, more than ever useful, necessary, and supremely important. Stoppani added that, enjoying as he did a certain influence over them, he felt he should accept, as in fact he did, their invitation to work with them, in the interest of tempering their discussions and keeping them within proper limits. In fact, he succeeded in preventing the publication of a violent article against a Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of Concordia. He stated that, since Leo XIII had more than once declared publicly and privately that, even regarding philosophical questions, he had never intended to prevent dispassionate discussion among intellectuals, the latter cannot

⁶⁸ *Universo Nostro Clero*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 1-2 (translated from Latin). The circular letter was written to communicate the Decree *Post obitum*, which condemned forty propositions taken from the posthumous works of Rosmini.

believe that now the Pope would be offended by the appearance of a periodical that in fact aims to do just that. Finally, he said that in no way can they permit a newspaper -- flaunting itself as the faithful mouthpiece of the Holy See -- to continue freely to slander them as rebels to the Supreme Head of the Church or as liberals, traitors, and worse.

Others have assured me that, if this dirty game continues, they have every intention of denouncing this naked villainy before the Catholic world and publishing a solemn protest in this regard.

As you see, Your Eminence, things are in such bad shape that it is hard to put a remedy to them. Let's face it: there were exaggerations on both sides, and now we are beginning to see the consequences. God protect us from worse things! Personally, even as a result of my conversation with Stoppani, I have a feeling that, if something is not done, there will be serious problems for the future of the Church.

Not that Stoppani showed himself disrespectful or unpriestly. On the contrary. But the fact is that I sensed such a bad mood in him, such unrest, that I am really worried.

As for the Rosminian priests in my diocese, we get along in perfect tranquillity. They know I do not share their views in philosophical matters, but they also know that I have always left them the freedom of thought permitted by the Church and want it always to be respected. This is enough for them to bow respectfully to the least of my desires as just happened, for example, in the case of the periodical in question. They have all promised they would not contribute a syllable to it (...). In any case, I shall do whatever you, in the name of the Holy Father, will tell me. I am sure no one wants to push the bishops from the wise, moderate line that has been and always will be one of the finest qualities of the Church.⁶⁹

"Maybe we bishops, too, have restricted the liberty of individuals too much"

The period we are going through is much worse than it seems.

Among the priests something unhealthy is brewing, not too well defined as yet. For the moment only the more daring are coming out into the open with bursts of unbelievable transgressions. Maybe we bishops, too, have restricted the liberty of individuals excessively. Our strict, punctilious discipline has by now lost the sense of austere grandeur it once had and, as a result, the prestige it used to have. Maybe we wanted all of them to be perfect, but the perfect is the enemy of the good. We wanted everybody to be perfect but not everybody has the gifts to be perfect.

Though highly valuable, philosophy and Catholic social action served as a cloak for some, as a shield for others, and as a means for self-advancement for many. These are serious

⁶⁹ Letter to Card. P.M. Schiaffino, Nov. 29, 1886 (AGS 3026/4).

questions about which one could write a book. I often think of them in governing my diocese.

But, unfortunately, those who should do something about all this have learned nothing, forgotten nothing, and forgiven nothing. May God spare us. This is really the time to pray much and be prepared for anything.

As for me, I have resolved to think only of my diocese, of the Missions, and of my friends, who are daily decreasing in number. I don't care to make new ones. If I could only sanctify myself, become a saint! "This is the ideal man."

How lucky you are: you've always been one. I am trying to be one. But I'm afraid I'll never catch up to you, noall this matter how fast I run.⁷⁰

"I was able to sacrifice my convictions"

For me, reverence and respect for the Holy Father was not bravado or hypocrisy but the basic guide of my activity.

In debatable questions, left to free discussion, I followed rational solutions, those that best served the religious and public good of the people. My special badge of honor has been to follow the guidelines which the Pope, in his wisdom and with the special assistance promised him by Christ, deems most useful for the good of the Church. Whenever I understood that some particular opinion of mine did not meet the approval of ecclesiastical authority, I was able to sacrifice my convictions precisely in homage to this authority and in accordance with my principles.⁷¹

"They indeed demanded of me a heroic sacrifice"

And now, Your Eminence, just a word about the war that has been waged against me (...). In all innocence and for the sheer love of good, we do what we are permitted or encouraged to do. But then the powers-that-be not only abandon the poor vanguards but even join the enemy in beating them up, in crushing them if it were possible. And goodbye Jack! What do you say about this, Your Eminence? Personally, I wasn't surprised or amazed by the intrigue, the tricks, the slander coming from that well-known faction; nor was I at all saddened by all this because it was to be expected. But I complained strongly, even to the Holy Father, that those people received a hearing in the very place where they should instead have met the scorn they deserve. I wanted to defend myself and so wrote the brief pastoral letter I have enclosed. I sent it to the Holy Father, who, from the red markings, must have given it to who knows whom and then sent it back to me with the request not to publish it.

⁷⁰ Letter to G. Bonomelli, Jan. 24, 1897 (Carteggio S.B., p. 338).

⁷¹ *Intransigenti e transigenti*, Bologna 1885, pp. 30-31. The "particular opinion" was that of the advisability of permitting Italian Catholics to vote in the political elections.

He really demanded a heroic sacrifice of me, which, I confess, I accepted solely out of love for God.⁷²

“God only knows what I wouldn’t do to draw you closer to your bishop”

You can’t imagine how much your situation saddens me. God only knows what I wouldn’t do to draw you closer to your bishop. I can only give you this advice: go to him and he’ll receive you with open arms. Put yourself into his hands. The rest will take care of itself later on without any problem. I believe he wants your good, the good of his diocese -- divided and split by the dissension between you and the bishop -- and the good of the Church. Be strong. At the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament let bygones be bygones. Prostrate yourself before the tabernacle. I am convinced that from that source you will draw the light confirming the advice I have just given you.⁷³

d) FRIENDSHIP

“Everything mine is yours”

The air, the quiet, the view, the relaxed and carefree walks will do good to me and to you as well. So, come on! Don’t let obstacles discourage you: “Everything mine is yours.” You know that I love you not only as a fellow bishop but also as a most loving brother.⁷⁴

I don’t know how your beautiful and impassioned letter from Milan found its way into a bunch of papers I gave the Pope. He read everything, including your letter, which, though quite strong, did not make an unpleasant impression on him. In my second audience with him, he spoke of my papers and of your letter. And since I was afraid that some expression might have hurt him, I spoke up and said: “Holy Father! In Bishop Bonomelli you have a bishop who is not only truly learned and zealous, totally consecrated to the good of religion, but a most devoted and loving son as well, who talks frankly when he sees the truth, but always with the deepest respect and reverence for you...”

“Oh, yes,” he interrupted, “I know the good Bishop Bonomelli well!” And here he paused to praise your piety and learning, your zeal, etc., etc. You can well imagine how happy all this made me.⁷⁵

⁷² Letter to Cardinal P. M. Schiaffini, Jan. 21, 1887 (AGS 3020/4). Scalabrini would have wanted to defend himself publicly against public accusations that he had disobeyed the *non expedit* (see Biografia, pp. 666-676).

⁷³ Letter to C. Crosta, 1902 (ags 3045/4). Rev. Clino Crosta from Como had been a pupil of Scalabrini and was author of a widely circulated manual of dogmatic theology.

⁷⁴ Letter to G. Bonomelli, June 19, 1882 (Carteggio S.B., p. 59).

⁷⁵ Id., Oct. 9, 1882 (ibid., p. 76).

I didn't want to write to you during these days out of respect for your filial sorrow, which I felt in my heart of hearts as if my own father had died. Whatever concerns you affects me very dearly. When I celebrate Holy Mass for the repose of your deceased father, whom I remember every day at the altar, I never forget to pray for you. Please do the same for poor little me because I need God's help so much.⁷⁶

During these past two years we have written each other so many letters that we don't know what else to say. Do you know how many of your letters I have? Sixty-two, yes 62, one more beautiful than the other and coordinated like the pipes of a somewhat monotonous organ, to be honest with you, because we are always playing the same tune.⁷⁷

The fire of our friendship is so great that "rivers will not quench it." The wood feeding the fire has been accumulated during these past years in such quantity and is of such quality that, at least for a century, it will suffice to send forth the most beautiful flame in the world. However, you do well to wake me up since, to be honest with you, I treat my friends very, very haphazardly. Sometimes I feel a little remorse over this. Once in a while my secretary will ask: did you write to Cremona? Oh, yes, I should write. I will write to him. In the meantime, the days, the weeks and the months slip away.... So bear with me. So, when I don't write, tell yourself, without fear of error: that poor soul in Piacenza is ravaged by the fever of activity. So I may as well forgive him his seeming indifference to his dearest friend.⁷⁸

I'm writing you a note to wish you a most blessed Yuletide, full of the choicest blessings. For a lot of people best wishes are a compliment, an act of propriety. But my wishes to you are a need of my heart, an expression of great esteem, of deep and reverent friendship, of abiding unity.⁷⁹

Think of all that is beautiful, good, tender, sincere, etc., and see in all this an expression of my feelings for you.

May God be at your side, assist you, bless you, and fulfill your desires, which are also mine.⁸⁰

Be at peace. The period that is beginning will be painful, yes, but full of light. Let us allow divine Providence to act. Personally, I don't have to tell you that for you I would do what I

⁷⁶ Id., April 25, 1883 (ibid., p. 123).

⁷⁷ Id., Sept. 17, 1883 (ibid, p. 136).

⁷⁸ Id., Nov. 27, 1883 (ibid., p. 139).

⁷⁹ Id., Dec. 21, 1883 (ibid., pp. 140-141).

⁸⁰ Id., Sept. 19, 1887 (ibid., p. 223).

wouldn't do for myself. Of course, your inner anxiety -- which is quite natural in such circumstances -- torments you. But remember one thing: justice and truth, above all!⁸¹

The first and the best wishes of my heart for a blessed Christmas season go to you who are *dimidium animae meae* (the other half of my soul). Our hearts are united by mysterious bonds. Even though far apart, our hearts speak to each other and always understand each other.

You must have already realized how grateful I am to you for the gift of your precious little book. My health? I feel very, very good. I got well as if by magic and have gone back to my routine. But I'll have to remember the recommendations of my friends, yours above all.

The Lord grant you robust health, a very long life, all the fondest desires of your heart, and diplomatic successes of the highest order and in the greatest quantity.⁸²

Contributing, albeit meagerly, to the splendid celebration of your jubilee was for me one of the greatest satisfactions of my life. But this time you wanted to act like a prince by giving me a truly magnificent gift. It is doubly dear to me because it is your gift, as well as a remembrance of one of the most beautiful days in your life and in mine as well. I thank you for your gift from the bottom of my heart.⁸³

If last year at this time, as you gently remind me, I was all for you, you can rest assured that I am all for you now and will be so in the future, even when I don't appreciate certain everyday lapses of yours.⁸⁴

"Hearts do not know distances"

Very well: "Let us give and receive forgiveness from one another." But not even this is fair because I, not you, need an excuse for not having thanked you yet -- as I am doing now from the bottom of my heart -- for your gift and best wishes on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of my episcopal consecration.

I say "an excuse" because, among people who are united in the love of Jesus Christ as we are, many things must be understood and taken for granted. I do this very easily. You too

⁸¹ April 17, 1890 (ibid., p. 267).

⁸² Id., Christmas 1892 (ibid., p. 336). A diplomatic mission to Central America was being considered for Bonomelli.

⁸³ Id., Dec. 3, 1896 (ibid., p. 336).

⁸⁴ Id., June 21, 1900 (ibid., p. 361). The "everyday lapses" refer to the foundation of the Bonomelli Institute for the emigrants in Europe. Scalabrini did not believe it should have been controlled by lay people, especially since they were liberal sympathizers (see *Biografia*, pp. 779-783).

should do the same. Hearts do not know spatial distances and do not need letters all that much because, even without them, they speak to each other, understand each other, and help each other.⁸⁵

e) LOVE OF BEAUTY

“Precious works of art should be protected”

In our diocese there are churches and oratories of ancient and priceless construction; pictures, paintings, magnificent frescoes; precious monuments that should have been kept with utmost care. Instead they suffered serious damage either because the needed repairs were not done or because additions and restorations were carried out by inexperienced people.

To prevent further damage to such buildings, I urge the Pastors and the Church Vestries to do everything necessary for their proper upkeep. Furthermore, I hereby direct that the bishop's permission be obtained from now on before they undertake major changes in them. The bishop, in turn, will not grant permission before consulting art experts to ascertain that the new work will not damage the architectural style of the church nor the precious paintings it may contain.

We must also remind them that works of art in churches or ecclesiastical institutions, together with the sacred furnishings, belong to their respective patrimonies. Hence no one may lawfully sell or alienate these objects without first getting special permission from the bishop, under pain of ecclesiastical censure.

I therefore strongly urge those in charge to ensure that precious works of art are kept with utmost care. Furthermore, I strictly forbid them, for whatever reason, to alienate or move elsewhere these glorious testimonials of the faith and of the greatness of our forefathers and mothers.⁸⁶

“For the greater honor and glory of religion but also of art”

The feast of my glorious predecessor, Savino, (...) gives me a beautiful opportunity to call your attention, Very Reverend Provost, to the illustrious but deteriorating crypt of your church, in hopes that, in your zeal, you can manage to restore it to public worship and thus

⁸⁵ Letter to L. Cornaggia Medici, Feb. 21, 1901 (Archivio Liberiano di Roma). Mon. Luigi Cornaggia Medici, a friend of Scalabrini even before becoming a priest, wrote, among other things, *Antesignani della Conciliazione*, Fidenza 1936. He was a canon of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome.

⁸⁶ Circular letter of March 22, 1879, pp. 1-3.

bring glory not only to religion but also to art, of which this crypt is a most precious monument.

This crypt is a most precious monument, worth opening up once again to the public or at least saving from the complete deterioration threatening it. As you can see, it is necessary to protect it from humidity, bring back air and light, and keep the tiny stones of the famous mosaic in the pavement from getting loose any further (...).

Frankly, dear Provost, I have no words to express my keen interest in this Basilica of yours.

A few months ago, God gladdened us by letting us find the venerable bones of St. Savino, surrounded by the small and very ancient urns containing the relics of martyrs and Apostles, for which St. Savino himself erected the so-called Basilica of the Apostles at Le Mose. When I also found in the very tomb of the holy Bishop the little vase with the inscription, *de sanguine Sancti Antonini Martyris* (from the blood of St. Antoninus Martyr), I was overwhelmed with a mysterious and heavenly sense of wonder and joy (...). What a beautiful and propitious opportunity we have to restore to public worship the crypt where our glorious Patron lay for many centuries, surrounded by so many treasures.

I am sure, dear Provost, that in a city as refined, cultured, and interested in the things of our ancestors as ours, you will not lack the support, advice, and help you need, especially from those who have the noble task of watching over the preservation of public monuments.

I will be frank with you. It would be a real disgrace for us and for everyone to let this precious jewel of ours deteriorate, a jewel tied up with the memories so dear to religion and country.⁸⁷

“The Cathedral is the house of God and everybody’s house”

The Cathedral is the house of God and everybody’s house. It is the boast and glory of our city, as it was the boast and glory of our ancestors. After resolving, in a sublime outburst of faith and civic pride, to build it, they spent treasures to put it up, to preserve and beautify it, though not always guided, as it were, by the same rigorous artistic taste that had envisioned it.

The Cathedral is the compendium of our history. From here the banners of our free city went forth. Victors or vanquished, they returned to thank God for victories or to draw new energies in misfortune. Here the bishops rose up as defenders and protectors of the rights of all. Here, for nine centuries, the people of the city and countryside of Piacenza have been listening to the word of their Shepherds and receiving their blessing. Here, more often and solemnly than elsewhere, the songs of exultation and the prayers of expiation rose up to God. Here among its arches and columns, we all feel doubly brothers and sisters, as if enfolded in the arms of one’s mother.

⁸⁷ Letter to the Provost of St. Savino, Jan. 17, 1881, published in the newspapers.

I cannot imagine an Italian city without its cathedral or, worse still, a city that, having a beautiful and majestic one, should let it fall into neglect, the slow but sure prey to the ravages of time. It would mean that either the city never really had a history that counted for much or that every spark of the religious and civic fire that inflamed the hearts of their forefathers and mothers is extinguished.

No one can impute either alternative to Piacenza. Her history is noble and ancient. Her love for art and her ancestral memories are forever engraved in her monuments and in the many precious writings of the Piacentini who so brilliantly illustrated them.⁸⁸

“Art, the daughter of nature, is the granddaughter of God”

You decided with me to hold this exhibit in this magnificent church, as if to assert that art is at home in a sacred place, where it was born and grew up.

While religion is God’s favored daughter, art is also intimately bound to him. In Dante Alighieri’s beautiful words: since art is the daughter of nature, she is the granddaughter of God. This is the profound reason why a work that reaches the highest ideals of art is ordinarily called divine. Art that does not radiate the light of God is not art. It does not mirror the beautiful, which is the splendor of truth.

This is what Dante Alighieri thought when he wrote with a divine mind: “It is not light if it does not come from the brightness that never dims.” Raffaello Sanzio, in a moment of sublime inspiration, painted at the feet of the marvelous *Madonna di San Sisto* (no longer ours unfortunately) that little angel who leans out from a little cloud -- like a child looking up from a balcony -- and, with that gorgeous uplifted face, stands motionless in the thoughtful contemplation of the heavens.

That stupendous creation in a marvelous way intimates the truth I am happy to remind you of on this joyous occasion, namely, that, to be real art, art must keep its eye always on the sun of eternal and infinite beauty. Like that little angel, art leans on matter it has first purified and softened almost like a white puff of cloud and looks up with rapture to the heavens. And to the heavens it raises the thoughts and sentiments of men and women. Art is thus the teacher of virtue, the powerful patron of civilization and order, the inspirer of pure and gentle morals, an angel who sees souls on the paths of beauty drinking from the fountain of the purest and sublimest ideals.⁸⁹

“The imprint of God”

⁸⁸ *Pel nostro Duomo*, Piacenza 1894, pp. 4-5. The restoration of the Cathedral of Piacenza was carried out during the years 1897-1902.

⁸⁹ Discourse for the inauguration of the Exposition of Sacred Art, Sept. 6, 1902. *La Madonna di Raffaello*, removed from the Basilica of San Sisto in Piacenza, is now in the art gallery of Dresden.

Mothers, let us speak to our children by taking our cue from everything that could make an impression on them.

Let us speak to our children of God in the contemplative silence of a clear night, in the midst of the claps of thunder, and on the solitary shores of the ocean.

Let us speak to them of God when at the end of an autumn day we perceive through the mists, as if through a fine veil, the hills and woods and valleys and everything else taking on different colors and shapes as they shimmer in the melancholy light of the evening.

When in the evening the pealing of bells, the distant sound of cascading waters, and the italyrustling of leaves gently lull them into melancholy, let us talk to them of God.

When we see their hearts being moved and touched by the marvels of art, by the melody of music, by hearing about some glorious feat or some example of virtue, oh, let us never stop talking about God to them!

Let us show them the imprint of God's goodness, grandeur and omnipotence in all things. From the harmony that joins and binds together different parts of the universe, let us help them understand the obligation human beings have to live in harmony with the purpose for which they have been created (...).

But remember that in Christianity true worship is not limited to a vague feeling but is manifested and nourished through external practices.

You must walk before your children by way of example in the performance of all kinds of good works.⁹⁰

"Music is a divine art"

Man is not the only creature authorized to teach others about God! Rather, everything that in this universe moves, is seen, is touched or heard has the divine and supernatural mission to lift us to the knowledge and love of heavenly things. This is what made St. Leo exclaim: What is there in the world that does not serve as an instrument of Eternal Truth? *Quid est, per quod Veritas nobis non loquitur?*

The fine arts -- the creation and work of human genius -- reveal to us even more the Eternal Beauty from which artists draw their ideals and achieve their triumphs. But it is music -- more than all the other arts -- that Christianity ennobled and turned into a powerful lever with which to lift pious souls to God, transporting them to the regions of the infinite.

Music is a divine art because God himself is an eternal shared melody of the three Persons of the adorable Trinity. Every note, every musical chord is an echo of the cosmic harmony

⁹⁰ *Educazione cristiana*, Piacenza 1889, pp. 31-35.

which has its source in the heavens and in eternity. Music gathers people's raptures, sighs, aspirations, joys and sorrows and explains them, interprets them, makes them tangible, and transforms them into an ethereal form. In the purest and most ineffable language, music sums up the ecstasies of victory and the shame of defeat, the explosions of anger and the tenderness of love, the tears of the desolate and the exultation of the blissful, the sadness of life and the cries of the abandoned.⁹¹

"Living the lives of the saints symphonically"

Look at this organ. It is an image of the Christian life as God intended it. In the organ there are thousands of different sounds: every pipe has its own shape, every reed its own tone, every opening its own size, every playful movement its own variations. When everything is moved by an intelligent principle, magnificent harmonies come forth.

In the same way, all of us have our own vocation, our own personality, our own duties. If we fulfill them according to God's will, all our works will produce a celestial harmony that will gladden us with blessings from above.

The whole universe invites us to this. The universe is an infinite harmony, a concert; and it will remain so even when we will be in the blessed peace of eternity. May our soul be a living harmony, harmony with God, with our brothers and sisters, and with ourselves. In this way, we live like the saints: *symphonialiter* (symphonically).

Jesus Christ is acclaimed as the Father's supreme art, the font and source of all harmony. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that I bless this new musical instrument. It is my prayer that just as we shall, in a moment, hear its melodies in the earthly Jerusalem here below, so also we shall all be admitted to the eternal melodies and harmonies of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁹²

"May our soul be a symphony"

We have just heard magnificent poems and even more magnificent music. Well, then, may the flowers of poetry turn for all of us into ever more copious fruits of good works. May our soul always be full of the harmony that comes down from heaven. May our soul, in the words of a Church Father, be *symphonialis* (a symphony). May our whole life be like music, a hymn of glory to the Most High.⁹³

"Let the people do the largest share of the singing"

⁹¹ Address on the occasion of the inauguration of the pulpit and organ of the Cathedral, Dec. 4, 1901 (AGS 8/8).

⁹² For the blessing of an organ (AGS 3018/10).

⁹³ At a performance for his episcopal jubilee, 1901 (AGS 3018/13).

Let the people do as much of the singing as the Church not only permits but also encourages them to do. Let them, oh let them, in this way, manifest and give free expression to their piety and faith. In song let them find solace and relief for their anxieties in the midst of life's miseries! What more spontaneous, more powerful, more sublime song is there than the unisonant song of a whole multitude of people gathered together in the same place, filled with the same spirit, taking part in the same divine mysteries?

I will exclaim with a saintly soul: our splendid cathedrals, our humblest parish churches, where Jesus resides in the Blessed Sacrament, call for the ancient songs, the songs of faith sung by a thousand voices. The people of our time need to abandon the phony bedlam, the drunken and seditious ruckus taking place on Sundays, and get back to the quiet, consoling, and pure chant of the Church. People feel the need to be taught to praise God and be told the sublime meaning of the songs composed for them. They need to be taught the sweet melodies of the Church so they can take part in the honor and adoration owed Jesus ever present in the Tabernacle for love of his people (...).

Then the churches will not be deserted, and the religious and solemn functions will not be shunned. Boys and girls will quickly learn church songs and, with them, the purpose of the rites and the meaning of the Church's hymns. Then major expenses will not be needed for a music too often unending and not too devotional. Then, as they do in various parishes and cathedrals of France and even of Italy, all, with no exceptions -- men and women, public officials, patricians, soldiers, boys and girls -- each one possibly with his or her own book in hand, all united in one single choir will alternate praises, blessings, prayers, and adoration to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament with the ministers of the altar, singing songs approved by the Church, adapted to different moods, and learned by the children in parish schools of music. These songs belong to the heritage of sweet, gentle, and beloved traditions that make nations great and blessed.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Circular letter of Feb. 7, 1898, pp. 21-22.

PART FIVE

MAN OF THE MIGRANTS AND FOR THE MIGRANTS

Bishop Scalabrini faces the dramatic problem of mass emigration that had exploded in Italy at the beginning of his episcopate with the heart of the shepherd who sees his flock being dispersed and feels the need to fulfill the mission of the Church, sent to gather into one the dispersed children of God.

The Apostle to the Emigrants studies the phenomenon of emigration in all its aspects: its magnitude, its causes, its human, social and religious consequences. While denouncing injustice and oppression, he nevertheless is also able to discern God's plan in all this. And so he discovers the Church's mission to the emigrants and the best way to fulfill her mission of evangelization and human development on their behalf.

He takes it upon himself to give a concrete answer to the needs of the migrants by founding two missionary Congregations for persons dedicated to the mission by religious consecration, namely, a Congregation for men and another one for women.

The evangelizing mission is rounded out by the work of protection and human development entrusted to lay people, especially to the St. Raphael Society

1. EMIGRATION SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF SCALABRINI

The sight of departing emigrants at the Milan railroad station and the pleas of his diocesan people emigrated to America challenge the apostolic heart of the Bishop of Piacenza. Emigration is one of the most important and significant events of contemporary Italian life. The numbers of people involved are enormous, and there is a permanency to the phenomenon because of inescapable financial needs.

A need presupposes a right, and this right cannot be denied by the State or by centers of power. On the contrary, they must ensure freedom of emigration, but not the freedom "to make people emigrate" -- which brings about speculation and exploitation.

Emigrants, unaccompanied and unprotected, are exposed to "infinite evils, both material and moral" and become "an easy prey to speculation." Abandoned to themselves, they risk losing their cultural and religious identity.

Instead, if emigration is well guided and assisted, it can become "an instrument of that divine Providence that presides over human destiny and, even through catastrophes, guides it toward the goal, which is the perfection of man on earth and the glory of God in heaven." In the plan of divine Providence, in fact, emigration is destined to develop "the unity of all people of good will in God through Jesus Christ."

a) THE MAGNITUDE AND THE CAUSES

"They were emigrants"

Quite a few years ago, in Milan, I witnessed a scene that left me with profound sadness.

As I walked through the station, I saw the vast waiting room, the side porticoes, and the adjacent piazza filled with three or four hundred poorly clad people, separated into different groups. Their faces, bronzed by the sun and furrowed by the premature wrinkles of deprivation, reflected the inner turmoil convulsing their hearts at that moment. There were old men bent with age and labor, young men in the prime of manhood, women pulling along or carrying their little ones, boys and girls, all drawn together by the same desire, all heading toward a common goal.

They were emigrants. They had come from the various provinces of Northern Italy and were waiting with trepidation for the train that would take them to the shores of the Mediterranean, whence the steamer would carry them to far-off America, where they hoped to find a less hostile fate, a land less unresponsive to their labors.

These poor souls were leaving, some sent for by relatives who had preceded them on this voluntary exile; others, without knowing precisely where they were heading, pulled by that powerful instinct that impels birds to migrate. They were going to America where -- they had heard many times -- there was well paid employment for anyone with strong arms and good will.

With tears in their eyes, they had bid farewell to their native village, to which they were bound by so many tender memories. But, without regret, they were preparing to leave their country which they had grown to know only through two despised realities: taxes and the military draft. For a destitute person the place that gives him bread becomes his country. Far, far away, these emigrants hoped to find bread, less scarce but no less hard-earned.

I left there deeply moved. A flood of melancholy thoughts brought a lump to my throat. Who can imagine -- I thought to myself -- the accumulated privations and misfortunes

making such a painful decision seem so sweet to them! How many disappointments does the future hold in store for them, how many new heartaches? How many will succeed in the struggle for survival? How many will succumb in the turmoil of the cities or the solitude of uninhabited plains? Though securing food for the body, how many will be without food for the soul, which is no less necessary than the former, and will lose the faith of their forebears in a materialistic way of life?

Ever since that day, my thoughts have often turned to those unfortunate people. That scene always reminds me of another one, no less desolate, unseen, but discernible in the letters of friends and the reports of travelers. I picture the poor wretches landing in a strange land, among people who speak a language they do not understand, easy victims of inhuman exploitation. I see them moistening with their sweat and tears an unyielding ground that exudes disease-bearing miasmas. I see them, broken by labor, consumed with fever, sighing in vain for the skies of their distant motherland and the age-old poverty of their family home, finally dying without the consolation of their dear ones, without the word of faith to point out to them the reward God has promised to the good and the forlorn. And those who win out in the cruel struggle for survival? Alas! Isolated, as they are, they forget all supernatural notions, all precepts of Christian morality. Day by day, they lose all sense of piety since it is not nourished by pious practices. Instead, they allow brute instincts to replace more noble aspirations.

Faced with this lamentable situation, I have often asked myself: how can it be remedied? Every time I happen to see in the papers some government circular warning the authorities and the public against certain speculators who carry out veritable raids of white slaves, sending them -- unsuspecting instruments of greed -- far away from their country toward a mirage of large and easy profits, and whenever from letters of friends or travelers' accounts I read that Italians are the pariahs among emigrants, that they do the meanest kinds of work -- as if there could be meanness in work -- that our own countrymen are the most abandoned and hence the least respected, that thousands upon thousands of our brothers and sisters live without the protection of their distant motherland, without the comfort of a friendly word, as objects of exploitation often unpunished, then I confess that I, too, blush with shame. I feel humiliated as a priest and as an Italian, and I ask myself again: what can be done for them?

Just a few days ago a distinguished young traveler brought me greetings from several families from the mountains of Piacenza, now living in camps on the banks of the Orinoco River: "Tell our Bishop that we always remember his advice. Tell him to pray for us and to send us a priest because here we live and die like animals...." That message from my far-off children sounded like a rebuke.¹

"One of the most important facts in the history of modern Italy"

One of the most important facts in the history of modern Italy is the emigration of its people: important for the number of people who are affected, for the social problems it gives rise to, and for the economic evils of which it is a symptom.

¹ *L'emigrazione italiana in America, Piacenza 1887*, pp. 3-6.

According to statistical data, Italian emigrants living in the American Republics total over 2 million: more than 1 million in the Republics of the South, of which more than 400 thousand in Brazil alone, the rest in the vast regions of the Americas, especially in the North. New York City alone has 85,000. During the decade 1880-1890, 2 million people left Italy: 1 million *temporary emigrants* -- a veritable ebb and flow of human beings that provides the European labor market with our intelligent and hard working manpower and brings honor and money back to Italy -- and 1 million *permanent emigrants*, namely, people who cross the ocean in the mostly vain hope of returning, spreading throughout the young American republics, in the North and the South, in the largely populated cities, in the deserted "pampas" and unexplored forests, bringing everywhere their appreciated and esteemed activity (...).

These figures speak for themselves. They state clearly and eloquently that, during the two-year period 1887-1888, more people left Italy than from France, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, and Switzerland put together; that our emigration is four times higher than Russia's; three times higher than that of Germany, which also has a very substantial emigration of its own; superior by a few thousand to that of the United Kingdom, which has very flourishing colonies and commercial interests throughout the world.²

"A phenomenon that has all the characteristics of a permanent fact"

The figures are shocking. However, gentlemen, it seems that the phenomenon of emigration has not yet reached its peak because, despite the stringent conditions laid down in the law enacted two years ago to restrain the activity of emigration agents; despite the disillusionments and cries of sorrow that, now and then, reach us from across the ocean, to our anger and shame; finally, notwithstanding the Government's prohibitions, the sad exodus is still going on. Gentlemen, the fact is that Italian emigration has increased and is still increasing because of our country's poor conditions, especially agricultural, and that it has been stimulated and is still being stimulated beyond all proportions by emigration agents and by the need for manpower resulting from the emancipation of the slaves in Brazil. It does, however, fulfill a real need of the Italian people and is commensurate with the annual population increase. So we are not dealing with a temporary phenomenon but with one that has all the characteristics of a permanent fact. Italy is a nation with the largest annual population increase. It increases at a rate of 11-12 per thousand and is surpassed only by Holland which has a 13-per-thousand population increase of births over deaths.

This is why, despite mass emigration, the population of Italy is increasing and why, in a few years, its beautiful cities and towns will reach their maximum density.

According to reliable projections, if the population increases as fast as during the past twenty years, in a century there will be 100 million Italians. Even allowing for the possibility that, through internal migration, Italy could accommodate another 10 million people within its national boundaries and thus reach a population of 40 or 50 million (which is how many Italy could feed if all the Regions had the same population density as Lombardy), there will still be another 50 million people who will spread around the world

² First Conference on Emigration (AGS 5/3), given in Rome on Feb. 8, 1891.

in the coming century, driven by an irresistible force, namely, the struggle for survival: 50 million people, gentlemen, scattered around the world like leaves driven by a gale!³

“Emigration is a natural fact and an inescapable necessity”

Emigration is a natural and providential phenomenon. It is a safety valve given by God to our troubled society. It is a saving force that is far more powerful than all the moral and material restraints devised by legislators to ensure public order and to safeguard the life and property of its citizens. We all know the proverb: *Mala suadens fames* (hunger leads to crime). Who could hold in line a nation convulsed by the pangs of hunger, with no hope of finding its daily bread elsewhere?

For people who see the suffering caused by emigration and blithely ask: “Why are so many people leaving?” there is a very simple answer. In most cases, emigration is not a pleasure but an inescapable necessity. Of course, among the emigrants there are some bad individuals, who are vagrant or depraved; but they are a minority. The vast majority, not to say all, of those who emigrate to far-off America do not fit that description. They are not fleeing from Italy because they don’t like work but because there isn’t any. They just don’t know how they and their families can make ends meet.

One day a wonderful man, an exemplary Christian, from a little mountain village where I was making my pastoral visitation, came to see me and to ask for my blessing and a memento for himself and his family on the eve of their departure for America. When I demurred, he countered with this simple but distressing dilemma: “Either you steal or you emigrate. I am not allowed to steal nor do I want to, because God and the law forbid it. But in this place there is no way I can earn a living for me and my children. So what can I do? I have to emigrate: it’s the only thing left. . . .” I didn’t know what to answer. With a full heart, I blessed him and entrusted him to the protection of God. But once more I became convinced that emigration is a necessity, a heroic and ultimate cure one has to accept, just as a sick person accepts painful surgery to avoid death.

Religion and emigration -- these are the only two means for saving society from a great catastrophe in the future: one by channeling surplus population toward other continents, the other by soothing with comforting hopes the desperate sorrow of those poor people.⁴

b) EMIGRATION IS A NATURAL RIGHT

“A sacred right”

Those who would like to put a stop or a limit to emigration for patriotic or economic reasons and those who, because of a mistaken idea of freedom, want emigration left to itself, without direction or guidance, are either not using their heads or, in my opinion, are reasoning egoistically and insensitively. In fact, by blocking emigration, we are violating a

³ Ibid.

⁴ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 7-8.

sacred human right; and by leaving it to itself, we are making emigration ineffectual. The former forget that human rights are inalienable, that hence a person can seek his fortune wherever he so desires. The latter forget that emigration is a centrifugal force, which, if well directed, can also become a very powerful centripetal force. Moreover, emigration brings relief to those who stay behind because of reduced manpower competition and new commercial outlets. But emigration is also a great boon because it creates new spheres of influence and brings back home, in a thousand different ways, the treasures of human resources temporarily withdrawn from the nation (...).

A theoretical debate on whether emigration is good or bad is a waste of time at this point. For my purpose, the important thing is that emigration exists. But during the research I undertook to gather the statistical data and facts for this humble work of mine and also during my conversations with friends, I came to realize that there are a lot of fuzzy ideas in this field, not only among the middle class and among private citizens but also among journalists and public figures. So I came to the conclusion that my observations are not at all out of place.

More than others, the owners of lands from which peasants are emigrating in greater numbers are worried by this sudden manpower shortage, which brings about decent salary raises for the remaining workers. So the owners have voiced their grievances with the Government. Through their elected representatives and associations, they have called for measures “to cure and limit this moral illness, this desertion, which deprives the nation of manpower and wealth, violates agreements with farmhands and leaves behind laziness and insubordination, with no gain for the emigrants because, without capital and education, peasants will always and everywhere be proletarians. The misery they try to escape by fleeing the country will haunt them like their own shadow, a misery made even more acute by new needs and isolation” (Parliamentary Proceedings, Session of February 22, 1869).

As anyone can easily guess, these reasons and proposals are motivated more by the interests of the well-to-do who stay behind than by the needs of the poor people who are forced to leave. If the Government were to listen to, and let itself be guided by, these proposals, it would do something useless, unjust, and harmful. Useless, because it will never be able to stop emigration; unjust, because every intervention that hinders the free exercise of a right is unjust and oppressive; harmful, because emigration would find an outlet other than the normal one of our ports, as happened every time the Government, out of an ill-conceived patriotic spirit, made emigration more difficult.⁵

“Emigration must be spontaneous”

If the emigration agents were, as the Hon. De Zerbi seems to think, just simple intermediaries who acted as trusted agents between the shipping companies and the emigrants and restricted their work to giving information on sailing schedules and formalities and if the agencies were just branches of the central shipping offices, there would be no problem. Their work, though superfluous most of the time (since the interested parties could easily get this information on the street corners or at the stores), would not be harmful either. In fact, sometimes their work might even be useful to the emigrants. Even if the agents did a bit of coaxing to sway the hesitant by depicting to the

⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-10.

poor -- tired of their misery -- the fresh, peaceful brooks of America, like those that in Dante's *Inferno* made Master Adam go into ecstasy, it would not be the end of the world. One could close an eye and say with Manzoni: you poor little ragamuffin, you are not the one who will destroy Milan.

But permission to make enlistments is something quite different from all this. If the agents were doing this when it was forbidden by government regulations, imagine if they will not take advantage of it when the law will give them this right! As a natural consequence, the catastrophes deplored in the past will increase in proportion to the freedom granted because, on the one hand, past experience is no match for people's insatiable thirst for gain; and, on the other, uninformed people either don't know the fate of those who preceded them or hope to be luckier than they.

The penalties laid down by the new law for emigration agents are severe and this is good. They will never be too severe for those who, more vile than thieves and more vicious than murderers, push so many unfortunate people to ruin. How many of these poor people, torn from their homes by false promises, crossed the ocean to settle in inhospitable lands, where they wrestled with a thousand insurmountable difficulties and considered themselves lucky if, at the end, they found a piece of land on which to die in peace! How many, abandoned on desert shores without clothes and food, were lucky enough to return, with despair in their hearts, to their little native village!⁶

"Freedom of emigration, not freedom to coerce it"

I believe in freedom of emigration, not freedom to coerce it, because, while emigration is good when free, it is bad when coerced. If spontaneous, it is good because it is one of the great laws of divine Providence ruling over the destinies of peoples and their economic and moral progress. It is good because it is a social safety valve. It opens up the flowery paths of hope and sometimes of riches to the poverty-stricken and civilizes people through contact with other laws and other customs. It brings the light of the Gospel and Christian civilization to barbarians and idolaters. It ennobles human destiny by broadening the concept of motherland beyond the physical and political boundaries, making the whole world man's motherland.

If coerced emigration is bad because it substitutes true need with the fever of instant gain or with an ill-conceived spirit of adventure. Instead of helping and relieving the situation, it becomes an evil and a danger because, by unnecessarily depopulating the motherland beyond measure, it creates more uprooted and disillusioned people. It is bad, finally, because it deviates emigration from its natural channels, which are the most effective and least harmful ones. Experience teaches, in fact, that this kind of emigration is the cause of great evils that can and must be prevented by a provident civil government.⁷

⁶ *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 8-11. This pamphlet has the subtitle: "Observations and Proposals of His Excellency John Baptist Scalabrini, Bishop of Piacenza" and is addressed "to the Hon. Paolo Carcano, member of the National Parliament." The Hon. Carcano had been a classmate of Scalabrini. Scalabrini tries in vain to stop passage of the 1888 law, which was more favorable to the landowners than to the emigrants.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

c) THE CONSEQUENCES

“How bitter is the bread of the emigrant”

The dangers connected with this type of emigration are numberless, and so are the evils connected with it.

Ten years ago, when I gave heed to the cry of distress of our poor emigrants and wrote a pamphlet that had a profound echo in the hearts of all people of good will, galvanizing the thoughts and activities of people of all classes, I had no idea of the untold evils and dangers our poor emigrants are confronted with. Everything, gentlemen, everything works against the emigrant! His troubles often begin before he leaves his poor home, in the person of an emigration agent who, with promises of easy riches, convinces him to emigrate and then sends him wherever it serves the agent's interests and not where it is best for the emigrant. Along the journey, which often turns into tragedy, the emigrant is shadowed by these very same evils. Then, upon his arrival in disease-infested areas, he finds these evils in the jobs for which he often is not fit, under bosses made inhuman either by an insatiable greed for money or by the habit of regarding workers as inferior beings. These evils multiply a thousand times when evil-minded people try to ensnare the emigrants in foreign countries where they are unfamiliar with language and customs and are condemned to a state of isolation that is often the death of body and soul.

I could cite many instances showing how wet with tears and bitter to the taste was the bread of the emigrants, of those unfortunate souls, who attracted either by vain hopes or false promises, found an Iliad of woes, abandonment, hunger, and not rarely death where they had believed they would find a paradise. They had dreamed of an Eldorado, made attractive by a mirage born of need, not realizing that in an instant *simoun*, the violent wind of reality, scatters the enchanted cities of their dreams! Wretched souls! Exhausted by work, the climate, and the insects, they fall heartbroken to the soil made fertile by their labors, on the edge of the green forests they have cleared neither for themselves nor for their children, racked by the gentle and fatal sickness of nostalgia, dreaming perhaps of the homeland which had not even been able to feed them, calling in vain for the minister of their forefathers' holy religion to soothe the terrors of the last agony with the immortal hopes of the faith.

Gentlemen, it is not a happy picture, but this is the true story of thousands and thousands of our fellow countrymen who have emigrated. I have put it together from the reports of my Missionaries and from what has been told or written to me by those who have witnessed and shared these most distressing facts.

However, I do not want to be misunderstood or appear pessimistic. The sad happenings I have mentioned are not true of all emigrants. Very many of them have found in the countries hosting them an adequate living, many a comfortable one, and some even wealth. They form communities of which the motherland can be proud. But there are also very many who are miserable, and in great measure this is due to their ignorance and to our neglect.⁸

⁸ *L'Italia all'estero*, Torino 1899, pp. 10-11 (a conference given in Torino in September 1898). “Simoun” or simùn is the violent and scorching wind of the Sahara Desert.

“An infinity of material and moral evils”

The dangers the emigrants must face are such and so many that not even a perspicacious person could avoid them completely. What shall we say of the poor peasants who trust themselves to people who in every emigrant see an object to be exploited?

Unfortunately, newspaper readers may recall a number of incidents, sometimes shameful, sometimes tragic, but always heartbreaking, which have victimized our poor brothers and sisters.

A few years ago, the newspapers reported that two or three hundred emigrants who had arrived at the port of embarkation -- I can't remember whether Genoa or Naples -- found out that the money they had saved by much hard work and the sale of their remaining belongings had ended up in the hands of swindlers. You can imagine the tears, the outcries, the cursing and, finally, the return to their hometown at public expense.

In early 1873, a steamship loaded with many families from the Abruzzi Region arrived in New York. The emigration agents had put them aboard the boat with the promise that they would sail for Buenos Aires where relatives and friends were anxiously waiting for them. But those poor wretches, who had already suffered so much during the crossing, found themselves on other shores, exhausted, far away from their intended destination and without money to continue their journey.

However, these might be exceptions. But the general rule is the manner in which our emigrants are transported. Crammed worse than beasts, they are stowed on ships in much greater numbers than the regulations or the capacity of the vessels allow. They make the long uncomfortable voyage literally huddled together, with what risks for their health and morality one can easily imagine.

What can we say about the even more distressing situation that awaits them on their arrival at their longed-for destination? They are often taken in by clever tricks, dazzled by a thousand false promises, and forced by necessity to bind themselves to contracts that are a veritable form of slavery, their children left begging on the path to crime and the women cast into the abyss of dishonor.

The vast uncultivated lands in South America are leased out to the emigrants either directly by the Governments or by private organizations that have acquired the land for speculation. After a certain number of years and upon payment of appropriate fees, the peasants become owners of the land they have drenched with their sweat. The settlers pitch their tents in these regions and transform them into productive and prosperous farms. These peasants often come from the same area, sometimes from the same village, and name after their home town the new settlement where Divine Providence has led them.

But while these settlements can lessen the dangers of emigration and make life safer and less oppressive, they can also, if not well overseen, cause countless material and moral evils. In fact, our poor peasants run the risk of being hoodwinked by exploiters into spending their whole life on sterile lands and in unwholesome places, exposed to wild animals and fierce tribes. All these things have already happened, and more than once. The press and public opinion have repeatedly raised a hue and cry over these conditions.⁹

⁹ *L'emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 29-31.

“Very easy prey to exploiters”

Where is this great mass of people, this flood of Italian blood going?

Most of them, sad to say, don't know where they are going. For them it's America, the country where those who leave the motherland in search of fortune go. South America or North America, in temperate or tropical zones, in healthy or pernicious climates, on fertile lands or on lands even more sterile than those they have abandoned, in populated centers or in deserted areas: they don't know. They go to America, often with the added burden of a signed blank contract that places, if not their person, surely their work at the service of a boss.

In this way, emigration agents sent a rather large number of emigrants to Brazil to take the place of the already insufficient number of workers needed for agriculture, a number, as I mentioned before, that had become absolutely inadequate because of the abolition of slavery. In this way, too, the *padrone* system, condemned by a bill of the United States Senate, massed together an immense number of emigrants in New York City -- attracted there by a thousand promises -- poor emigrants who were shamelessly exploited and then abandoned to make room for the new arrivals, the new victims of sordid gains.

In Chile, finally, not to mention many other cases, several thousand countrymen of ours, lured there by ridiculous lies, now find neglect and destitution. While here in the motherland ignorance and poverty make them easy victims of the emigration agents, down there isolation and destitution make them very easy prey to exploiters, who are always and everywhere without an ounce of compassion, there more so than elsewhere. Thus, instead of appropriate and well paid work, of abundant and healthy nourishment, those unfortunates find a backbreaking job -- if and when they do -- and a remuneration that is a real mockery compared to the work, the danger, and the rising cost of the necessities of life. Finally they discover that the little improvement in food supplies is often paid for at the high price of the privation of meaningful social life.¹⁰

“They lose the sense of their identity and faith”

However, who could describe the dangers our poor emigrants meet when it comes to their religious life. Suffice it to say that the vast majority lives there without ever seeing the face of a priest or the cross on a bell tower. So, abandoned to themselves, either they give in to the most disheartening indifference or they desert the faith of their forefathers and mothers. Gentlemen, I will tell you something that cuts me to the quick when I think of it. In sixty years, according to official calculations, 40 million Catholics emigrated to a great American Republic. Now, even supposing that 20 million returned -- which actually has never happened -- Catholics living there should number at least 20 million, taking into account births and deaths. But, according to the last ecclesiastical census, the number of Catholics does not reach, or certainly at that time it did not reach, 8 million. Where did the other 12 million go?

¹⁰ *L'emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Ferrara 1899: this is the conventional title of a report read by Bishop Scalabrini to the National Catholic Congress of Ferrara in April 1899 and published in the *Atti e documenti del XXV Congresso Cattolico Italiano*, Venezia 1899.

They lose the sense of their identity and with that -- the thought breaks my heart -- their attachment to the Catholic Faith. They fall prey to Protestant propaganda, unfortunate victims of the sects, more active and numerous there than in other places. Gentlemen, allow a Bishop to weep before you over such a misfortune! The lack of the spiritual bread that is the word of God, the impossibility of reconciliation with him, the absence of the liturgy and of any encouragement to do good, exercise a deadly influence on the morale of the people. An educated person also is subjected to such a danger, but to a lesser degree because his education, culture, and theoretical knowledge of religion somehow help to safeguard him from the frost of indifference. If nothing else, he can unite himself spiritually with the divine mysteries celebrated elsewhere and nourish his mind with wholesome reading. But how could a poor peasant rise to such sublime thoughts? To him, more than to others, the idea of religion is inseparable from that of Church and priest. Where every visual religious display is silent, little by little he forgets his duties toward God; and Christian life weakens and dies in his heart. The thirst for truth, the desire of the infinite, however, do not die in him! "Man," says a modern unbelieving philosopher, "needs religion and is religious by nature, just as he is intelligent by nature. Better yet, he is religious because he is endowed with reason." The more it becomes impossible to satisfy this need, the more it makes itself felt. This is evident among our migrants, even where the most despicable materialism reigns supreme for lack of priests. So imagine how much that need must be alive among those -- and they are the majority -- who still sense the dignity of their own person and feel the claims of their own conscience.¹¹

"They are abandoned down there without a shadow of religious care"

When they don't die during the voyage or succumb to privation or to heartbreak for having been duped, these poor migrant peasants are left in those regions without a shadow of religious assistance. Their state is more easily imagined than described.

There are not many priests in America. The few who are available almost always do not know our language and could not be of any help, much as they might want to, for the simple reason that our emigrants would not understand them. Besides, the emigrants are so spread out all over that vast territory that the priest could visit them only rarely and briefly.

Hence, Italians in America are almost constrained, as a rule, to live a life that is worse than pagan, without Mass, without sacraments, without public devotions, without liturgy, and without the word of God, so that it is already a lot if their children are baptized. It is clear that such a state of affairs must imperceptibly lead those poor wretches to a frightening indifference toward religion and a dehumanizing materialism (...).

Moreover, we must not forget that, though there are not all that many Catholic churches and priests in America, there is plenty of Protestant and Masonic proselytizing, depending on places.

Where the voice of God's minister does not arrive, immoral novels, pamphlets, books and flyers from various sects do arrive. Hence, whereas religious assistance is totally lacking, the dangers to the faith of our poor emigrants abound. Either out of expediency or out of ignorance, the emigrants let themselves get caught in the nets of the apostles of error.¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 45-46.

“Most of the evils could be avoided”

What most saddens the heart is the thought that most of the religious, moral, and economic ills to which our emigration is exposed could be avoided or much reduced if the ruling classes of Italy were conscious of the duties that bind them to their expatriate brethren. In fact, gentlemen, the immense American countries are not so unhealthy as not to be able to offer a tranquil corner to our emigration. Not all lands are so controlled by speculation that some fertile lands could not be found at a good price, such as to assure a fair profit to the workers. It is all a question of pointing this out to our emigrants. But when was this ever done in Italy? Was the emigrant ever told that he should be on his guard against the various contracts and lands offered him and against the traps concealed in them? For example, are the lands unsafe, unhealthy, unproductive? Though fertile, are they so far away from any possible means of communication, so isolated from all human contact as to cause the produce of the emigrant's labor to remain unsold, leaving him rich and poor at the same time?

I repeat, when was this ever done in Italy? At most, some people do a little shouting, while others weep under the blows of events that offend national pride in the person of those brothers and sisters of ours. There are cries and expressions of compassion, even demands for some government measures. Then what? All is hushed up, all is forgotten, all calms down in the deceiving quiet of the wave that hides its victim and waits for new ones.¹³

d) GOD'S PLAN

“Emigration is a good and an evil”

It is undoubtedly a good thing for both those who go and those who remain, a true safety valve, relieving the country of excess population, opening new avenues for commerce and industry, blending and perfecting civilization, broadening the concept of motherland beyond physical boundaries, making the whole world man's motherland. But it is always a very grievous individual and national evil when it is allowed to take place without laws, limits, guidance, or effective protection. Emigration, in this case, would not mean lively and intelligent forces working for the good of the individual and of society but forces in conflict, often destroying one another in turn. It would mean exploitation of the emigrants, to their detriment and shame and that of the land of their birth. It would not mean life-giving waters but torrents without banks, which lose the riches of their waters among boulders and thistles, let alone destroy the cultivated farmland.¹⁴

“Emigration is an instrument of divine Providence even in the midst of catastrophes”

¹³ *L'emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Ferrara 1899.

¹⁴ First conference on emigration (AGS 5/3).

Emigration is a law of nature. The physical and the human world depend on this mysterious force which stirs and mixes the elements of life without destroying them, carrying living organisms born in one place and scattering them throughout space, transforming and bringing them to perfection, thus renewing the miracle of creation at every moment.

Seeds migrate on the wings of the wind. Plants migrate from continent to continent on the waves of the seas and rivers. Birds and other animals move from place to place. But even more do human beings migrate, sometimes in groups, sometimes alone, and, in so doing, are always the free instruments of Divine Providence, which presides over human destiny, leading all people, even through great calamities, to their final goal: the perfection of man on earth and the glory of God in heaven.

This is what Divine Revelation is telling us. This is what history and modern science are teaching us. It is only from this threefold source of truth that we can deduce the laws that govern the phenomenon of emigration and that we can set down the wise and practical guidelines regulating this phenomenon in all its rich variety of forms.¹⁵

“The religious and social greatness of the emigrants’ cause”

I think that the religious and moral importance of the cause of our Italian emigrants and the political and material greatness of this hospitable country -- which, as the illustrious President of the Republic pointed out to me a few days ago, opens wide its doors to them -- are two great components destined to be fused into one and to unveil to the 20th century the secrets of a new era that will lack neither the blessings of God nor the conquests of civilization (...).

I have traveled a considerable part of your glorious country and once again admired, with deep and enthusiastic joy, God’s great designs for America. When the 4th centennial of Christopher Columbus was being celebrated, I was invited to give some conferences on this subject back in Italy, for the simple reason that the family of Christopher Columbus had once belonged to my beloved diocese of Piacenza, though he himself was born in Genoa. One of these conferences was entitled: “God’s Plan for America.” I saw those thoughts confirmed during my happy stay with you on my long trip through the various States of the Union.¹⁶

“The union in God through Jesus Christ of all people of good will is taking place”

Some day, if neither laziness nor ignorance of the ways of God nor complacency over past victories nor repression of rightful aspirations deviates the people from the divine plan, all nations will have in this land numerous rich, happy, moral, and God-fearing descendants who, while retaining the characteristics of their respective nationalities, will be closely

¹⁵ *L’Italia all’estero*, Torino 1899, pp.7-8.

¹⁶ Speech to the Catholic Club of New York, Oct. 15, 1901 (*L’Araldo Italiano - The Italian Herald*,” New York, Oct. 24, 1901, p.1).

united. This land of blessings will give rise to inspirations, develop principles, unfurl new mysterious forces that will regenerate and revitalize the Old World, teaching it the true economy of liberty, brotherhood, and equality, showing it that, though politically and religiously united, people of different origins can very well keep their own language and nationality, without the barriers that divide people and make them envious, without armed forces to dominate and destroy one another (...).

This is my hope, gentlemen. Yes, this is my hope! For while the world is dazzled by its progress, while man exults in his conquests over matter and lords it over nature, disemboweling the earth, yoking the lightning, cutting isthmuses to mingle the waters of the oceans, eliminating distances; while nations fall and rise and renew themselves; while races mingle, spread, and fuse; above the roar of our machines, above all this feverish activity, over and beyond all these gigantic achievements and not without them, a much vaster, nobler, and more sublime work is developing: the union in God through Jesus Christ of all people of good will.¹⁷

“The Catholic Church, victorious and peacemaking”

God’s servants who, without realizing it, work for the fulfillment of his plans are numerous in all periods. But in the great epochs of social renewal there are many more than we can see or imagine. They are innumerable. Gentlemen, remember this and never forget it: the supreme purpose divine Providence assigned humanity is not the conquest of matter by means of science, at a more or less advanced stage, nor the formation of those great peoples in which are embodied, from time to time, the attributes of power, wisdom, and riches. No, his purpose is the union of all peoples in God through Jesus Christ and his visible representative, the Roman Pontiff. The obstacles still in the way of this magnificent goal will disappear little by little. And the day will come, and it will come above all in this great and glorious country of yours, when all nations will understand where true greatness is to be found and will feel the need to return to the Father. And indeed they will return.

Gentlemen, what a glorious day that will be! A sublime day, in which all accents, all voices speaking different languages will raise to God the hymn of praise and thanksgiving. The sun of truth will shine more brightly and the rainbow of peace will envelope the earth in all its colors. It will be like an arch of triumph under which the Church will march victorious and peacemaking, drawing the modern world to herself. And so society, renewed in Christ, will continue in order and justice on the path of freedom, true civilization, and progress. Gentlemen, let us hasten that blessed day with our desires, our prayers, and our works!¹⁸

“Ancient piety is awakening”

I am deeply moved by what I have seen on my long pilgrimage. I have seen the Catholic faith fully alive in the midst of innumerable difficulties in the fazendas of the State of Sao Paulo. I have seen the faith of these settlements in Paranà, and I hope and pray that people

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

in the cities of Latin America will imitate those of North America. Up there Italian churches are being built in all the cities. Our Missionaries assist them together with other religious. Ancient piety is awakening. Good reputation and respect is daily increasing with the authorities, thus verifying once more that wherever an apostle raises the cross, civilization springs up spontaneously and material well-being increases.¹⁹

2. THE CHURCH AND EMIGRATION

“Where people are working and suffering, there is the Church,” which has the mission “to evangelize the children of poverty and labor.” The Church does not direct its missionary activity only to unbelievers but also to the Catholics who are exposed to the danger of becoming unbelievers because of emigration.

It is necessary to intervene concretely and immediately because “the religious and moral future of emigrating people depends on that modicum of religion and morality,” that must be preserved at once as the most precious part of their cultural and religious patrimony. What we need is “heroes who will go forth to evangelize” in conditions less dangerous but no less arduous than those of the missionaries to the unbelievers.

The preservation of, and appreciation for, the emigrants’ spiritual heritage call for the preservation of ethnic culture: “religion and country complement each other in this work of love and redemption.”

The pastoral care of migrants must take this principle into account. Both the missionaries and the receiving Churches must respect the cultural identity and religious traditions peculiar to the emigrants. So, under the leadership of the bishop, the missionary should be free to exercise his ministry, a ministry that will prudently guide the immigrants’ integration into the local Church, will respect normal rhythms, and not prematurely force an assimilation that would destroy the immigrants’ thousand-year-old heritage of religion and tradition.

Emigration is not a concern just for the sending or the receiving Churches. In fact, as a universal phenomenon and problem, it is a concern for the universal Church. Hence the need for coordination among the local Churches, a coordination that can only come from the center. The problem of emigration is like that of the Church’s missionary activity “to the infidels.” Just as the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith exists for this missionary activity, so also is there a need to set up an appropriate Congregation or at least a central commission in the Roman Curia for the emigrant Catholics of all countries.

a) THE PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH

“Where people are working and suffering, there is the Church”

The Church of Jesus Christ, which has sent her Gospel workers among the most barbarous peoples and most inhospitable regions, has not forgotten and will never neglect the mission

¹⁹ Speech given in Curitiba, Brazil, Aug. 28 (?), 1904 (AGS 3018/3).

God entrusted to her, namely, to preach the Gospel to the children of poverty and labor. She will always look with anxious heart on so many poor souls who, in forcible isolation, are losing the faith of their forebears and, with the faith, every sentiment of Christian and civil upbringing. Yes, gentlemen, where people are working and suffering, there is the Church because the Church is the mother, friend, and defender of the people and will always have a word of comfort, a smile, a blessing for them.²⁰

“A new and consoling development is taking place in the Church on their behalf”

As everyone can see, the Church is bringing about a new, marvelous, and consoling reawakening on behalf of the poor and abandoned. Blessed many times over is the person who will be able to help the Church in this religious and social rebirth. This is the time when -- in the words of the Apostle -- if one member rejoices, all the members rejoice; if one member suffers, all the other members come together to help it.

If the past has been bleak, if, until yesterday, our brothers and sisters were left to themselves in the vast plains of America, in the Andes or the Cordilleras or the Rockies, on the banks of great lakes in the North, along the Plata, Orenoque, Amazon, or Mississippi Rivers, along the shores of the seas and in the forests, Christian charity and today's social standards now require that we put a stop to a deplorable state of affairs unworthy of a great and generous people.

The challenge I lay down before the minds and hearts of the clergy and laity of Italy is great, noble, untried, glorious. It makes room for the widow's mite as well as for the rich man's offering, for the unassuming work of calmer people as well as for the generous drive of more ardent spirits.²¹

“Unfortunate, truly unfortunate”

Inside me there still resounds the plaintive voice of a poor Lombard peasant who came to Piacenza two years ago from the remote Tibagy Valley in Brazil to ask me for a Missionary in the name of that large settlement. “Father,” he told me with a broken voice, “if you only knew how much we have suffered! How much we have wept at the bedside of our dear dying ones who were anxiously begging us for a priest ... and we were unable to get one! Oh God, we can no longer live, we can no longer live like that!” With unpolished yet eloquent language, the poor man went on to tell me about really heart-rending scenes. I must confess that, never like at that moment, did I wish I still had the vigor of my youth. Never like then did I regret the impossibility of changing the golden cross of the Bishop with the wooden cross of the Missionary so that I could hasten to help those unfortunate ones, truly unfortunate because, besides all the other dangers, they also risked the danger of falling into the abyss of despair.²²

²⁰ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, p. 50.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²² *L'emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Ferrara 1899.

“We are here like animals”

At the Feb. 12, 1879, session of the House of Deputies, the Hon. Antonibon -- reporting some of the distressing news on the condition of our emigrants in America -- read a letter from a Venetian settler, who, by way of conclusion to a litany of woes, wrote: “We are here like beasts. We live and die without priests, without teachers, and without doctors.”

During this past year I have received about one hundred similar letters from heads of families, imploring me to extend the protection and care of my Institute to them. Not only were letters sent to me but also special messengers from the various regions of Brazil who had come to plead their cause more forcefully by word of mouth. From those poor ungrammatical letters, embellished with illegible signatures, as well as from the moving words of their messengers, emerged the great need of priests and teachers, a need that was all the more desperate the more the settlements prospered. All of them ended their pleas with the heart-rending words of the poor Venetian emigrant: “We are like animals. We live and die without priests, without teachers, and without doctors” -- the three aspects of civil society, in the perception of the poor.

Well, then, with my charitable Institute I try precisely to meet these three great human needs:

- To keep alive in their hearts the faith of their forebears, and, with the immortal hopes of the afterlife rekindled, to cultivate and refine their moral sense since -- and we must not forget it -- fortunately our people’s only treatise on ethics is still the Ten Commandments.
- With the first rudiments of arithmetic, to teach also the mother tongue and some national history and thus keep alive in our distant brothers and sisters the flame of love of country, as well as the desire to see their country again.
- Finally, a bit of healing arts, by giving our missionaries some training during the months of novitiate on the use of the most effective and common medicines, on the way to concoct and administer them, and on setting up little pharmacies next to every residence of the missionaries. In itself, this is not much. But it is a lot when we consider there are no doctors or medicines in those immense plains of America, where, often enough, even when doctors and medicines are available, the people do not have the financial means to pay for them.²³

“The religious and moral future will depend on how much religion and morality they will preserve”

Hence, the urgency to act is quite clear and appears even more so from the following observations:

Those little groups of cabins, presently spread out in a desert of sorts, will become flourishing towns and cities because of the natural population increase and because of this emigration tide that rises higher and higher by the day. What will happen then? It is easy to foresee that in a few years we shall have in the vast plains of the Americas a new Italy,

²³ *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 47-48.

perhaps rich in material goods but poor in the riches of the spirit. Or, more precisely, we shall have a society consistent with the direction we will have given it at the start.

The first impressions are always the most persistent and lasting; and the first traditions are the ones that give a family, a city, a settlement its special characteristics. History gives us innumerable examples.

We must also consider the fact that, by nature, our fellow citizens are eminently docile and therefore easily adapt to the conditions of places and peoples where divine Providence leads them.

The religious and moral future of our communities in America, therefore, will depend on how much religion and morality is preserved by these first centers of population. Will they be inspired by civic and Christian sentiments? If their descendants will be civic minded and Christian, those who will join them later on from Italy will more or less spontaneously have to adapt to the traditions of faith and piety they find implanted there. Instead, if they are abandoned, they will grow up like savages; and even those who arrive after them will themselves become like savages.

Furthermore, the tendency of our emigrants to settle in communities must not be overlooked because it makes the task of those who must guide them less difficult. To overlook this tendency -- now that it is a question of choosing the sites of future cities and of stamping them with a religious and Italian character on which their future prosperity and importance will depend -- would be an unpardonable error. That identity must be stamped on them immediately. I believe any delay will be fatal! Such an identity will be a bond uniting them to their distant motherland. In fact, sharing in the same religious and patriotic values is much more important for creating the unbreakable unity of a nation than do material interests.²⁴

“Heroes of evangelization”

Gentlemen, after so much talk about emigration and emigrants during these past ten or twelve years, how much has been accomplished? It would not be true to say that what has been accomplished is as much as could or should have been accomplished.

Thank God, various associations of religious and civil assistance have appeared and by spontaneous selection divided up this new field of activity.

I will not mention my work. Since you are quite familiar with it, I don't want to take advantage of your patience and kindness. I will only say that with confidence in God and his Providence I undertook the difficult task of urging people of good will to try something also in Italy especially in the area of religious assistance. I thought to myself: if the clergy provides heroes who go off to preach the Gospel to uncivilized peoples, surely it will not refuse to provide generous young men who -- with less danger but with no less hardship -- will go out to assist our countrymen, especially those in the Americas, among whom they have friends and relatives perhaps, neighbors for sure. To dry the tears of a moment, the rich and the poor of Italy have often vied with each other in works of charity. The former gave abundantly from their surplus, the latter from their need. What will they not do when they realize there are tears to be dried, tears that have been shed for many years and will continue to be shed for generations to come unless somebody does something? What will

²⁴ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 47-48.

they not do when they realize there is a shame to be removed that makes us look uncaring and renders us contemptible in the eyes of foreigners?

Very soon I realized I was right. Not only did I meet with applause and praise, but -- most importantly -- with receptive hearts, generous spirits, and vigorous wills ready for action to the point of sacrifice.²⁵

“The beneficent influence of the Cross of Christ”

Churches, convents, Christian schools, orphanages, and hospitals are sprouting up everywhere. The cross of Christ consoles the emigrants, encourages them, and sustains their religious principles. It preserves the emigrants from the dangers of corruption and apostasy, which, little by little, would lead them to deny not only Christianity but their duties to the motherland as well.²⁶

“For the Church a fountain of incalculable benefits”

In my opinion, the formidable problem of emigration on which Governments are working, almost always in vain, is destined by divine Providence to earn the Holy See immense social prestige and become a fountain of untold consolations and of incalculable benefits for the Church. No one who can discern the signs of the times can have any doubt about this. I say this so that we may be firmly convinced that to solve this problem, as it deserves, we should spare no sacrifice.²⁷

b) RELIGION AND COUNTRY”

“A truly Christian and eminently patriotic work”

This does not exempt Italians from remembering that they have there brothers and sisters who belong to them in a special way and need their special help. Abandoning them to their own devices would mean breaking in them every bond with their mother country and putting their faith and morality in great danger.

Would it not be truly Christian and eminently patriotic to help break the shameful tradition of neglect inherited from the past and to improve the condition of our emigrants?²⁸

“Our church, our school, our language”

²⁵ *L'emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Ferrara 1899.

²⁶ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 21-22.

²⁷ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, April 4, 1889 (AGS 3/4).

²⁸ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 28-29.

Religion and Country! These are the two great loves God has implanted in the heart of humanity, the motto written in glowing characters on the banners of civilized Christian nations. In the shadow of this immortal banner our ancestors have fought and conquered. In the shadow of this banner people joyfully raise their heads, resentments vanish, divisions disappear, hands are shaken in brotherhood, families find peace, and nations flourish.

Religion and Country! Gentlemen, let us rally around this noble ideal which, as it were, takes shape and form in this saving work on behalf of our emigrants. Then we will have reason to hope that a brighter future will dawn on our beloved Italy and that, in the not-too-distant future, God's plans for her will be fulfilled.

One more word and I shall conclude. Not long ago, tremendous efforts were made in the United States to Americanize, if I may use this word, the emigrants from the various countries of Europe.

Religion and Country deplored the loss of millions of her children. Only one group of people had the courage to resist that violent attempt to assimilate them, the one that had this motto on its flag: "Our Church, our School, our Language."

We must not forget this piece of history. Each of us, according to his abilities, must see to it that all Italians abroad may share the same mind, the same determination, the same courage on behalf of Religion and Country.²⁹

"Two supreme aspirations of every noble soul"

Religion and Country! These two supreme aspirations of every noble soul are intertwined. They complement each other in this labor of love, which is the protection of the defenseless. They unite in a wonderful symphony. The ignominious barriers created by hatred and resentment will disappear; arms will open out in a fraternal embrace; hands will shake in a warm sign of love; lips will open to smile and kiss; and, with all class and party differences eliminated, we will understand in all its Christian splendor the meaning of the aphorism: *homo homini frater* (man is a brother to man).

May these words of mine be an inspiration for noble works to the glory of God and his Church, for the good of souls, the honor of our country, and the welfare of the poor and the unfortunate. May Italy, sincerely reconciled with the Holy See, emulate its ancient glories and add another imperishable glory, that of having set her distant sons and daughters on the bright paths of civilization and progress.³⁰

"An idea, so simple, yet so beautiful"

We are not dreaming. Here is my idea, as innocent and naked as the truth. It is so simple, yet so beautiful, that it doesn't need any rhetorical frills to be offered to people of good will. The young seminarians who every year have to do military service in Italy are about one hundred. Now, what harm would it do our Army if the seminarians who wanted to enroll

²⁹ *L'Italia all'estero*, Torino 1899, p. 23.

³⁰ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 53-54.

among the missionaries for the Italians in America were exempted from the draft? Would it really be an exception to the equality of all citizens in the matter of military service if young Italians aspiring to the priesthood, instead of three boring years in the barracks, were to spend five years in the Americas at the service of our fellow citizens, helping in their religious and moral redemption, as soldiers at once of Church and State? With the fresh enthusiasm of their youth, with a zeal that brooks no obstacles, with the energy of 20-year-olds who feel no fatigue, what heroic apostles we would have! what indefatigable teachers! what harmony in the two loves of religion and country in those young hearts, who, as they step out for the first time into public life, would experience the beneficent hand of their country! How grateful they would be that they had not been taken from their studies and condemned to three long years of crude -- yet inevitable -- experiences of barrack life, which disturb and mortify them!³¹

c) THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS

“For the civil, religious, and moral welfare of our emigrants”

I ask all of you, beloved brothers and sons, to continue to give all your talents and energies to the civil, religious, and moral welfare of our countrymen. While you endeavor to keep alive in their hearts their love for the mother country, be careful not to instigate among them anything that could separate them from their new fellow citizens or detach them in whatever way from other people. It is your duty to see that the Italians distinguish themselves for greater respect for authority, for a more exemplary conduct, for the exact observance of their duties, and for a more lively attachment to the faith of their forefathers and mothers. Since they are naturally good Catholics, they will respond easily to your counsel as they have done until now, so long as they see in you hard working and disinterested priests.

In all things, be their model in word and deed, in purity and in seriousness of life so that, as the Apostle writes, even those who are against you will respect you and have nothing bad to say against you. After the example of the Apostle, I will say with St. Bernard: “Honor your ministry.” Notice that I say ministry and not dominion, ministry and not yourselves. You will honor your ministry not with vain displays but with an irreproachable way of life, with untiring zeal, and with good works.³²

“A work of evangelization entrusted to the zeal and wisdom of the American bishops”

Your Excellency, I can now assure you that today the Sacred Roman Congregation read with immense pleasure the beautiful paper you wrote in which you explain so well how important is the work I have undertaken. In those pages you rightly point out that on the success of this work depends not only the future of countless Italian Catholics flung across the ocean by emigration but also the great work of evangelization entrusted to the zeal and

³¹ *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 51-53.

³² *Ai Missionari per gl’Italiani nelle Americhe*, Piacenza 1892, pp. 11-12.

wisdom of the American bishops. In fact, people are used to drawing certain logical and rigorous conclusions from what happens around them. Today, more than ever, people tend to judge by their experiences. So it stands to reason that, when your Protestant countrymen see the religious ignorance and indifference of many, not to say most, Italian immigrants, they will conclude that the Christian life must not be very intense in our country if so many of her sons and daughters lose the faith so easily and abandon the practice of the most basic Christian duties. Now, since Italy is not only an exclusively Catholic country but also the heart of Holy Mother Church and the residence of her august Head, it follows, as Your Excellency says so well, that Protestants are inclined to believe that Catholicism is on the decline and that its cause is undoubtedly the absence of faith and virtue due to the priests' ineptness and culpable negligence. Without question, we must fight these errors. But, above all, we must eliminate the main causes that give rise to them. Now, from the success and favorable outcome of the work I have undertaken depends the healing of the disorder which we are deploring and which is so harmful to the spread of the faith in America, especially if Christian traditions and the principles of Catholicism are not preserved in the hearts of millions of Italian immigrants who live in America.

For these reasons the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith has accepted my work with great favor and is pleased to see that the American bishops appreciate it, you in particular, who are one of the most renowned and learned bishops in the New World.³³

“To freely exercise their ministry under Your Excellency’s authority”

I received your most gracious letter of Feb. 10, together with your generous donation of one thousand Lire for our institute. I don't know how to thank you as I would like to. But affection and gratitude are also good money, and with this money I intend to repay you, dear bishop.

I hope that by now good Fr. Marcellino has explained my ideas to you about the Missionaries to be sent to New York. I plan to send you three of them, plus a brother catechist. But we would need a residence there since they should live in community if possible; also a church, be it even in a basement, where they can freely exercise their ministry, always under Your Excellency's full authority. If it were possible, convenient and prudent to remove the Italians from the jurisdiction of the parish and entrust their spiritual care directly to our Missionaries, everything would go well. But the judgment on this proposal belongs to you, Your Excellency, and I know you will do what you deem best *in Domino* (in the Lord).

Personally, dear Bishop, I really wish that you, who justly enjoy such high esteem with the Holy See, would be the first American bishop to open a house for our priests. It is a work we have practically accomplished together because you were kind enough to encourage me from the very beginning and to promise me your influential support.

From the New York house, the Missionaries, subsequently increasing in numbers, could fan out from their community into other dioceses that might ask for them. Moreover, I think some schools could also be opened in New York for the children of the Italians, as well as

³³ Letter to Bishop J. Ireland, March 12, 1889 (AGS 3/1) (translated from French). His Excellency, J. Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul, Minnesota, was the Holy See's chief American spokesman on migration problems.

some nurseries to be conducted by Sisters. Also, in New York, benevolent societies could be set up for our emigrants, after the example of the St. Raphael Society for Germans, something that is done also for the Irish.³⁴

“Without freedom of ministry there is very little that can be done”

Respectfully ask the Archbishop of Rio if he will permit our Missionaries to have back the mission of Novella Mantova and the surrounding Italian settlements. You will also let him know what the Holy Father desires in this regard. I am therefore transcribing for you the following resolution as found in file 2978 of *Propaganda Fide*: “With respect to the bishops of Brazil, the Holy Father directs that they grant the Missionaries the necessary faculties directly, to be exercised independently of the local pastors and vicars. The bishops are authorized, when necessary, to also detach the areas inhabited by the Italians from a parish circumscription and establish new parishes therein, to be entrusted to the aforesaid Missionaries.”

The experience of the past few years has shown that, without freedom of ministry, albeit with some dependence on local pastors, there is very little that can be done.

Tell the Bishop of Sao Paulo the same thing. Assure him, moreover, that if he accepts the proposal, he will receive truly wise and holy Missionaries. You will also tell him that if someone did not succeed as well as was expected, an extenuating reason can be found in the lack of support from those who were supposed to give it.

Maybe his predecessor -- like the deceased bishop of Rio -- was unable to do what he had wanted to.

If you can get to Curitiba, ask that bishop, too, if he will allow us to have back the mission directed by Fr. Colbachini, together with the house, church, and various chapels. Tell him also about the Holy Father’s desire.

At any rate, you would do well to get the aforementioned bishops to put into writing the conditions under which our Missionaries would be accepted and all the stipulations they wish to set down for this purpose.³⁵

“Let the Missionaries be given parochial faculties”

As they make their rounds, our Missionaries often run across many Italians. The report of the arrival of the man of God passes from mouth to mouth like good news; and those poor

³⁴ Letter to M. A. Corrigan, Feb. 27, 1888 (Archdiocesan Archives of New York). The Archbishop of New York was the first one to encourage the Founder to send Scalabrinian missionaries to America. Fr. Marcellino Moroni had been sent by Bishop Scalabrini to New York to prepare for the arrival of the first missionaries there.

³⁵ Letter to Fr. G. Marchetti, Dec. 26, 1884 (AGS 3023/2). “The mission of Nova Mantova, etc.” had been opened in 1888 by Scalabrinian Missionaries in the State of Espiritu Santo. Fr. P. Colbachini had to abandon the Italian “settlements” of Curitiba in 1884 for political reasons. Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti, co-founder of the Scalabrinian Sisters, founded the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo.

wretches, crying with joy, run after him because in the Italian priest not only do they recall the memories of religion and motherland but they also know they can confide whatever is burdening their consciences to his paternal heart, without having to curtail the meager bread of their children. Many live in common law unions. Many children are not yet reborn in the waters of baptism. There are thousands of cases of conscience of people living a life almost cut loose from bonds with society. But, unfortunately, the poor Missionary does not have faculties for that particular parish, and the pastor either cannot be reached or will not grant them (...).

I would be insulting Your Eminence's intelligence and zeal if I were to waste words in pointing out such an awful situation. However, the situation must be remedied at once because such outrages make religion odious and give unscrupulous and malicious people a pretext for opposing and ridiculing it. These outrages also sow doubts and unbelief in the minds of those poor, simple settlers, who get used to doing without a priest, unable as they are to pay handsomely for what should be free. Judging institutions by concrete deeds, these souls must receive an impression damaging to their faith when they see evil, egoism, and simony prevailing over goodness and over the spirit of unselfishness and sacrifice.

I end with the renewed plea that Your Eminence see to it that what the Sacred Congregation decided on this matter is implemented, namely, that the bishops of Brazil separate the Italian settlements from the Brazilian parishes, leaving the settlements wholly under the jurisdiction of the *Missionaries for the Italian Emigrants*. I know this is a very difficult matter, but we must absolutely try to achieve this goal.

In the meantime, I would propose -- and I do hereby propose and request -- as an indispensable condition, that the aforementioned Missionaries be given all parochial faculties for the Italian settlers, albeit with the obligation of the Missionaries to transmit to the local pastors an exact copy of the baptisms and weddings performed.

If there is no way of getting full freedom of action and the full exercise of parochial faculties for our Missionaries from that episcopate, I think it would be best to pull our Missionaries out of Brazil and give them a new assignment since I am convinced that it is seriously harmful and gravely unfair to waste very precious energies in a holy work made sterile by the bad will of human beings.³⁶

"The idea of nationality"

The idea of nationality is not something artificial but a reality. Various elements go into its makeup: historical traditions, racial community, love for one's native place, local or family traditions, common joys and sorrows, and so on.

The idea of nationality conforms to the needs of human beings. God had a very valid reason for separating human beings into different nations and assigning boundaries to peoples and nations.

This division was necessary for the moral and material progress of humanity. The difference in the distinctive talents of the various races, as well as the marvelous variety of dispositions, aspirations, and emotions that distinguish one people from another, all contribute to the creation of that great intellectual movement that helps humanity make progress and meets the new needs of times and places.

³⁶ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Sept. 4, 1889 (AGS 3/1).

The division of human beings into various races, into various nationalities encourages emulation, which is the primary source of the moral, intellectual, and material activity of the human race.

Of course, the jealousies and conflicts among nations give rise to mistakes and often to injustices. But this reprehensible selfishness, these petty conflicts do not preclude the great emulation among peoples, the relentless race to be the best -- in which everyone tries to get ahead of his fellows or his adversaries -- from being sources of true and real progress and hence of good.³⁷

“Environment, upbringing, tradition, religion, and culture go into making the sense of nationality”

Environment and upbringing generally make up the sense of nationality, a providential sentiment that makes everyone happy with his or her country and consequently keeps the citizens of an area less endowed than many others from desiring to abandon their country and, following their own fancy, to create another country for themselves in a richer land, with better climate and more favorable business conditions.

I often thought of this providential effect of love of country as I traveled through areas that are pathetic either because of their barren soil or because of their lack of natural beauty or even because of a concentration of circumstances that make them ugly and boring. Everywhere I found the local people bursting with pride over their place of birth, and I said to myself: What a blessing! What a providential design of God! If these people saw their place of birth with my eyes, they would abandon it at once. But then we would have depopulated areas as well as areas where people would cut each other's throat to occupy some of the land. In one and the same country we would have areas that are deserted and others that are too highly populated.

Instead the traditions of one's family, of one's youth, the moral and material environment, one's family and relatives, the customs, all these factors make people forget the worst possible drawbacks. These drawbacks are not able to kill, not even weaken, their love for the place of their birth. This is the foundation of the principle of nationality.

Certainly, looking at things on a big scale, religion plays a big, if not the main, part in the sense of nationality, but it is not the only one to make up the idea of nationality. It is also the moral, religious, and material aspects of the environment of one's place of birth that go into this idea. We have seen the beneficial and providential effect of this idea for the peace of the world and the happiness of human beings.

A people's culture strengthens its sense of nationality because culture gives greater clarity to this sense of nationality. Hence, we see that, as time goes on, the antipathy to foreign domination has become irresistible and that those very peoples, like the Italians and the

³⁷ A memorandum on the need to protect the nationality of the emigrants -- to Leo XIII -- A draft copy of 1891 (AGS 3014/1). In March of 1891, Scalabrini had been asked by Leo XIII to draft a memorandum “on the need to protect the various nationalities” of the emigrants. The memorandum was written by the Marquis G. B. Volpelandi under the inspiration if not the dictation of Bishop Scalabrini.

Southern Slavs who endured so much in the past, today vigorously resist what they more or less tolerated yesterday.³⁸

“The influence that the sentiment of nationality can have over religious sentiment”

Much could be said about the influence the sense of nationality can have over religious sentiment or, better, over the religion of a people and of the citizens that make up the nation. It is enough to repeat what was said before, namely, that since environment, upbringing, historical and family traditions are powerful and, one might even say, exclusive components of the idea of nationality, religion takes first place among the sources from which love of country and national pride are born.

A human being has two great loves that accompany him everywhere: love of God and love of parents and family. Both, along with some other elements, help produce the sense of nationality. So, as long as a human being remains even passively faithful to the faith of his forebears, he or she will feel love of family and with it love of country. The person who abandons religion becomes an apostate and relinquishes the sentiment of nationality as well. So we must conclude that fidelity to one’s faith carries with it fidelity to one’s country, unless a mortal conflict between these two great loves of religion and country drives the foolish to sacrifice the first to the second, something that has invariably happened in the past up to our day wherever the conflict has been long lasting.

The great religious upheavals began this way. The schism of the Eastern Church was caused, to a very large extent, by the reluctance of the people of the Eastern Rites to submit to Rome (...). And so the Eastern Churches were lost, one after the other. This fact is so obvious that Leo XIII himself acknowledged it when, to bring these Churches back to the desired unity, he directed that their rites and ancient traditions which are not contrary to Catholic teaching be respected. He formally forbade Eastern-rite converts to be Latinized. He wanted them to understand that in Catholicism all peoples have the right of citizenship and that, as a universal religion, Catholicism respects all nationalities, their rights, their legitimate aspirations, and their patriotism.

The Protestant heresy, too, was fueled by an ill-conceived sense of nationality. The traditions of Arminius, the desire to crush the papacy, considered a Latin institution -- many Germans still refer to it as the “the Latin iniquity” -- did much to spread Protestantism not only in Germany but also in the Scandinavian countries and in England as well. Painting the Pope as a foreign sovereign, albeit spiritual, they stirred up national sentiment against him; and this was more than enough to solidify the heresy (...). Again, if Catholicism flourishes in Ireland and Poland today, the reason is that Anglicanism and the schism are the religion of the foreign conquerors and the people see in the Catholic religion the bastion of the motherland. Hence, in the past, before the 1827 emancipation, the English tried with fire and sword to protestantize Ireland, sure that, having abandoned the religion of their forefathers and mothers, the Irish would also lose their national pride.

The Russians did the same thing in Poland without much success. The Russians do not trust the Poles because they know that Catholicism is the stronghold of love of country in

³⁸ Ibid.

Poland and feel that, if they could only crush Catholicism, national identity would fade away and the complete assimilation of conqueror and conquered would take place.³⁹

“A sense of nationality has much to say about whether the faith is kept or not”

There is no doubt that the idea of nationality is one of those sentiments that is bound to exercise a great and oftentimes decisive influence on the preservation or loss of a people's faith.

Just as philosophical ideas have their repercussions on the social life of a people -- as ancient and modern history shows -- so too the sense of nationality has always had an influence on religious sentiment. This influence was all the stronger the more intense was the sense of patriotism.

As I said before, what greatly helped to solidify the schism and Protestantism was the idea that those two forms of Christianity were a guarantee of national independence.

The great founders of religions almost always tried to unite the ideas of country and religion so that national sentiment would underpin the people's religion and be the lever with which to lift them out of the old order, drag them onto new paths, and bind them to their wagon (...).

Unfortunately, as I said, whenever the religious sentiment seems to be at odds with the national sentiment, the latter rebels. Since people are more attracted to concrete things rather than to abstract ones, there results a national apostasy or a more or less hostile indifference (...).

Therefore, the sentiment of nationality has much to say on whether a people is to keep the faith or not. In fact, it is a basic factor either in this people's fidelity to the Church or in its apostasy.

This is equally true of nations in general and of individuals. To speak more specifically of individuals, I am certain they exhibit the same symptoms as those that appear in the social and national body as a whole.

As long as people live in their own country, they more or less retain the sentiments that prevail among most of their fellow countrymen. There are exceptions but they do not change the rule.

However, for the emigrants the situation changes.

The emigrants have been flung into a foreign land and are drowning, as it were, in the great ocean of another people or, in countries with mixed populations, among people with customs, traditions, and habits that are totally different from their own.⁴⁰

“What preserves Catholic life is a religious environment”

The faith is perhaps the one thing Catholics lose more easily in a foreign land when the country they happen to live in is Christian but non-Catholic.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

What preserves Catholic life is a religious environment. Ideas are the luxury of very few people. A man of learning can be a Catholic in Rome or New York, among the Lapps, Eskimos, Chinese or Turks. But when he finds himself flung into a foreign land, a worker who is without clear ideas and is ruled by material concerns keeps the faith of his ancestors only if he finds there something reminding him of the environment he left when he had to abandon his country and if he preserves an intense and abiding love for his national traditions. This is why, even in Catholic countries, like those in South America, national pride bolsters religious sentiment. Hence, the poor emigrants need not just the care of a Catholic priest but also the loving attention of an apostle who will nurture in them the ancient traditions of country and family that are basic to their faith.⁴¹

“If the emigrants preserve their traditions, they will remain Catholics”

If the emigrants preserve their traditions, they will remain Catholics. If they lose them, they will imperceptibly become Protestants in Protestant countries and Freemasons or indifferent individuals in Catholic countries, especially since they will unfortunately find incentives spurring them on to apostasy, even at the hands of our own perverse countrymen.

But tradition is the greatest obstacle to this loss of faith. A person who has limited ideas and is therefore subject to a narrower range of sentiments is more tenacious in his traditions than the learned man. But, vice versa, when these traditional sentiments, this undying memory of one’s place of birth, epitomized by the family home, the Church, the sacred functions, and the pastor, fade away in him, either he changes radically and is assimilated into his new environment or he loses all morality and becomes a solitary, a person unto himself, absorbed in material things, with no ideals or supernatural principles.⁴²

“A person cannot live alone and abandoned”

There is no question that a worker who loses his national traditions, to a great extent loses the *raison d’être* of his faith. Vice versa when he keeps his faith intact, he also preserves his national traditions intact.

The millions of Italian, Spanish, German Catholics, etc., scattered in the vast ocean of Protestantism or indifference in North America were lost because, from the moment they disembarked on those distant foreign shores, they found they were alone and abandoned.

Now, a person cannot live alone and abandoned for long. A human being is essentially social. He can hold out against isolation for a while. But if he is not overwhelmed by homesickness in the foreign land, he ends up adapting to the environment. When, like the vast majority of our emigrants, he is uneducated, together with the new national ways he also absorbs the religious practices of his new homeland, thus apostatizing from the two great loves of the human heart: religion and country.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Il Progresso Italo-Americano,” Aug. 7, 1901, p. 1.

⁴³ Letter to the Italians of Boston, Oct. 28, 1891, quoted by V. Gregori, *Venticinque anni di Missione fra gli Immigrati Italiani di Boston, Mass. 1888-1913*, Milan, p. 246.

“I consider schools necessary”

I consider Italian schools necessary because only the mother tongue can give the unity and force now missing in the vast emigrant population. All the children should be able to speak Italian and, through it, learn their national history and foster in their hearts the ideals that bind us to the motherland.

Crossing the ocean on the S/S Liguria, I did nothing else but hear the confessions, one by one, of the thousand or more emigrants traveling with me. How many tears I saw flowing from the eyes of these poor people, almost all of them Sicilians! If you could only imagine with what emotion they listened to my words that reminded them of the homeland they had just abandoned. On the S/S Liguria, in mid ocean, they had prepared an altar on deck, with the miter and crosier, where I celebrated a solemn Mass, gave First Communion to the little emigrant children, and administered Confirmation as well. Then I preached. I'll never, never forget that scene. I spoke to those Italians of their country and of their faith. I saw them all crying!

Oh, why shouldn't these sentiments remain intact in their hearts even in the future? Why neglect to keep alive the Italian language in them?

I came here to take action. So I will make every effort to introduce even the American clergy to these ideas. I have spoken to Archbishop Corrigan about this and told him that I feel it necessary for the Italians, first and above all, to be united in preserving their mother tongue so that the religious faith itself might spread and become stronger among them. I believe no one, not even the Americans, should oppose this idea.⁴⁴

“School and nuns”

I will pray for all of you because I want the community of Boston to become the most flourishing and religious of all the communities in the United States. But to obtain this grace, you must keep alive the idea of an Italian School, with the Sisters as teachers.⁴⁵

“A unified catechism”

Given the multiplicity of texts used in the various dioceses, the missionaries themselves will have a hard time giving catechetical instructions. So we should really adopt just one text. The one used in Piacenza could very well be adopted. It is used to a large extent in the dioceses of Northern Italy and even in Piedmont. What do you think, Your Eminence? I

⁴⁴ Letter to Cardinal A. Agliardi, 1901 (AGS 3020/2).

⁴⁵ Letter to E. Schiaparelli, Jan. 30, 1888 (AGS 2/1). The Egyptologist, Ernesto Schiaparelli, from Florence, was secretary of the National Association for the support of Italian Catholic missionaries. He was the first secretary of the Opera Bonomelli.

am convinced that the Holy Father will soon satisfy the universal desire for a unified catechism, and that will be the end of the problem.⁴⁶

“Assisting the emigrants on both their outward trip and their return trip”

Your Eminence, I must tell you that it is supremely important to assist the emigrants on both their outward trip and their return trip, especially now that the Episcopalians have set up their mission on Italian steamships, a decision they made at their convention in San Francisco this past September.

To stymie their nefarious efforts as much as possible, I have informed the various administrations about it. They will issue timely directives in this regard. But, more than anything else, the pastoral care of the Catholic priest will be the decisive factor.⁴⁷

“The need for an Italian orphanage”

I am leaving Sao Paulo quite happy because with this excellent Bishop I was able to arrange various matters that will prove very beneficial to our poor expatriates who here, more than back in Italy, are hungry for the word of God and for the sacraments. Like true apostles, the Missionaries of St. Charles are indefatigably visiting the more than two thousand fazendas of this diocese. They try to visit them as often as possible but surely not more than once a year even though there are twelve missionaries. But I will have to increase their numbers, also to give better care to the important charitable works they have created in the past ten years or so. Before, the Italian orphans would all take to ruinous paths. The first Missionaries sent here soon realized the need for an Italian orphanage. So they rolled up their sleeves and bravely got down to work. God came to their help. They have already gathered 802 youngsters, trained them, and set them up with a trade. At the moment, we have 242 youngsters here, in two large buildings outside the city. Here they study, pray, learn a trade, and prepare themselves to become good Christians. They subsist on donations our Missionaries receive during their never-ending apostolic excursions. What surprises me most is that they don't have any debt whatsoever. God sees and God provides.⁴⁸

“A hospital: symbol of unity and peace”

Your desire to see a hospital for the Italians become a reality could not be more legitimate, holier and more timely. I can only bless it. Certainly nothing pleases God more than the care of the sick. It is one of the most beautiful forms of Christian and civic life (...).

⁴⁶ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Oct. 12, 1890 (AGS 4/1). The Cardinal replied affirmatively.

⁴⁷ Letter to Cardinal M. Ledóchowski, Feb. 17, 1902 (AGS 9/2). Cardinal Miecislaus Ledóchowski succeeded Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni as Prefect of Propaganda Fide.

⁴⁸ Letter to Pius X, July 22, 1904 (AGS 3019/3).

But the care of the sick -- useful and praiseworthy everywhere and in whatever form -- becomes an absolute necessity for expatriates and a special duty for those united by the powerful bond of nationality, which is a substitute for the family back in the homeland.

In your letter, gentlemen, you have expressed this fact eloquently. In a society like the one in your illustrious metropolis, where every nationality has its churches and hospitals, it would be a shame for our people not to have them, too.

May this desired charitable institution rise. May it rise soon through the intelligent and efficient cooperation of everyone, and may it be a lasting symbol of unity and peace in your midst. When it comes to charity, all strife should disappear, every enterprise should have free reign without exclusion or favoritism, without partisanship and without discrimination.⁴⁹

“The means of communication”

I very much want to inform the public, especially the men of the Church, how desperate are the spiritual needs of the Italian emigrants in America and how urgent it is to do something for them.

What would help a lot is the sending of Missionaries, the establishment of the aforementioned committees and the use of other means of communication, as is commonly done in similar cases. We must not forget the religious publications and special wide-circulation pamphlets with which to inform the Italian Catholic public.

Let me mention an example from another field. With the most powerful means at his disposal, Prime Minister Gladstone was unable to secure the freedom of Ireland. He is now trying to obtain it by enlightening the English people with his pamphlet, *The History of an Idea*. If others think that through the press they can help achieve -- and soon will achieve -- their goal, namely, the freedom of a people from political bondage, why couldn't the press help achieve the freedom of our fellow citizens from an immensely more harmful slavery?⁵⁰

d) EMIGRATION: A CONCERN FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

“A Congregation that in the name of the Holy Father would prescribe the measures required”

Most Holy Father, I make bold to submit an idea to you. Your Holiness, you have chosen a sublime and fruitful program for yourself: *Instaurare omnia in Christo* (to renew all things in Christ). Through the marvelous institution of Propaganda Fide, the Church spends so much money and engages so many priests for the spread of the faith among unbelievers. Will the Church not do something similar for the preservation of the faith of the emigrants

⁴⁹ Letter to an Italian committee in New York, Dec. 12, 1890 (AGS 3023/2). The Christopher Columbus Hospital was opened by Fr, Felice Morelli and later acquired by St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.

⁵⁰ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Feb. 16, 1887 (AGS 1/1).

from all the Catholic nations and regions: Italians, Germans, Spaniards, Portuguese, Canadians, etc.? A special Congregation dedicated to this problem, the greatest in our time, would bring honor to the Holy See, bring people closer to this loving mother, and do so much good. In the United States of North America, the losses to Catholicism are in the millions, certainly much more numerous than the conversions of unbelievers made in our Missions in three centuries. And, despite appearances, these losses are continuing. Protestants are working hard in the United States and here, too, to lead souls astray.

Now, the Church needs a Congregation to be in contact with the bishops from whose dioceses Catholic emigrants are leaving and the bishops to whose dioceses they will be going. If needs be, this Congregation would be in contact with the respective Governments. The Congregation would study this difficult and complex problem from all angles, using ancient and modern research tools, when necessary, and in the name of the Holy Father would determine the measures required. Such a Congregation would be a blessing for the world and would suffice to make your pontificate glorious.

Most Holy Father, forgive the boldness of this loving and grateful son of yours, who would give his blood and his very life for you and your cause. I beg you to continue to send me your blessing, which I receive every day on my knees with deep faith, so that, with God's help, I may do the work I came here to do and be able to be back with my beloved people for the Feast of All Saints.⁵¹

“Memorandum on the Congregation or Commission Pro Emigratis Catholicis”

Part One

(Presentation of the Problem)

Your Eminence,

I have the honor to submit some considerations and proposals to you on the present and future conditions of Catholicism in the two Americas.

These observations and proposals are the fruit of long studies done on the spot. In fact, they are the fruit of the experience of outstanding missionaries and illustrious bishops who have consecrated their lives to the spread of the faith in those regions.

Never before, when writing about this subject, have I been so deeply moved as I am at this moment. Never have I invoked with greater intensity enlightenment from heaven and the grace of eloquence that comes from words enriched with statistics and data. For I wish to transmit my inmost convictions on this most important topic to other people's hearts.

The things I saw during my trips throughout the United States of North America and throughout Brazil are burnt into my memory almost as if they were present now. The emotions I experienced then will never be erased from my heart.

I visited densely populated cities and newly founded communities, fields made productive by human work and immense plains untouched by human hands. I met emigrants who reached the peaks of wealth, others who lived comfortable lives, and the majority -- the vast, shadowy army of the unfortunate -- struggling for survival against the hazards of the

⁵¹ Letter to Pius X, July 22, 1904 (AGS 3019/3).

desert and the dangers of unwholesome climates, against human greed, left alone, in utter abandonment, without religious or civil care, without anything. I heard hearts beat in unison with mine when I talked to them in the name of religion in their own mother tongue. I saw, oh what a terrible sight! I saw the faith extinguished in millions of souls for lack of spiritual nourishment and unfortunately also because of the unworthiness of the Church's ministers.

I saw the practices of Christian life and the ineffable hopes of the faith reflower in entire populations under the inspiration of holy apostles. It was a springtime of souls.

In a word, I saw that if the Church of God does not play a greater role in those regions than it does at present in guiding the lives of both communities and individuals, if souls are lost by the millions, the reason to a large extent is due to the lack of a well organized apostolic work suited to local conditions and also to the lack of priests rather than to the activity, although great, of the enemies of the faith. I am deeply convinced that we must confront this crisis with a sense of urgency, that we who have been called to rule the Church would commit a serious mistake, not to say a grave fault, if we let a state of affairs continue that is causing great harm to souls and is diminishing the social importance of the Church in the face of the enemies of God (...).

The kinds of European immigration to America, after the brief war of conquest, are totally different from all other immigrations recorded in the annals of history.

We are not witnessing hordes of barbarians sowing death and destruction but armies of peaceful workers seeking bread, prosperity, and tranquility in other lands. No longer the onrush of a torrent that overwhelms everything, but the quiet and unruffled flood of waters bringing fertility! No longer the extermination of peoples, but fusion and adaptation, by which different nationalities meet, intermingle, acquire new strength, and give rise to new peoples! Despite differences, these new peoples display specific characteristics and particular religious and civil tendencies typical of the whole national group (...).

The Catholic Church is called by her divine mission and her age-old tradition to play an important role in this vast social movement which aims at the economic revival and fusion of Christian peoples.

Just as she has done always and everywhere, the Church, even in this great clash of interests, has a beautiful and noble mission to fulfill: first, to look after the defense of the faith, its spread, and the salvation of souls; then, to take her seat as the common mother and queen among the various groups so as to soften the edges of the various nationalities and moderate the conflicts of interest of the various national groups; in a word, to harmonize the variety of origins in the reconciling unity of the faith (...).

What must the Church do to keep the religious spirit alive and dynamic and the Catholic faith strong in nations with such a rich and promising future, to which the Catholic people of Europe every year keep sending such large numbers of emigrants of different nationalities?

The question is simple, not so the answer. An adequate answer must be at once varied and comprehensive, general and particular: a general answer, because of the authority from which it emanates; a particular and diversified answer, depending on the environments in which it is to be applied, the different needs it hopes to address, the laws and customs of the individual countries, and, I would say, the individual Christian communities that are being formed.

I will try to be brief and explain everything succinctly.

Part Two

(Gravity and urgency of the problem)

From the very beginning of the Discovery, the Church carried out her mission in America by curbing the greed and brutality of the conquerors and civilizing the natives. One example among many is the fight waged by the clergy to defend the natives and the Christian communities founded among the Guarany Indians in the Missions of Paraguay. These communities formed a vast political and religious empire, admired even by writers not too kind to Catholicism, and appropriately called *The Republic of the Saints*.

But, later on, as times changed, the clergy got excessively involved in politics, and the colonial political power in Latin America was anything but good. It was foolishly tyrannical and grasping not only with the natives but also with the Americanized descendants of Europe. The saying that a European shoemaker had a greater right to govern a colony than the most brilliant Creole became an axiom of those colonial Governments, which seemed to have been purposely set up to alienate those rising generations from the motherland and to instill in them a deep-seated hostility to everything European. The moral divorce got worse and worse until it burst into open rebellion. This state of animosity and rebellion had repercussions on religion because most of the people believed that the clergy was in league with the Governments, as was often the case. If we add to this the scarcity of churches and priests, we have to conclude that in those regions Catholicism existed in name more than in fact, to the great moral and religious detriment of both governments and people.

When the waves of emigration began, many priests also crossed the ocean; but unfortunately, with rare exceptions, they represented everything bad that the clergy could offer in terms of morals. There, almost without restraint, with a scandalous life and illicit trade in holy things, they brought shame and ignominy on religion and ruined entire populations.

Now, the problem is to restore all things in Christ in those regions as well.

To this end much has been done, but it is very little compared to what still has to be done. Given the dangers to their faith, all the emigrants of the various nationalities need the vigilant and maternal care of the Church. But Italian emigration deserves special attention because, of all those peoples, the Italians, if I may say so, are perfectly foreigners. In the United States, the Spaniards and the Portuguese found vast areas where their language is spoken, while the English and the Irish have a second motherland there and in the British territories, at least as far as religious care is concerned. Only the Italians live there abandoned to themselves. There was a time, not long ago, when, because of intolerance, they were shabbily served even in Catholic churches! The same is true of the Poles, the Ruthenians, and the Germans.

On my recent trips through those regions, I have witnessed demonstrations of faith that moved me to tears. But I have also accumulated a catalog of anecdotes and stories that make me blush as a bishop when I think that the abandonment in which the emigrants were left for so many years could ever have happened and, in fact, is still continuing to happen to so many people even in our day! There are hundreds of thousands of our expatriate brothers and sisters who are pleading in vain for a priest to speak to them of God in the language of their distant motherland.

This is also the fate of the Poles, who are torn by schism, of the Canadians, of the Germans -- who do not have the good Jesuit Fathers as they do in the State of Rio Grande do Sul -- of the Ruthenians with the burning question of celibacy for their priests, of the Italo-Greeks, and of other new waves of Catholic emigration, disseminated a bit all over (...).

Part Three

(Proposed Remedies and Function of the Congregation)

As I mentioned above, I believe that the first remedy lies in a wise plan for the apostolic work to be done in the Americas. This plan should emanate from the Holy See, an authority not only undisputed and indisputable among the entire Catholic clergy, but universal in nature and therefore embracing all nationalities.

We should see to it that every settlement or community with very many emigrants should have its own priest. He should reside in the urban center of the settlement and opportunely and periodically make the rounds of the territory assigned to him, a territory that oftentimes is as vast as any of our biggest Provinces.

This work must be complemented by that of the school, in which, together with the rudiments of reading, the children of the emigrants will learn writing and arithmetic, the language of the country that is to become their new homeland, and the language of the country they have left behind, because a supremely important element for the preservation of religion is precisely the sense of roots appropriately instilled into the Americanized generations.

Language is a mysterious means for preserving the faith. It is not easy to explain why, but it is a fact that, by losing the language, people easily lose their ancestral religion as well. It is hard to put one's finger on the mysterious reason for this, but experience shows that as long as a family abroad holds on to its language, it will hardly ever lose its faith.

Religious Sisters could be used for the schools. I found that the Sisters of the Sacred Heart have been successful in this work in some settlements in Brazil as well as in urban centers.

Since among those young communities the good must always go hand in hand with the useful, it would be good to set up a pharmaceutical dispensary in many places, next to church and school. This dispensary would be run by the Sisters themselves or by the priest and would dispense the most common medicines to the sick, at cost.

In this way, the multifaceted work of religious, civil, and material care would center around the priests, and the Church of God would be blessed for her presence among those people. Once more people would see that, like her divine Founder, the Church, too, "passed by doing good and healing everyone."

Everything I have said thus far has to do with South America.

For North America the dangers for losing the faith are even greater because, besides those deriving from the lack of priests, which I mentioned above, we must add the proselytizing work of the Protestant sects, which are more active and numerous there than elsewhere.

The losses sustained in the United States because of the lack of religious care are enormous. Statistics tell us that two thirds of the present population of the United States, that is, 48 million, is made up of immigrants from different European countries. Sad to say, though a good number of these immigrants come from Catholic countries, Catholics in the United States number only 10 million. Now, there is no question that Catholics in the United States could be more than double the number they are at present if those who had emigrated there had only remained Catholic. The emigrants would have remained Catholic if, upon their arrival and later on, they had received the necessary religious care. In fact, emigrants tenaciously preserve everything that reminds them of their country of origin and of their ancestral faith. But, unfortunately, the clergy in North America, like in South America, are not enough and, besides, have a language problem. There is a twofold problem: for the

immigrants, especially those of Latin background, learning English; for the Anglo-Saxon clergy, learning Romance languages.

Now, besides the sending of numerous, well-prepared national priests, these would be the remedies to this situation:

- 1) The establishment of parishes for the various nationalities whenever the Catholic communities are able to provide for the expenses of such an institution, including support of the priests and the exercise of divine worship. The laws of the United States are extremely liberal and grant civil protection to any parish association and do not discriminate against any religion or nationality. The experience of establishing Italian parishes in various cities has clearly shown the importance of this very simple means to rekindle the faith and the desire of religious practices even in people who seemed most opposed to them.
- 2) In places where several nationalities live together and none of them is able by itself to form a parish, there should be a mixed clergy, with the strict obligation of giving religious instruction to the adults and catechism to the children in their respective native languages.
- 3) It is desirable that, if possible, the priests be from the nationality of the parishioners or, at least, that they speak their language.
- 4) It is advisable that in every parish there be a school where, together with English and the basic rudiments of education, the national language of the parishioners is taught. The establishment of parochial schools where the national language is taught along with English is of primary importance not only to tap into the feelings of patriotism -- so strong in expatriates -- in the interest of religion but also to remove the youngsters from the influence of the American school, which, because of its spirit of perfect neutrality toward religion, becomes, in effect, an atheistic school....

I have thus already outlined much of what should be the purpose and work of the proposed central Congregation (Commission) *pro Emigratis Catholicis*.

The need for such a Congregation (Commission) and the benefits it could confer are evident. For new phenomena there should be new organisms suitable to the needs. Isolated instructions and measures, however good they may be, are not enough, since it stands to reason that they count very little without an organism ensuring their implementation and keeping them operative. In fact, instructions and measures to this effect have been issued by the Holy See, in particular by His Holiness, Leo XIII. But, for many reasons I cannot go into now, these instructions did not have the desired results.

The phenomenon of emigration is universal, and the Congregation (Commission) in question should be universal in authority and central in position. The work of individual bishops, unaware of what the others are doing, can end up in a waste of energies.

All European Governments have felt the need to create new administrative organisms to regulate emigration at home, to keep an eye on it abroad wherever it ends up, and, more importantly, to safeguard it against the innumerable snares set for the poor expatriates by the clash of interests. With even greater reason, obviously, should the Church plan to guide and defend her sons and daughters who emigrate to Protestant countries or to completely new countries where they do not have adequate religious care and thus lose the gift of faith. Only a Congregation of the Holy See, could -- without jealousies on the part of various Governments or the American bishops -- set up national parishes, the only ones, in my opinion, that can adequately counteract the harmful work of the Protestant sects, especially

in countries where they are predominant. Only such a Congregation could bring back the schismatic Poles to the Church with wise measures and keep the other nationalities faithful. How should this Congregation be set up?

I believe it should comprise representatives of the various nationalities that account for the greatest emigrant quotas, namely two Italians, one Pole, one German, one Canadian, etc.

These representatives should be competent people who know the conditions and needs of their countrymen and also speak Italian so that the various members can communicate with the head of the Congregation, as well as with people in other related Roman Congregations. This could easily be achieved by turning to the religious congregations who have devoted themselves to the care of their emigrant countrymen and women.

What should be the purpose and task of this Congregation?

The purpose should be to provide spiritual assistance to the emigrants, especially those in the Americas, and, in this way, keep alive in their hearts the Catholic faith and Christian values.

The Congregation's task would be:

- 1) to study the complex and serious problem of emigration, first of all by preparing a questionnaire on it and keeping well informed of the Catholic emigrant flow.
- 2) to promote the establishment of Catholic committees in the more important parishes, while respecting the praiseworthy private initiatives already active in this field.
- 3) to stimulate, through the bishops, the zeal of pastors on behalf of these committees and to suggest practical ways to help the committees, especially at the moment of the emigrants' departure and arrival.
- 4) to reply to inquiries that might be made regarding the measures adopted or to be adopted and to smooth out the difficulties that might arise concerning emigration either back home or in foreign countries.
- 5) to ensure above all that the emigrants are accompanied by priests during their voyage to and from their destination and also that the various settlements are provided with good, zealous missionaries. And so on.

Part Four

(Observations on various points)

I feel I should make a few observations on these three last points.

Not all the priests who dedicate themselves to the spiritual care of the emigrants have the necessary qualities of zeal, piety, and spirit of self-sacrifice that a good missionary should have. In fact, many abuse their ministry, becoming traders in sacred things and authentic buyers of gold rather than seekers of souls. This perhaps is the reason why many bishops feel a certain antipathy against foreign priests who want to enter their dioceses to take care of their countrymen and why some bishops have decided to have the native priests study languages, assigning them eventually to foreign communities in their dioceses. In practice, this decision cannot be very fruitful, either because knowing national languages is not enough if one does not know also the different dialects spoken in the various Provinces or because learning a language does not necessarily make one understand the culture of the people. Hence the importance of the choice of priests to whom the spiritual care of the communities will be entrusted.

The Congregation could easily take care of this need if all priests wishing to go to the communities as missionaries had recourse to it and if bishops who need missionaries for the foreigners living in their dioceses did the same thing.

The Congregation would have no trouble getting reliable information on those aspiring to the Missions and judging their attitudes, while the bishops asking for them would feel fortunate to be able to admit into their dioceses priests recommended and approved by the Congregation (...).

It is consoling to see that in the past few years bishops have been trying to provide priests for the emigrants.

But it is equally sad to think that for such a long time many bishops have utterly neglected the religious needs of so many hundreds of thousands of poor emigrants.

How well the brave missionaries who first rushed to do work in the settlements know this. How much suspicion and mistrust they had to overcome. With what coldness they were received. How many difficulties they had to surmount. How often their efforts were rejected with contempt!

Even today, notwithstanding this holy reawakening by the bishops, if we think of how much more needs to be done, we realize how little has in fact been accomplished.

It would be up to the Congregation to keep an eye on the great flows of emigration; to classify the various communities, from the biggest with hundreds of thousands of members down to the smallest; to keep an exact count of the churches and of the priests assigned to the emigrants' care; and to require that provision be made for pastoral care wherever necessary. The Congregation would help the bishops by offering advice, making recommendations, sending them good priests, urging the religious congregations to give their strong support, providing all the means at the Congregation's disposal, and doing so with loving solicitude.

The Congregation could send its own people on the spot to ascertain in person how the spiritual needs of the emigrants are being provided for. The Congregation must not be satisfied with the reports sent in by the bishops who most of the times do not reflect the real situation of the communities but the good intentions of those who prepare the reports.

Regarding the problems that emerge so often everywhere, we have to realize that they are almost always the result of the diversity of languages, differences of character, different customs and practices, and a hundred other reasons.

If not eliminated, these problems will become a source of friction, abuse, retaliation, and strife, all to the detriment of the communities and the churches and to the benefit of the non-Catholic sects, who take advantage of such a situation to vilify the Church and her priests.

Also in these cases, should the members of the Congregation go on the spot, they could easily and surely ascertain the reasons for the unrest, report back to the Congregation, and take immediate measures.

Yes, there are Congregations whose task it is to settle the disputes that might arise in similar cases. But the customary slowness with which they proceed to settle them, due partly to the enormous distances, the solemnity these matters assume when they are brought before the Congregations, the difficulty in having quick and sure information, the lack of knowledge of the environment where the problems have emerged are all obstacles that serve to perpetuate a situation that is harming the interests of the contending parties.

The Congregation should also make a serious study on the best means with which to counteract the active and persistent propaganda the Protestants are directing -- and not without success -- especially at the Italians in the United States. Oh, how many distressing things I could say about this matter!

Another heartbreaking fact the Congregation should be concerned with is the proliferation of the so-called independent churches, especially in the Polish communities.

From what I have briefly stated thus far and from all that could still be written on this subject, were one to study this problem in greater depth, he would easily understand what a vast, down-to-earth field of activity would belong to the Congregation under consideration. Everyone can imagine what a magnificent impression the establishment of such a Congregation would make on millions of poor emigrants in whose hearts by now has entered the discouraging conviction, albeit false, that their Father, the Supreme Pontiff, does not care about them.

Part Five

(Practical suggestions for implementation of the plan)

As I said, the plan would have built-in efficacy because of the authority accruing to it from the Holy See. This efficacy would be increased by demonstrating the timeliness and seriousness of the measures, by insisting that the bishops implement the decisions of the Congregation (using penal sanctions when necessary), by requiring an annual report from them on what was done in this regard, by occasionally sending some special observer on the spot, by bestowing honors on the more active and deserving people, etc.

An annual collection could be taken up in all the churches of the various nationalities to set up a fund, of which one part would go for the administration of the Congregation itself and the rest for the needs of the emigrants. If Leo XIII could request a similar collection for the trade of Blacks slaves, could the present Pope not request one for the trade of Whites slaves? Surely, everybody would gladly contribute to this collection because the need is more easily understood and felt.

In my opinion, it would also be a good thing to assign to this work of universal interest at least a part of the proceeds from the new authorized editions of -- for example -- the liturgical books, catechisms, and so on. No one would oppose this.

Since this work aims solely at the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, could God not bless it?

I will end with the following very significant words of Theodore Roosevelt, taken from the last issue of the *Revue* of Paris:

“The immigrant arrives almost without protection. Generally, he does not know our language, is unfamiliar with our institutions, our way of life, our customs, and our way of thinking. I am sorry to say there are many swindlers who hope to make a living by fleecing him. Unless somebody on the spot helps him, he is literally lost. A philanthropic or religious organization could do no more beautiful work than that of extending a helping hand to the men and women who come to us to become citizens or are parents of citizens. If we do not care for them, if we fail to improve their lot, our sons and daughters will undoubtedly pay the price. Either they rise or we fall.”⁵²

⁵² Letter to Cardinal R. Merry del Val, May 5, 1905 (AGS 3020/1). The entire text of the memorial was published by M. Francesconi, *Un progetto di Mons. Scalabrini per l'assistenza agli emigrati di tutte le nazionalità* in “Studi Emigrazione,” N. 25-26, March-June 1972, pp. 185-203.

“It would be the mustard seed”

Please pardon me if I bother you again regarding the plan, *Pro emigratis catholicis*. The matter is much too important. In the Memorandum I recently sent you on this matter, I wrote: “I believe the Congregation should comprise representatives of the various nationalities which account for the greatest emigrant quotas, etc. These representatives should be competent persons who know the conditions and needs of their countrymen and women and also speak Italian so that the various members can communicate with the head of the Congregation, as well as with people in other related Roman Congregations. This, I added, could easily be achieved by turning to the religious congregations who have devoted themselves to the care of their emigrant countrymen and women.”

Now, if I may be even more practical and help facilitate the matter, I would propose that three missionaries of the Congregation of St. Charles (two from North America and one from South America) be called to Rome to devote themselves to the work of preparation, using to this end their experiences and studies, as well as the insights of other missionaries living in Rome.

If, in the ongoing reorganization of the parishes, we could have a church in Rome with an attached residence, the project would soon become a reality, without much ado and with very little expense. It would be precisely the *granum senapis* (the mustard seed) that subsequently could spread farther and farther with the Lord’s blessing, as Your Eminence wrote me recently.⁵³

3. THE MISSIONARIES OF ST. CHARLES FOR THE MIGRANTS

In January 1887, Bishop Scalabrini contacted the Holy See and offered to organize at once a society of priests to assist the emigrants. In February, he submitted the first proposal and in the following months refined it. On Nov. 15, Leo XIII gave his approval to the foundation of the Congregation of the Missionaries for the emigrants, which was officially born on Nov. 28, 1887.

Soon enough, the need was felt to complete the undertaking with a Congregation of women religious, which, in fact, was born on Oct. 25, 1895, with the help of Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti and Mother Assunta Marchetti.

The two Congregations share in the missionary activity of the Church. The “mission” is conferred by the Pope and carried out under the guidance of the bishops. Union with Christ and the universal Church is assured by union with the bishops and the Pope. The local Church guarantees a pastoral methodology that is suited to the particular needs of the migrants.

The Missionary Fathers and Brothers and the Missionary Sisters obey the Redeemer’s missionary mandate and continue the mission of Christ who was sent to bring good news to the poor. The Missionaries fulfill Christ’s mission in the same way the Lord himself fulfilled it. They share in his Paschal “exodus” through the Cross. They also share in his

⁵³ Letter to Cardinal R. Merry del Val, May 17, 1905 (AGS 3020/1).

incarnation which took place within the social and cultural environment in which he lived -- poor, chaste, and obedient -- within an apostolic community.

a) THE FOUNDATION

“A society of priests to help the emigrants”

A few months ago, a former student of mine in the Como seminary, now a priest and professor, came to see me, as he had done more than once. He had to take a trip to America to see his father and his family there. While in America, he was deeply moved and saddened to see the religious abandonment in which hundreds of thousands of Italian emigrants were living. There he found groups that could easily form parishes of several thousand people who are presently living and dying without seeing the face of a priest, without hearing a religious word, without receiving the sacraments, living and dying like animals. It is heartrending just to think about the situation. This priest visited some of these small communities and told me of the tumultuous, festive welcome he had received and of the need those poor people felt for at least an occasional visit from some minister of the Lord.

Your Eminence, is there no way we can help those people? People make so many great sacrifices for the conversion of unbelievers. Shall we allow our countrymen, already Catholic, to perish? Your Eminence, should we not be thinking of a society of Italian priests whose task it would be to provide spiritual care to the Italian emigrants in the Americas, to watch over their departure and arrival, and to look after their Christian needs as much as possible?

I know that some years ago the Archbishops of Genoa and Naples came up with a similar idea, but I think little or nothing came of it. Personally, I would be prepared to dedicate myself to such a project and begin it at once, though on the smallest possible scale, but to begin it for real.⁵⁴

“Project for an association to look after the spiritual needs of the Italian emigrants in the Americas”

Here is my project or rather the rough copy of a project for the care of the Italian emigrants in the Americas, drafted by me in accordance with the wishes the Holy Father expressed to me through your Eminence (...).

Your Eminence, if you ever feel you want to use my poor person either to prepare the appeal to the Italian bishops and the circular letter to the bishops of America or for anything else, I will always feel honored to be of some service to you. However, the initiative for this most noble enterprise should come from the Holy See, and all the relevant documents should bear the signature of Your Eminence.

⁵⁴ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Jan. 11, 1887 (AGS 1/1). The priest who was the former student of Scalabrini was Fr. Francesco Zaboglio, who became the first vicar general of the Scalabrinian missionaries.

Surely the clergy of Italy would then respond enthusiastically to the invitation. I have confidentially talked to several priests about this idea, as if it were a distant possibility, and these priests are ready to leave at any time....

“The need to provide”

I do not believe I have to speak at length about the need to provide help and spiritual care for the Italians who emigrate to America because the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith is better aware of the situation than others as a result of the reports of the Archbishops of New York and New Orleans and of the Fathers of the Third Council of Baltimore.

Similar reports, perhaps even more discouraging, have been undoubtedly submitted also by the bishops of South America and Australia (...).

I shall omit the years before 1881. In 1881 the Italians who emigrated from their country were 28,217, an incredibly enormous number it seemed at the time. In 1882, this figure rose to 58,290 and in 1883 to 62,704. In 1884, there was a letup: just 60,489. But lo and behold, in 1885, the number jumped again and reached 83,786. If those unfortunate people were only all adults! But what saddens my heart more than anything else is that of those 83,786, there were no fewer than 15,642 children! (...). I am not counting those who left from foreign ports, like Marseilles, Toulon, and Le Havre.

So, since hundreds of thousands of Italians are living in America, scattered in the cities and the countryside or lost in the forests, without religious care, not counting those who will follow them..., it is clear that we must provide for those who have emigrated, for those who will be emigrating, and for their children.

“Urgent need to provide”

It is imperative that we provide for the spiritual needs of so many hundreds of thousands of our countrymen and do so as soon as possible.

If we delay any more, the damage will be irreparable.

Unbelievers, heretics and, above all, Freemasons, who are very powerful in America, are actively working to take possession of the minds and hearts of the emigrants. While, at the moment, it is only a question of bringing wayward Catholics back to the right path, in the not-too-distant future these same emigrants will be unbelievers, heretics, Freemasons, and atheists whom we will be trying to convert.

These miserable people themselves, who because of poverty or other crying reasons had to abandon their native country, are begging and pleading that someone go to their help.

An Italian gentleman who had come back from a long trip of exploration in America was telling me he had come upon groups of families from the mountains of Piacenza. They were tearfully asking about their bishop and begging the traveler to implore the bishop in his kindness not to forget them but to send them a priest, at least for a few months. It was heart-rending, the gentleman said, to hear those wretched people regret the happiness lost and remember their festivities, their little church, and their sacred functions. They said that the bishop should somehow be concerned also with their eternal salvation. They were ready to make any sacrifice to defray the expenses of getting a priest, etc. “If he has no pity

on us,” they said, “we will become worse than pagans. And, what is even worse, very many are dying without reconciling themselves with God.”

These simple words welling up from hearts still full of faith vividly express the tragic conditions in which almost all our emigrants live. The need to provide assistance is obvious. *Fiat, fiat!*

“How to provide the help”

First of all, I believe that it is necessary to dispatch priests to the areas where our fellow citizens live. These priests will be without a fixed residence and there, with the understanding of the local Ordinary, will conduct missions of fifteen to twenty days more or less, depending on the needs. These priests should erect chapels, find the means for the support of a priest, take note of the various places and their condition, of the number of inhabitants, etc., and send all the information to the person whom the Holy See will appoint head of the Pious Association (...).

The Holy See should order the bishops, or at least recommend, that they let these vocations go free and not oppose them in the least. The Italian bishops should not complain about losing good priests because it is a question of providing for the spiritual good of their far-off diocesan faithful. These are unquestionably in greater need than the others, who, even in dioceses where there are few priests, will always find the means of salvation if they wish (...).

Priests from any Italian diocese will be admitted to this Pious Association as long as they are approved to hear confessions and are at least thirty years old or have exercised the ministry for three years (...). It is absolutely indispensable that aspirants be truly pious, docile, irrefragable, and full of zeal for the salvation of souls (...).

The Missionaries commit themselves to working in the Italian communities for at least one year but may stay longer, if they wish, even all their life if they feel inspired by the Lord to consecrate themselves unreservedly to this most noble cause.

Before departure, the new Missionaries will gather for a month in a place of retreat (...) and there fortify their spirit in the practice of meditation and prayer, as the Apostles did in the Cenacle before leaving to evangelize the world (...).

Before departure, the Missionaries will take an oath not to keep for themselves money or gifts people might offer them but to hand everything over to the Superior of the Pious Association, returning to their respective dioceses in the same condition as when they left them.

The Missionaries can busy themselves only with catechizing, preaching, instructing, administering the sacraments, etc., and will be called back to Italy at once if they get involved in other things not in keeping with the purpose set down by the Holy See (...).

Every three months, on a weekday, they will get together in groups of five or six, depending on the distances and the local problems, to take care of their own spiritual needs and at the same time exchange ideas and information and give each other help and encouragement.

“How to begin this work?”

For Italy

Address an appeal to all the Italian bishops and through them to their priests. Encourage priests to cooperate concretely in this holy undertaking. Make known to them the desires of the Holy See and the above mentioned requirements (...).

Committees will be set up especially at the ports to assist the Missionaries, to direct emigrants to them, to collect funds, and so on.

For America

- 1) A circular letter should be written, in Latin, to the bishops of America, asking them to indicate as soon as possible the needs of the Italian emigrants; also asking the bishops how they would provide for the priests who might be sent to them.
- 2) Urge them to help the cause by collecting funds for it, especially for the foundation of an Italian seminary in some American city, in which to prepare native Italian priests who will consecrate themselves solely to the Italians.
It should not be hard to get vocations when we think that in 1885, as I said before, 15,642 Italian youngsters emigrated.

“Means to prevent harm to the emigrants”

Besides waging a war of reconquest, so to speak, of the souls lost in those boundless areas of the New World, we would do well to think also about preventing the ruin of so many poor Italian Catholics who are going into voluntary exile across the Ocean, often with their children.

The first means for keeping the emigrants from harm should be the zeal of pastors to fight emigration itself, trying every which way to persuade their parishioners not to emigrate. But, unfortunately, most of the times they will not succeed: emigration must be accepted as a painful necessity. “Either we steal or we emigrate” -- this is the terrible dilemma I heard more than once from the lips of poor workers and peasants.

The pastor of these places must not let anyone go abroad without a letter of recommendation for the priests of the place where the emigrants will be settling. During the years I was working in the parish, I always used this method and got good results from it. When I became bishop, during my pastoral visitations I got to know even better the very serious evils of emigration (...).

Very beneficial would be Catholic settlements like those already established in the United States for the Irish and for the English. It seems to me that these settlements are none other than Catholic parishes of sorts, with their priests and Catholic schools, to which their countrymen are steered rather than letting them leave like lost sheep. In this way, the emigrants would find themselves in their own homeland, as it were, in the midst of Catholics, with at least basic religious care.

To preserve the fruits of the missions, we should urge the communities of Italians without a priest not only to perform the devotions of good Christians at home every day but, on Sundays and holy days, to come together in the church or chapel to pray together, sing the praises of the Lord, teach the children catechism, read the Sunday gospel, and perform all the religious devotions they are allowed to as lay people. This is how not just the faith but also religious fervor was preserved in Madagascar during the absence of the Missionaries for several years.

The reading of good books and religious publications, tailored to the special needs of the people, will also help to take the place of the priests.⁵⁵

“The idea of going to the help of the emigrants is ripe”

The idea of going to the help of the emigrants is ripe. The press is constantly after one or another of the men in Government, urging them to raise their voices and take measures. It would be terrible if Freemasons were to get into this field first, ahead of the Church, and take control of it.

It is precisely to prevent this from happening that I, albeit the least of bishops, decided to write about this important matter, also in hopes of predisposing people to the plan of evangelization I had presented to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide at your express request -- in case this plan were to be approved.⁵⁶

“An Institute for priests and for youngsters from the Italian settlements”

People from all sides have been urging me get the project on behalf of the Italian emigrants off the ground. I have suspended negotiations in this matter in expectation of a response Mons. Jacobini promised to send me by this past August. Since I have not received anything yet, I wonder if I could open an Institute here in the meantime, as I had planned, which would accept priests who want to dedicate themselves to the evangelization of the emigrants in America and would also accept the youngsters from the Italian settlements who give signs of a priestly vocation.⁵⁷

“The beginnings of the undertaking”

One of the evils I deplored when I visited the 366 parishes of my diocese for the first time was that of emigration.

From my notes, I figured out that at least 28,000 of my people were abroad at that time! Once in a while, some of them would write me very touching letters, describing their disgraceful condition, especially from the religious point of view, urgently imploring me to come to their help. More than once, I personally witnessed the departure of emigrants from the Piacenza train station. I must confess that, at the sight of their misery and distress, at the thought of the countless and terrible dangers they would encounter, at the idea of the utter spiritual abandonment they would find themselves in, I felt utterly dismayed. I wept over their fate and decided I would do something about the situation.

⁵⁵ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Feb. 16, 1887 (AGS 1/1).

⁵⁶ Letter to Leo XIII, June 13, 1887 (AGS 1/1). Scalabrini presents his first pamphlet on emigration to the Pope. It is entitled, *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, and was printed at Piacenza in June 1887.

⁵⁷ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Sept. 21, 1887 (ags 1/3). Mons. Domenico Jacobini, later cardinal, was Secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.

It was then that I felt it my duty to turn, as I did, to His Eminence, Cardinal Simeoni, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, to ask him what I might do about this serious problem in an effective and enduring way (...). That Sacred Congregation, in fact, discussed this most important matter. At an audience on June 26, 1887, the Holy Father approved its decisions. One of the decisions, the 4th one, reads as follows: “To establish in Italy one or more institutes for priests who wish to go to America to work among the emigrants to help sustain their faith, always with the understanding of the local bishops. This institute will be put under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary, but the rules will be approved by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.” After this decision, I was called to Rome where I was authorized to open the Institute for the Missionaries in Piacenza and to assist the emigrants, as far as possible, in all their needs.⁵⁸

“Purpose of the Congregation and the means to achieve it”

1. A Congregation of Missionaries for the Italian settlements, especially in America, has been established in Italy under the supreme jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide and under the direct authority of a Superior General appointed by the same Propaganda Fide.
2. The purpose of this Congregation is that of keeping alive the Catholic faith in the hearts of our emigrant countrymen and women and, as far as possible, providing for their moral, civic and economic well-being.
3. The Congregation achieves this purpose:
 - 1 - by sending missionaries and teachers wherever the needs of the emigrants require them;
 - 2 - by erecting churches and oratories in the various centers of the settlements and establishing residences for the missionaries, from which their civilizing influence will spread far and wide through temporary visits;
 - 3 - by setting up schools where, with the first rudiments of the faith, the children of the settlements will learn the basics of our language, of arithmetic, and of the history of their homeland;
 - 4 - by sending the settlers’ youngsters with signs of a priestly vocation to study for the priesthood;
 - 5 - by organizing committees in the ports of embarkation and debarkation to help, guide, and counsel the emigrants;
 - 6 - by accompanying the emigrants on the ocean voyage and exercising the ministry for them and being at their side, especially during illnesses;
 - 7 - by favoring and fostering those activities and organizations that are judged most suitable for the preservation of the Catholic religion and Italian culture in those settlements.⁵⁹

“I can say that the project has been successfully launched”

⁵⁸ Report on the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the Italian Emigrants, Aug. 10, 1900 (AGS 7/5).

⁵⁹ Rules of the Congregation of the Missionaries for the Emigrants, 1888, (AGS 127/2).

I can say that, with God's help, the work the Lord inspired me to undertake on behalf of our poor countrymen emigrated to America has been successfully launched. Once returned from Rome, I got down to work.

For the time being, I have rented a rather comfortable house and have almost finished furnishing it with the basics: beds, linen, kitchen utensils, and so on. Twelve people could start living there, even at once.

So far, we have five people: the superior, the treasurer, who will reside here, and three students admitted during these very days. The priests asking to be admitted are not lacking, especially after the publication of the *Brief* sent me by the Holy Father. But I plan to go slowly in honoring their requests because I want to move ahead slowly but surely, especially in the beginning (...).

Judging only from the approval with which the undertaking was universally welcomed and the endorsements I keep receiving even from outstanding bishops, I must honestly say we have to be thankful to the Lord. Of course, we need lots of patience, courage, and spirit of sacrifice for the undertaking to fully achieve its purpose. Personally, I will do my very best. God will do the rest.⁶⁰

"In my city of Piacenza I founded the Institute of the Missionaries"

Here in my city of Piacenza I founded the Institute of the Missionaries for the religious care of our emigrants and gave it the glorious name of the great Italian discoverer of the New World, *Christopher Columbus* (...).

In the Christopher Columbus Institute, supported by the charity of the people, there are presently forty-two people, comprising priests, clerics, and lay brothers. Among these are some young men from Italian families living in America. These young men are also preparing to become missionaries for their emigrant countrymen.

Since Nov. 28, 1887, the date of its foundation, the Institute has seen forty-eight missionary priests leave for America, distributed at the moment in sixteen missions, of which eleven are in North America and five in South America (...).

In New York, the missionaries have founded parochial schools, an orphanage, a hospital and the *Barge Office* (...), as well as the *St. Raphael Society* for the assistance and protection of the emigrants; in Boston, an industrial school; everywhere, churches and chapels.

To staff the orphanage and the hospital and to open girls' schools and nurseries, numerous groups of excellent Sisters were sent to the New World by the Salesian Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

In the future, we will try to set up special missions in the main ports of Brazil and of La Plata. In the meantime, committees of the St. Raphael Society are being formed in all the cities of the United States where our missionaries work. At the same time, we are negotiating, with good hopes of success, for the foundation of other missions (...).

⁶⁰ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Dec. 16, 1887 (AGS 1/5). The first provisional residence of the Scalabrinians was a section of the parish building next to the Basilica of St. Antoninus. The "three already admitted," who made their "first profession" on Nov. 28, 1887, were Fr. Giuseppe Molinari, Fr. Domenico Mantese and Canon Domenico Costa, Provost of St. Antoninus, and first superior.

The lay coadjutors or *brother catechists*, who accompany the missionary priests, are thirty-eight in number so far. Thank God, they have done very well.

When possible, the emigrants who leave from Italian ports are accompanied by a priest who does not necessarily belong to the Congregation. This priest ministers to the emigrants during the voyage (...).

During the short time they have been able to exercise their work of Christian and civic charity, the missionaries have everywhere earned the affection of their emigrant countrymen and women and enjoy the esteem of the people among whom they live.⁶¹

“A new work, still an infant”

The conditions of the Italians in North America twelve years ago or so are described in the letter, previously quoted, of Cardinal Simeoni, dated Feb. 9, 1887. “I too am deeply saddened,” this holy man wrote me, “at the awful conditions in which they (the Italian emigrants to America) live. The reports sent to this Congregation by the Archbishops of New York and New Orleans, as well as the account given by the Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, paint a very bleak and disheartening picture of their spiritual and religious condition.”

Suffice it to say that in New York the Italians could use only the basement or lower level chapel of Ascension Church. But, to be honest, I must say that, as soon as Archbishop Corrigan of New York heard of our foundation, he wrote me warm and encouraging letters, asking for missionaries and promising to take excellent care of them.

Our missionaries did go. They, so to speak, opened the doors to mission work among the Italian emigrants. To a great extent, the emigrants are now able to satisfy their spiritual needs if they so wish.

Other congregations joined the Missionaries of St. Charles, and the Shepherds began to take a greater interest in the welfare of the poor emigrants. So, even if not everything was done that should have been done, still much was accomplished for them. On the occasion of the solemn feast of the canonization of John Baptist de la Salle and of Rita of Cascia, I had the occasion to see a good number of bishops from North America. All of them were pleased, enthusiastic over the good work the Missionaries of St. Charles are doing there. I received a very flattering letter from Cardinal Satolli, formerly Apostolic Delegate to the United States, who was able to witness the good work of the missionaries at close quarters. When the Archbishop of New York came here and responded to the address of the clergy of the city who had come to honor him, he gave a talk that was so highly flattering of our work that when I got up to thank him profusely, I felt that, in homage to the truth, I had to tone it down a bit. I mentioned that we are dealing with a new type of work which is still an infant and, as such, cannot pretend to be without any shortcomings or without mistakes due to inexperience. I added that these shortcomings did occur and that we too had made our share

⁶¹ *Dell'assistenza alla emigrazione nazionale e degli istituti che vi provvedono*, Piacenza 1891, pp. 4-10. The “Salesian Sisters of the Sacred Heart” were those founded by Mother Cabrini.

of mistakes but hoped and prayed that, with God's help, our institute would continue to improve.⁶²

"The immense good they are doing in Brazil"

As soon as our missionaries set foot on Brazilian soil, rather than help and encouragement they encountered untold obstacles, countless obstacles. But quite a few years ago, thanks to the zeal of those holy bishops, the situation changed. I believe it will be useful to quote from a letter written on May 14, 1900, from Petropolis by the Most Reverend Internuncio to the superior of our missionaries in Sao Paulo:

"I have learned with much pleasure," he said, "that the work of the Missionaries of St. Charles is expanding greatly in these regions and that the missionaries are doing an immense amount of good in the midst of so many abandoned settlers living in places that are utterly remote and bereft of the comforts of the faith. I am truly edified. For all this I sincerely thank God and the good religious, especially your Excellency who are their superior and sustain them by word and example (...)."

While in North America our emigrants are found in great numbers in the cities, in South America, especially in Brazil, they are scattered in little groups in immense territories. So our missionaries have taken pains to erect little churches, oratories, and chapels in the midst of everyone of those groups, where they go periodically to exercise their sacred ministry.⁶³

"The need to have Sisters"

I am submitting to your judgment a matter of great importance and I ask you to give it the most serious attention.

We have often spoken of the need of having our own Sisters, Sisters who depend on our Fathers. Some of the latter have written me to say they are convinced the Sisters would do a lot of good. It is not a question of establishing convents. Rather, as they do in all the dioceses of France with great advantage, the Sisters should live in their own little house, three or four of them, do some teaching, take care of our churches, keep the Missionaries' things in order, teach catechism to the children, assist the sick, even in their homes when this can be done without danger, and so on.

A number of good souls have volunteered for this purpose and anxiously await to enter novitiate, which should be absolutely regular. But I am hesitant, even though it seems to me from certain circumstances I might call providential that God wants to place on me also this Cross, which is heavier than so many others.

Pray, think about it, and then let me know what you think.⁶⁴

⁶² Report on the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the Italian Emigrants, Aug. 10, 1900 (AGS 7/5). The Church "of the Ascension": more precisely "of the Resurrection," the first chapel in New York to be served by the Scalabrinians.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Letter to Fr. P. Colbachini, Feb. 15, 1899 (AGS 3023/22). The history of the foundation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians) is complicated

“One of the ‘providential circumstances’”

On the ship on which one of my Missionaries, Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti, a professor at the diocesan seminary of Lucca, was sailing, a young woman died leaving behind a nursing infant and her husband, who was beside himself with despair. To calm the desolate man, who was threatening to throw himself into the sea, the missionary promised to take care of the child; and he kept his promise. When he arrived in Rio de Janeiro carrying the little orphan, he went to see the distinguished Count Pio di Savoia, who was then consul general in that city. All he could give the young missionary was some encouragement, but this was enough to set him knocking on door after door until he finally succeeded in placing the child with the janitor of a religious house. From that time on he pursued the idea of founding a home for the Italian orphans in Sao Paulo (where he had been assigned) and finally succeeded at the cost of enormous sacrifices. It is now four years and 160 orphans later, and we now have a martyr who prays for them in heaven, for the great labors he endured cost this devoted and zealous missionary his life.⁶⁵

“Go forth with confidence, my daughters”

Go forth with confidence, my daughters. Later, I will send you other sisters, and you will come back to be trained and strengthened in the religious spirit.⁶⁶

because the documentation has lacunae. Here and elsewhere Scalabrini speaks of “certain providential circumstances” that led him to found the Sisters. One came from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who were on the verge of extinction. A few days before writing to Fr. Colbachini, the bishop proposed “to save them” provided they worked for the emigrants. But the most important and determining “circumstance” was Fr. Giuseppe Marchetti, who presented to Bishop Scalabrini his sister Mother Assunta Marchetti, his mother Caroline, and two other young women. The four, assigned to Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Sao Paulo, Brazil, made their first vows in the hands of Bishop Scalabrini, who “sent” them to Brazil, gave them the veil and set down some ideas for their first constitutions on Oct. 25, 1895. This is the date of the “moral foundation” of the Scalabrinian Sisters. Bishop Scalabrini made the “juridical foundation” in Piacenza on June 10, 1900, with the title of Missionary Apostles of the Sacred Heart: the new Institute comprised both the Sisters gathered by Fr. Marchetti and the Apostles founded by Mother Clelia Merloni. The merger of the two groups, however, did not succeed, and the two Institutes separated in 1907 (see *Biografia*, pp. 1067-1107). Keep in mind that, in the following passages, by “Apostles of the Sacred Heart,” Scalabrini means the Congregation made up of the two groups.

⁶⁵ *L’Italia all’estero*, Torino 1899, p. 22. The foundation of Christopher Columbus Orphanage gave rise to the foundation of the Scalabrinian Sisters.

⁶⁶ E. Martini, Memorial on the Foundation of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles (AGS 103/8). These words were addressed to the first four Scalabrinian Sisters on Oct. 25, 1895.

“An ‘ad experimentum’ Rule”

Regarding the Sisters: there was a Rule approved *ad experimentum*. If you can't find it, write to me at once. It was decided to start with the temporary vows. We'll see what God wants. In the meantime, receive the young women you wrote me about, but make sure they are what they should be.⁶⁷

“Another ‘providential circumstance’”

Given the truly providential circumstances, it seems to me and to the Fathers living here that God wants the project. It will certainly succeed if, with fervent prayer and a sincere desire to consecrate ourselves wholly to the glory of God, we become worthy and deserving of such a grace (...). It is necessary to start from the beginning and set up a regular novitiate, which everyone, without exception, must make so as to be formed in the true spirit of Jesus Christ. As you await the hour of God, live with your sisters and be all with Him and for Him; and He, in his mercy, will help us in the great work we wish to undertake.⁶⁸

“The new Sisters and the older ones”

The Sisters: this is a matter to be pondered in all seriousness. The new Apostles of the Sacred Heart are being seriously formed in the religious life. We must also form the good young women who for some time have been diligently working for our little orphans. From what you wrote and what Fr. Marco told me, I came to know their spirit and their strong desire to serve Jesus Christ their Spouse in the best way possible, inspired as they are solely by the desire for their own greatest good.

A few days after their arrival, the new Sisters will take over the administration of the house, and the older ones will get together for a few months to make a novitiate of sorts. During this time, without leaving aside the necessary work of the house, they will -- as you and Mother Superior see fit -- devote themselves with special care to the works of piety and religious perfection suggested to them. They will try to grow in the knowledge of and love for Our Lord and cultivate the virtues of humility and obedience and the spirit of sacrifice, in the conviction that they will thus become worthy instruments of his choicest graces. I bless them all, one by one, and pray God to fill them with his choicest graces. Even the mother of our beloved Fr. Marchetti who from heaven prays for us, may be accepted and enter novitiate with the others if she desires. When the novitiate is over, those who will be considered worthy -- all of them, I hope -- shall renew their vows.⁶⁹

“The work of the missionaries would be incomplete without the help of the Sisters”

⁶⁷ Letter to Fr. F. Consoni, March 12, 1897 (AGS 103/2). Fr. Faustino Consoni succeeded Fr. G. Marchetti as director of Christopher Columbus Orphanage.

⁶⁸ Letter to Mother C. Merloni, Feb. 22, 1899 (General Archives of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Rome).

⁶⁹ Letter to Fr. F. Consoni, Aug. 8, 1900 (AGS 103/2).

The work of the missionaries would be incomplete, especially in South America, without the help of the Sisters. So I asked for some Sisters from the already existing congregations but was not successful at all. True, the good Missionary Sisters of Codogno offered themselves to me. I opened for them the doors of America, where they are doing a great deal of good; but it is not the kind of good our Congregation has in mind.

We needed Sisters like those scattered in the dioceses of France. These Sisters adapt themselves to living even in groups of just four and without pretense teach in elementary schools, teach catechism and, where possible, assist the sick with all those precautions that prudence and experience call for. Howsoever much the Missionaries insisted and importuned me to provide such Sisters, I always resisted because I felt a deep aversion to getting involved in this new venture.

But, years ago, a series of providential circumstances made me understand this was the will of God; and now we have the Apostles of the Sacred Heart, whose aim it is to assist the emigrants, especially in the Americas. Shortly, after two years of training, twelve of them will be leaving: six before the middle of this month for Sao Paulo; the other six at the end of September for Curitiba. Later on, others will be leaving because in a short time we have already received over one hundred requests for them.

We are doing all this by way of experiment. If God blesses this undertaking, too, as I hope he will, in due time their rules will be sent to this Sacred Congregation for approval.⁷⁰

“A work of regeneration”

I mentioned in one of my letters that I was arranging something very useful with this good and pious bishop. Now, here is what we have decided:

- a) to gather the deaf-mutes -- boys and girls -- and begin this mission.

After reading my letter, you will go to the Superior General of the Apostles, Sister Marcellina, and tell her in my name to have two Sisters ready who have been trained by Sister Candida and have them come here as soon as they are summoned (...). This is an institution of great importance, absolutely new for these great States (...). The bishop accepted the proposal with real enthusiasm and understood at once its moral value. Tomorrow I will talk about it with the President of the State and hope to get some help from him.

For the moment, they will begin in the building to be left vacant by the little orphan girls and the Sisters. These will move to Villa Prudente. The bishop promised me all the moral and even material support he can give. Should only this one work of regeneration succeed, I will have been rewarded for my long trip.

- b) To give St. Bernard Parish to the Missionaries, where we have our properties. The parish has almost 40,000 souls and extends almost from Sao Paulo to Santos, that is, down to the sea coast, 80 miles in length. It was a thoughtful gesture on the part of the bishop to provide our Missionaries, for whom he has the greatest esteem and affection,

⁷⁰ Report on the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the Italian Emigrants, Aug. 10, 1900 (AGS 7/5). The “Missionary Sisters of Codogno” are the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart founded by St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.

with five or six thousand lire in revenues annually and thus lighten their very heavy burden. The parish is composed almost exclusively of Italians.

- c) To open, as soon as possible, two residences in the interior of the State to help the Italians working in the fazendas. There are more than two thousand fazendas and, till now, they are cared for with immense sacrifices by our priests here at the Orphanage. In this State and diocese, there are 1,200,000 Italians. It is very important to organize things well here because we are helping the largest community of Italians in South America.⁷¹

“If we eventually succeed in forming priests from among the children of our emigrants...”

You missionaries are a curious lot! You look on the Institute (or so it seems at times) as if it were twenty years old, whereas it is only one year old! Before sending candidates, we should at least test them a little (...).

Vocations are not numerous, but the priests we have seem good.

We do get requests, but we have to go slow in accepting them. If we eventually succeed in forming priests from among the children of our emigrants, we will have workers for the rich and plentiful harvest.⁷²

“An Italo-American seminary for the children of the emigrants”

You ask me if Fr. Morelli did right in buying the property on Long Island. I answer that by all means he did the right thing, and I'll tell you why.

Toward the beginning of this month I was seriously thinking about how to carry out the Pope's cherished dream of founding an Italo-American seminary for the emigrants' children who show signs of a priestly vocation. For us it would certainly be a providential thing. The clerics would take their Latin and philosophy in that seminary and their theology here at the Motherhouse.

I believe the Lord really wants this project because during these very days, while I was pondering over the matter, two excellent priests came to see me. For several years they had been professors in their respective seminaries and were eager to get back to teaching once again. At the moment, I'm expecting a third priest, also a professor. Moreover, two young students have asked to enter: one has finished grammar school, the other philosophy. As you see, we already have the personnel and this is enough for a start (...). If you have a building and can furnish it with at least the essentials, I'll soon send you these new apostles

⁷¹ Letter to C. Mangot, July 14, 1904 (AGS 3022/22). The “bishop” of Sao Paulo was Bishop José de Camargo Barros. Sister Marcellina Viganò was the second superior general of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Sister Candida Quadrani, Daughter of St. Anne, was the directress of the Istituto Sordomute, founded by Bishop Scalabrini.

⁷² Letter to Fr. F. Zaboglio, Nov. 9, 1888 (Archives of the Seminary of Como).

and, with them, the four or five young men from America so as to start the project with a certain number of students.⁷³

“The children of the Italian emigrants trained in America”

As to the youngsters in question, let me remind you that to have together in the Institute priests, theology students, and youngsters raises a serious problem: a situation that, all things considered, is just not right. Experience has shown that there was only one Noah’s Arc that achieved its purpose. Besides, we have to weigh the economic factor and keep in mind the considerable expenses for the teachers’ salaries. Finally, we must never lose sight of propriety and perseverance. My idea, and the Holy Father’s, is that youngsters, children of Italian emigrants, who seem to have a priestly vocation should be taught Italian and Latin in America and then sent to Italy when ready for theology, or at least philosophy. In this way, we could make sure of their vocation and thus avoid making them waste precious time and making us incur heavy expenditures without getting anything out of it. How can you rely on a 10- or 12-year-old lad? Those who came here some years ago are all good youngsters, but will they persevere? Only God knows. In the meantime, I’ve placed them in the seminary so they can do their regular studies. If they don’t feel called to the priesthood, they can go on to other careers.⁷⁴

b) IN THE CHURCH AND FOR THE CHURCH

“Your solicitude as universal shepherd”

Your letter concerning Christopher Columbus (...) has once again called our attention to the miserable situation of those who emigrate in droves from Italy to the Americas every year to eke out a living there.

Yes, Holy Father, the same faith that made Columbus picture in his mind untold numbers of people enshrouded in utter darkness and drawn to foolish ceremonies and idolatrous rituals brings before our eyes a picture that is no less heartbreaking: thousands upon thousands of poor emigrants, like sheep without a shepherd, wandering over steep and rugged paths, generally uninstructed in the eternal truths and precepts of the Christian life, exposed to the snares of wicked and arrogant people whose slaves they have become, miserable prey to the sects, which are more active and numerous there than elsewhere.

We know that, in your solicitude as universal Shepherd, you hastened to come to their help both by challenging the zeal of the American bishops on their behalf and by fostering the foundation of the *Istituto Cristoforo Colombo* in the episcopal see of Piacenza, an institute for priests who wish to be their guides and to assist them with all the care of the sacred ministry and the inventiveness of Christian charity.

⁷³ Letter to Fr. F. Zaboglio, Jan. 20, 1891 (ibid.). Fr. Felice Morelli had bought a piece of land on Long Island, N.Y., with a view to starting a Scalabrinian seminary but soon had to sell the property to pay the debts on St. Joachim’s Parish.

⁷⁴ Letter to Fr. F. Zaboglio, March 4, 1892 (ibid.).

Holy Father, the support and encouragement you thus conferred on Italian emigration will not be the least of the glories of your fruitful and illustrious pontificate, nor will the benefits accruing to the Church and the Holy See from your support be either few or insignificant. In its work of protecting the emigrants of various European nationalities, the Holy See -- without mentioning the innumerable other means known to Your Holiness -- now possesses the easiest and surest means to earn the gratitude and affection not only of the emigrants but also of the very nations to which they belong.⁷⁵

“Give a new impulse to the work for the Italians living in the Americas”

We, the undersigned Metropolitans of the various regions of Italy, interpreting the feelings of your fatherly heart and of our venerable suffragan bishops, make bold to ask you to give a new impulse to the deserving and meritorious work of the missions for the Italians in the Americas by capitalizing on the 4th centennial of the discovery of the New World.

Since the moral and material needs that must be met for this purpose are, as you know, huge, ever-present and increasing, we dare ask you, Most Holy Father, to direct that on the third Sunday of this coming October, pursuant to your venerable letter, and every year thereafter, a collection be taken up in all the churches of Italy on behalf of the abolition of white slavery, just as you did for the work on behalf of the abolition of black slavery.

The offerings collected would, if it please you, be sent to the Cardinal Protector of the Congregation of the Missionaries for the Italian emigrants, which has its main house in Piacenza, and be administered and distributed by him according to the needs of the Congregation.

Your Holiness, by now all the dioceses, in fact all the parishes of Italy, one might say, contribute sons and daughters to emigration, in greater or lesser numbers. So it is only fair that all the parishes contribute to a work that redounds to the good of all (...).

In this way, Holy Father, the *Istituto Cristoforo Colombo* -- which would stand like a living monument erected on this solemn occasion by the Italian Catholics to the great discoverer of America -- could have a stable and secure existence and bear ever more abundant fruit. We ourselves would be much more at peace over the fate of our distant sons and daughters. Through this collection, very many other supremely important works would have life and growth, such as churches, schools, factories, orphanages, hospitals, and so on. With that periodical reminder, many priests and lay people would feel the urge to hasten to their help. The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide itself would reap significant moral and financial benefits from the collection, and the future of Catholicism in those young American countries would be ensured also in this way.⁷⁶

“Under the high patronage of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Episcopate”

⁷⁵ Letter to Leo XIII, July 1892 (AGS 6/3). The letter, drafted by Scalabrini, was signed by six cardinals, seven archbishops and thirty-seven bishops.

⁷⁶ Ibid. The first “Cardinal Protector” of the Scalabrinian missionaries was Agostino Bausa, Archbishop of Florence.

The Institute of the Missionaries for the Italian Emigrants, born five years ago in my City of Piacenza, under the high patronage of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Episcopate, has, with God's help, borne overflowing fruit. Your Excellency knows well the spiritual, moral, and material dangers that are part and parcel of our emigration (...). Since all the dioceses of Italy contribute a more or less large contingent to this sorrowful exodus, all of them, I am pleased to say, have helped in the work of Redemption by providing material means, as well as priests aflame with the spirit of sacrifice. With that help, it was possible to open an Institute of Missionaries in Italy, in this city to be precise, and to carry out all the other works of religion in various countries of America, mainly in North America, wherever the Italian settlements are more numerous.

But what has been done so far -- although it is a lot given the lack of time and means -- is still very little in comparison with what remains because we do not have huge material resources or a sufficient number of workers to replace the worn out and the fallen, not to mention the possibility that the works already begun may wither. We would need to initiate other rather urgent activities, such as setting up offices of supervision and administration at least in the main ports of embarkation and debarkation both in America and in Italy. Moreover, I get frequent requests to open new Missions, but I do not know how to provide the help.

Your Excellency, please give me a helping hand with an undertaking that is overwhelming my meager energies. Please recommend this work to the prayers and charity of your faithful during the Lenten sermons or in whatever way you deem best. I address this plea to you in the name of so many of our distant sons and daughters who are without religious care and thus in constant danger of losing their souls.⁷⁷

"I put my trust in the help of my venerable confreres in the episcopate"

Your Excellency, I am pleased to see that the cause of our poor emigrants is very dear to you, too. The solicitude of a bishop like you, outstanding for virtue and learning, gives me great encouragement in the face of an undertaking which, to be honest with you, surpasses my energies. Personally, after God, I put my trust in the help of my venerable confreres in the episcopate. In the last analysis, we are dealing with an undertaking that will be highly beneficial to the most abandoned portion of their flock (...).

Your Excellency, there are millions of our poor countrymen and women scattered all over the vast plains of America, "like sheep without a shepherd." Almost every day, I would say, I get very touching reports from them. All end their letters pleading with folded hands that I send them a priest.

I sent some not too long ago and I will send more in a few months. Your Excellency, I will not forget your suggestions, but I need help, especially personnel. Oh, if you too, with the great influence you exercise, would only speak about this matter to the Sicilians, who are so full of faith! I am convinced that we could find vocations for the care of our poor emigrants also in your part of the country.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Circular letter to the bishops of Italy, Jan. 14, 1893 (AGS 7/1).

⁷⁸ Letter to the Archbishop of Monreale, Oct. 17, 1888 (AGS 3024/4).

“We are dealing with a cause that is of common interest”

I have been moved to write you this letter by the urgent and very serious needs of our emigration, to which every diocese in Italy contributes in greater or lesser numbers.

As you will see from the enclosed letter of his Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of State, I would like to assign one of my missionaries, Fr. Beccherini, to give a conference in the main seminaries to help make the work for the care of emigrants in America better known and, where possible, to inspire vocations on their behalf.

Your Excellency, would you be so kind as to let this Missionary come to you, too? I would be most grateful to you, and God would certainly recompense you for it by a luxuriant burgeoning of your clergy? A holy bishop used to say: “For every one I give to the Missions God invariably sends me two”.⁷⁹

“In this matter not all bishops measure up to their calling”

We need personnel, but unfortunately we don’t have enough for the needs. At the moment, I have seven priests and six lay brothers available here, plus three clerics studying theology. There would be no lack of aspirants; but in this matter not all bishops measure up to their calling. They forget the hundreds of thousands of souls that are perishing -- among whom each bishop has his portion -- and they refuse their priests permission to go to their help. What is one priest more or less for dioceses like ours! Oh, Your Eminence, what lack of generosity even with our Lord! We should really think about removing this obstacle, too. Your Eminence, you would render an outstanding service to religion were you to send a circular letter to the bishops of Northern and Central Italy. To save you time, I am enclosing a sample copy of a letter. This is the only way to wake up the slothful. I know it will do a lot of good.⁸⁰

“Nothing without the bishop”

You owe obedience, first of all, to the Venerable Shepherds of the American dioceses, whose learning, zeal, and attachment to the Holy See you have often praised. You owe much to them.

Beloved, remember that you are exercising the sacred ministry in the field reserved to their immediate jurisdiction and that they alone are the ordinary and legitimate judges of the works that are done for the spiritual good of the faithful committed to their care. They alone are the judges of the most opportune time and the most suitable means for beginning activities and for ending them.

Beware, therefore, of undertaking anything at any time without the approval of him whom the Holy Spirit has assigned to rule the diocese where you are living. With humility and devotion see him as your father, who invokes the blessings of God upon your labors; and as

⁷⁹ Circular letter to the bishops of Italy, Feb. 22, 1904 (AGS 9/4).

⁸⁰ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Dec. 7, 1888 (AGS 2/1).

such surround him with the most reverent love and with the most heartfelt respect. Let your great concern be to guide and train the minds of our compatriots to have the same respect and love. The more they see you docile to all the Bishop's teachings, strict in the observance of all he prescribes, always ready to follow his wishes and desires, the more eager will they be to follow your wishes and desires.

Your union with the Pope, the Supreme and Infallible Teacher from whom you received the mission to the apostolate in these distant lands, will become stronger and more intimate through your union with the Bishop. Mindful that where Peter is, there the Church is also, take advantage of every occasion to make the Pope's greatness known, to remind everyone of his good works, and to celebrate his glories so that you may win the hearts of all people to him. First of all, you must submit yourselves entirely, mind and heart, to whatever he teaches or commands or even simply recommends.

Great self-abnegation, great love for discipline, and a strong, generous, and persevering obedience to your Superiors and especially to the Roman Pontiff: this, in a word, is what will give beauty, glory, and strength to the humble Congregation to which you are among the first to belong.⁸¹

"Total obedience to the local Ordinary"

I am firmly convinced that these Missionaries can achieve their purpose only in total obedience to the local Ordinary not only regarding jurisdiction and the observance of Church laws but also regarding the fulfillment of their mission. It is my firm determination that these Missionaries are not to undertake anything without the advice and permission of the Ordinary.

Your Excellency, it is very important that you know all this so that you may act with the greatest freedom and authority with the Missionaries, admonishing them, correcting them and, if necessary, also compelling them with ecclesiastical penalties. In all this, you will find me and the provincial superior in complete accord.⁸²

"This is one of the principal points in our Rule"

I am becoming more and more convinced that the Missionaries must depend in all things and for all things on the bishops who accept them into their dioceses.

This is also one of the principal points in our Rule. Fr. Morelli, who did not observe it, is paying for it and will make us pay as well. The will of God be done! I hope that the consequences teach the others a lesson and that Fr. Vicentini will not do anything without your approval. For that matter, if the Missionaries cannot have the basement, a room will

⁸¹ *Ai Missionari per gl'italiani nelle Americhe*, Piacenza 1892, pp. 7-8. The "open letter" is dated March 15, 1892.

⁸² Letter to Bishop W. H. Elder, June 21, 1893 (translated from Latin) (Archdiocesan Archives of Cincinnati, Ohio).

do or a wooden chapel if Your Excellency permits them to continue their mission in that area. As long as they do good and save many souls, anything will do.⁸³

“The different nationalities should have a representative in the episcopate”

The good Marquis Volpelandi gave me a copy of the letter Your Excellency wrote to the Hon. Cahensly.

These two gentlemen were deeply mortified, to say the least, by the attribution to them of ideas they had never entertained and asked me to reply for them, convinced as they are that my word will be more effective with you.

Dear bishop, permit me to tell you that this is all a tempest in a teapot. These excellent men had no intention of violating the rights of the American hierarchy in any way whatsoever. They never dreamed of asking the Holy See for *a double jurisdiction*. Their intention was very simple: to try to have the various European nationalities represented in the American hierarchy, not by a foreigner but by an *American citizen*.

Was this idea not already offered to the American hierarchy itself by the wisdom and practical sense of things that characterizes this body? Is this not the method already in practice? Are there not German bishops in the United States? Was not Mons. Persico himself, born in Italy, a bishop? And, if I am not mistaken, is there not presently a bishop who is in some way Italian?

If the question is put in these terms -- and these were the terms -- Your Excellency can see that no harmful effects could come from the memorandum. In fact, I believe it would have benefited the whole episcopal body. Since bishops must provide for all Catholics under their jurisdiction without distinction, they would have received from these aforementioned representatives exact and sure information on the customs, aspirations, and needs of the respective nationalities. Providing for them would have been much easier, the people would have been much more satisfied, and religion would have greatly benefited from it.⁸⁴

“Freedom of ministry, in agreement with the Archbishop”

The priest, Rev. Francesco Zaboglio, is authorized to negotiate with the Archbishop of New York for the establishment of our missionaries in that city on the following conditions:

1. The missionaries must have freedom of ministry so that in the church, oratory, or basement assigned to them they may perform all the functions of the sacred ministry, abiding, however, by the conditions the Archbishop believes appropriate for weddings and baptisms.

⁸³ Letter to M. A. Corrigan, Sept. 9, 1893 (Archdiocesan Archives of New York). Fr. Felice Morelli was the first provincial superior of the Scalabrinians in the United States. His successor was Fr. Domenico Vicentini.

⁸⁴ Letter to M. A. Corrigan, Aug. 10, 1891 (Archdiocesan Archives of New York). For the “Lucerne Memorial,” which was asking for representatives from the various immigrant nationalities in the American hierarchy, and for “Cahenslyism”, see Biografia, pp. 969-974.

2. The missionaries must have free and independent lodging even if it has to be in a rented house so that they can live common life.
3. The missionaries must be free to take up collections, always in agreement with the Archbishop, for the purpose of erecting a new church for the Italians.⁸⁵

“Full and absolute freedom in their ministry”

Cardinal Rampolla -- to whom Your Excellency turned -- and the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide have asked me to honor the wishes you expressed to them, namely, to have missionaries at your disposal for the religious care of Italian emigrants.

I will seriously consider the holy desire expressed by Your Excellency and will make arrangements to grant your request, which is inspired by your pastoral zeal and love for souls. So I hope to be able to send you missionaries in a few months. But I first have to know: 1) if the priests can have a separate residence, howsoever modest it be, so that they can observe the rules approved by the Holy See; 2) if they will have full and absolute freedom in their ministry to the Italians and if, therefore, they will be under the sole and direct authority of Your Excellency, whose orders and plans they must fully honor. This principle has been adopted in the dioceses of North America, where I have sent missionaries. The bishops have withdrawn the Italians from parochial jurisdiction and put them entirely under the missionaries sent from Italy to provide for their spiritual needs.⁸⁶

c) MISSIONARY SPIRIT

“Go forth, new apostles of Jesus Christ!”

In the midst of the terrible trials afflicting the Church today, in the midst of the even more frightening storms threatening it, how beautiful it is to watch the calm, the unruffled calm, with which she continues her civilizing work throughout the world!....

Sure of herself and of the help that comes from above, the Church every day detaches from her peaceful army certain platoons chosen from among the bravest and sends them forth to the four corners of the world. She flings them upon the remotest shores, beyond the seas, beyond the immense deserts that are more frightening than the seas themselves, to bring the faith to new peoples, to preserve and increase it in those that already have it, to save souls.

This is a singular phenomenon in the history of the world, something that has been going on for twenty centuries already and of which we ourselves have an eloquent example under our very eyes.

These generous souls have wedded the poverty of Christ and abandoned comforts, honors, country, family joys, and whatever in this world is most human and tender and hasten breathlessly to the help of their emigrant countrymen beyond the ocean. They have heard the cry of pain of our distant brothers and sisters and they go forth!... Oh, go forth, new apostles of Jesus Christ: “Go forth, O you swift angels...to a people that is awaiting you”.

⁸⁵ Instructions to Fr. F. Zaboglio, June 4, 1888 (AGS 3023/1).

⁸⁶ Letter to Bishop Thiel of Costa Rica, March 20, 1889 (AGS 3021/9) (translated from French).

Go to every corner of the New World because in no part of the world is there a people more humiliated than ours. Go, because souls in need of your help are waiting for you there. The people, the people themselves are begging for the bread of the spirit, and there is no one to break it for them! (...).

Go, the Angel of the United States is beckoning you and presenting you with 500,000 abandoned Italians. Go, the Angels of Paranà, Perù, Argentina, Colombia, and other Provinces are calling you to their 1,300,000 Italians thirsting for truth, in constant danger of falling into the snares of heresy (...).

Infinitely vast is the field that opens up to your zeal. There you will have to build churches, open schools, erect hospitals, and set up hospices. You will have to look after the worship of the Lord. There you will find children, widows, orphans, the sick, feeble old men and women -- in a word, all the miseries of life upon which to pour the beneficent waters of Christian charity. What can be done to provide for so many serious needs?... *ite!* Go forth! Divine Providence, which watches with a mother's tenderness over undertakings begun by it, will resolve the difficult problem. Just make sure you respond to God's loving plans.

Try to make everybody taste how sweet the Lord is (...).

Awaiting you, I know, are immense labors, untold dangers, many difficulties, constant struggles and sacrifices. But these are the very things that validate the work you are doing and awaken enthusiasm in your heart. Find your solace, your guidance, your surest defense in the Cross I have just handed you: the Cross, which, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, is the light of the humble, the support of the weak, the wood of life, the key of heaven, the sign of victory, the terror of Satan, the power of God. With this sword in hand -- I feel I can say this to you -- you shall overcome. "You shall conquer," St. Antoninus, the Martyr and Patron of this basilica, seems to be saying to you from the urn where he is resting. Having witnessed the budding of the first seeds of your Institute here next to his sacred ashes, he will, no doubt, be with you and protect you.⁸⁷

"The Cross of the missionary"

In a person's life there are moments so awe-inspiring, so pregnant with sweet and deep emotions that one who has not experienced them could hardly imagine them. Once tasted, they can never be forgotten. One of them took place a few months ago in this very Basilica when I blessed the first group of generous souls who, wedded to the poverty of Christ and detached from whatever the world most cherishes, eagerly hastened to the help of our emigrants across the Ocean. Today this very same scene takes place once again. I confess that faith makes my heart beat more vigorously and strongly and that God's love gladdens my spirit. My mind rises to the heavens at the vision of, and with the desire for, the missions. And so, clasping the bishop's golden cross to my heart, I gently complain to Jesus, who many years ago denied me the wooden cross of the Missionary. I cannot refrain from telling you, O young Apostles of Christ, of my deep veneration for, and envy of, you who with brave hearts have pledged yourselves to the blessed work of the Missions. Who would not feel the same way were he to reflect for a moment on the greatness and sublimity of the Catholic apostolate of which we have an eloquent example today? (...).

⁸⁷ Discourse to the departing missionaries, Sept. 12, 1888 (AGS 3018/2).

Through his prophet, the Lord says: “In the midst of the people I will raise a sign of universal redemption. From among the living I will choose the heralds of my word and will send them to the people abandoned across the seas. To them they will announce my glory and, gathering all their brothers and sisters into one, will present them in oblation to the Most High.”

The sign of universal redemption raised in the midst of the people is the Cross. The Society of the redeemed is the Church. The word that flies from place to place, from one people to another, announcing salvation, is the Catholic apostolate (...).

No obstacle, no created power, has been able to bring the ministers of the word to a halt (...). And today, beloved sons, you can be proud of belonging to this number as you join this humblest of Congregations. A few days ago, the great Archbishop of St. Paul, Minnesota, saluted our Congregation as the most beautiful, useful, and fruitful form of Catholic apostolate of our day (...).

Oh, blessed are the feet of the Missionaries who bring the good news to our abandoned brothers and sisters! How precious is their work in the sight of heaven! How beautiful and moving it is in the eyes of the world! How attracted we are by the sight of these catechists, who duly sent forth, grasp the cross and go forth to plant it -- as a symbol of salvation and civilization -- in the midst of our brothers and sisters, who are often forced to live and die without the comforts of the faith (...).

Go forth, do not be afraid! Be true to your priesthood, to your calling. Be patient, prudent, humble, and full of charity. To this end are offered my poor prayers and those of many good souls, those of your confreres and families, especially those of your mothers who, while now in sorrow at your departure, will one day rejoice in the honor of having given an apostle to Holy Mother Church.

Prayer! Never forget that prayer gives power and fruitfulness to your preaching of the Gospel. Prayer is the most vital, most efficacious, and most powerful component of our apostolate, as Jesus Christ, supreme model of the apostolic life, teaches us.⁸⁸

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations”

Since the day when Jesus Christ turned to his disciples and said: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,” the Catholic apostolate has never ceased in the Church of God (...). Today, like yesterday, like in the past centuries and like on the first day of human redemption, Christ’s appeal, *ite* -- go -- sounds so appealing, so insistent in the heart of the ministers of the Altar. *Ite!* Where to? To the whole world: *in mundum universum*. And why? To spread the truth: “Make disciples of all nations” (...).

In our day, too, we behold the heralds of the “Good News” leaving from all the shores of Christian Europe, pioneers of civilization, messengers of pardon and peace. Aflame with faith and love, these young levites respond: Lord, we cannot wait “to announce your Name to our brothers and sisters.” They tear themselves away from the embrace of a loving mother in tears, bid farewell to loved ones and friends, renounce all the comforts of the homeland, all the allurements of riches and the pleasures of life. Armed only with the Crucifix, they cross stormy seas, face a thousand dangers, and risk their own earthly life to impart the heavenly life to others (...).

⁸⁸ Id., Jan. 24, 1889. The archbishop of St. Paul, Minnesota, was Archbishop J. Ireland.

O generous young men, I salute you! I feel the sadness of seeing you leave, now that I have gotten to know and love you. But I also appreciate the high worth and merit of the sacrifice you are about to make. At this moment, God is recording it in the great book of life. He promises to be always with you: *ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus* -- "Behold, I am with you always." Go forth, then, with joy and confidence.

Beware of ever putting your trust in anyone other than God, in anything other than his grace. Do not worry about your future or about those you left. The One who feeds the little birds of the air and clothes the earth with flowers and plants will also feed and clothe you and your loved ones until the day he will clothe all people with his eternal splendor.

Always have the glory of God and the good of souls as your only aim in life.

Make yourselves worthy of the love of the godly and of the hatred and persecution of the ungodly. More and more show that your zeal is equal to your detachment, that all your hopes are in God and him alone, that you expect your reward from God and God alone, and that you will never cease from your labors as long as there are poor wretches to console, ignorant people to instruct, poor people to evangelize, and souls to save.⁸⁹

"Every sending forth of missionaries is a renewal of the Divine Master's mandate"

Every sending forth of missionaries is a silent yet eloquent proof of the divinity of the Catholic Church. It is nothing more than a repetition or, better, a continuation of the mandate the divine Teacher gave when he said to his apostles: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Moreover, every departure of missionaries attests to the fruitfulness and indefectibility of the Church itself.

These sendings-forth have been following each other without interruption for the past nineteen centuries, seemingly becoming more frequent just when persecutions and apostasies are on the increase. The Church is now as young and beautiful as on the day she was born. Every sending forth of missionaries speaks to us in a most moving way of the infinite mercy of God and the value of souls. To save us, God came down from heaven, became man, suffered death, death on the Cross. Urged on by the example of Jesus Christ, the Catholic missionary also abandons whatever he holds most dear (...), exposes himself to a thousand dangers, and embraces a life of sacrifice just to save one soul.⁹⁰

"When the missionaries arrive where the Indians live"

Cardinal Simeoni used to tell me often: When the missionaries arrive where the Indians live, they should try to do something also for them.

Well, we've arrived. Even the President of the State spoke to me about the matter, assuring me of all his support. For the time being three or four priests are enough. While taking care mainly of the Italian settlements, they will have to figure out how to get in touch with the natives. If God helps them and they obtain his grace, I will send people who are ready to

⁸⁹ Id., Dec. 10, 1890.

⁹⁰ Id., Sept. 9, 1891.

sacrifice themselves. Otherwise, we can say that at least we meant well. These natives are the descendants of the people converted by the Jesuits. But, when abandoned and hunted down, they fled into the forests. They are said to still preserve certain traces of Christianity in their cultic practices. Holy Father, I beg of you a prayer and a special blessing on this new work of charity.⁹¹

“Evangelization of the Indios”

Please tell the bishop -- to whom you will present my respects -- that should the Holy See entrust the evangelization of the Indios in Paranà to our Congregation, it will be necessary to do work also in the Guarapuava area and that when he is ready to give us a residence in that area, I will take it upon myself to provide good Missionaries for this purpose.⁹²

“Italians in Africa”

Because the present miserable Government does not want to hear of Missionaries or Missions, Colonel Baratieri had someone ask me again if I would take the responsibility of providing priests for the Italian territories in Africa.

I replied that, at the moment, I could not take any decision but would think about it. I submit the matter to the well known wisdom of your Eminence for a decision. Your Eminence, I won't hide the fact that I would be inclined to grant the request not only because for Africa it would be easy to obtain support and whatever is necessary but also because we could do much good there.

However, it would be wise to detach the Italian colonial territory from the jurisdiction of the French Vicar Apostolic and have the Missionaries depend directly either on me or on Your Eminence, in an Apostolic Prefecture of sorts.⁹³

“Your vocation to the Missions comes from God”

I have given much thought to your letter and believe I am not fooling myself when I say that your vocation to the Missions comes from God.

If this is so, he will remove all obstacles.

Our Missionaries form a Congregation. The candidates, if priests, remain here in the Mother House for a few months' novitiate. After making their simple vows, they leave for their destination. The field is immense: hundreds of thousands of our poor brothers and

⁹¹ Letter to Pius X, August 1904 (AGS 3019/3). “The President of the State”: the State was Paranà in Brazil

⁹² Letter to Fr. M. Simoni, March 31, 1905 (AGS 3023/2). From 1904 to 1911, Fr. Marco Simoni and other Scalabrinians staffed the parish of Tibagi, PR, in which some tribes of Indios lived.

⁹³ Letter to Cardinal G. Simeoni, Oct. 4, 1890 (AGS 4/1) (see Biografia, pp. 1032-1033).

sisters live and die like animals for lack of religious care. Blessed is he who is called to their help and dedicates himself entirely to them!⁹⁴

“God calls you to the high honor of the apostolate”

I am waiting for you and still believe you should no longer resist the voice of God calling you to the high honor of the apostolate. Let me tell you again: *Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia* (the grace of the Holy Spirit does not know tardiness). Come on, then! Have the courage to open your heart to your venerable uncle and come at once. In recollection at the Mother House, you will prepare yourself for the holy vows and then, *sicut gigas ad currendam viam* (like a giant running his course), you will go wherever God will assign you.⁹⁵

“A house of itinerant missionaries would be the best thing in the world”

Archbishop Satolli’s idea is one I’ve nursed for a long time. Our finances permitting, a house of itinerant missionaries would be the best thing in the world. We have to think about it. Wouldn’t it be wise to mention the idea to the Archbishop?⁹⁶

“It is one of my old desires”

Fr. Vicentini wrote me about your desire to have a residence for itinerant Missionaries, whose task it would be to go wherever there are Italian settlements. This is one of my old dreams, a desire expressed to me even by the Holy Father. I would have gladly realized it if I had the resources.

Your Excellency, if, by the great influence you have deservedly acquired, you can give me a hand, the establishment of such a residence in a central location would be a real blessing.⁹⁷

d) RELIGIOUS LIFE

⁹⁴ Letter to Fr. M. Rinaldi, April 21, 1900 (AGS 3023/2). Fr. Massimo Rinaldi was a missionary in Brazil from 1900 to 1910. In 1910, he became procurator general of the Scalabrinians and remained in that position until 1924, when he was chosen to be Bishop of Rieti. He died in the fame of sanctity in 1941.

⁹⁵ Id., Aug. 29, 1900. Rinaldi was secretary of his uncle, the Bishop of Montefiascone.

⁹⁶ Letter to Fr. D. Vicentini, Sept. 9, 1893 (AGS 3023/2). Archbishop Satolli, later cardinal, was the first apostolic delegate to the United States.

⁹⁷ Letter to Archbishop F. Satolli, Sept. 14, 1893 (ASV, Deleg. Apost. USA, 1, Varie, Documenti, 2-159-4-1).

“They commit themselves to living as religious”

Before leaving for the Missions, both the Missionaries and the lay brothers will make the following vows.

To remain in the Congregation for five consecutive years, whatever be the destination or office assigned them by the superiors (...).

The lay brothers will make the vow of chastity.

All will make the vow of obedience *more religiosorum* (like religious) to their own superior and to the superiors of the Congregation.

They will also make the vow of poverty, meaning that they cannot possess or acquire or accept anything as their own (besides what they may already possess or may acquire in the future in their homeland).

By this vow of poverty, the Missionaries and lay brothers pledge not to keep any sum of money, any object, or any movable or immovable goods they may receive in the exercise of their ministry either as a stipend, compensation, personal gift, or remuneration for services rendered. All of them shall be handed in to the Congregation.

Likewise, by this vow of poverty, the Missionaries and lay brothers promise to be satisfied with the pure necessities of life and with their food and clothing, in keeping with St. Paul’s recommendation. Hence, whenever they need something on their trips or in the missions, they promise to provide for themselves within the bounds of modesty and Christian frugality, shunning luxury and superfluities and being thrifty for the sake of the Congregation (...). All income from whatever source shall be turned over to one’s superior.

Once admitted to the Institute, all candidates must clearly understand that they are to live for five years as true religious, imbued with zeal for the salvation of souls in a spirit of sacrifice and detachment from the riches and glories of the world, in full communion of love and unlimited obedience to the Pope, the superiors of the Congregation, and the Ordinaries of the places where they exercise their ministry.⁹⁸

“I judged it necessary to introduce perpetual vows”

The good Jesuit Father Rondina was here to conduct with much fruit the spiritual exercises for the young aspirants to the Missions of America. After consulting him regarding the reform of the Rule, I thought it necessary to introduce simple but perpetual vows. To my great satisfaction, these young men have already accepted without any problem this and other important changes, which I will submit to Your Eminence with the proper formalities through the services of the same good religious. Hence, it is extremely important to recall the missionaries who have left for the missions without vows and replace them with others who, having made their regular novitiate as is now the practice, show promise of becoming very good missionaries.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Rule of the Congregation of the Missionaries for the emigrants, 1888 (AGS 127/2).

⁹⁹Letter to Cardinal M. Ledóchowski, Sept. 26, 1894 (AGS 7/2). The “same good religious” is Fr. Francesco Saverio Rondina, S.J.

“Total confidence in the future”

Fr. Rondina, a well known Jesuit writer for *La Civiltà Cattolica*, was here to conduct the spiritual exercises. He went away very pleased and in agreement with me. I decided to introduce the simple perpetual vows and a regular novitiate. Almost all our young men enthusiastically welcomed the idea.

On Oct. 15, they began a novitiate of sorts and on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception will make their perpetual vows. I found them all happy with this program. The new applicants will begin a regular 1-year novitiate. This is the first time I experience such deep inner peace and unbounded hope for the future.

Thus finalized and approved by the Holy See, the Rule will be printed and sent to the first missionaries. Then, whoever applies and is admitted will make perpetual vows, while those who do not feel called will leave even at once, if need be, and be replaced by these new candidates whom Father Rondina holds in high esteem as a group of saintly and promising young men. Meanwhile, it is important to hold on to our positions as best as we can; and when God so wills, they will be filled by more generous and better formed people. May God assist us.¹⁰⁰

“I am about to receive the perpetual vows of the Missionaries”

December 8, 1894 - 7:00 A.M.

I am about to receive the perpetual vows of the Missionaries. I want the vows to be like those the Capuchins make for the first four years, that is to say: the missionaries are bound to the Congregation, but the Congregation is free to send them home, in which case the vows are ipso facto annulled without resorting to dispensations. A serious reason, judged such by the superiors, is enough for individuals to be dispensed from the holy vows, including uneasiness of spirit, destitution of one's parents, poor health, etc.

O Mary, Virgin Immaculate, bless us all!¹⁰¹

“The consecration God deigns to grant you today through the hands of Mary”

Your presence, dearly beloved sons, fills my heart with utter joy and bliss. How blessed is the soul that has received the privilege God has granted you. Today, by the profession of the holy vows, you gladden the Church, the choirs of angels, the saints, the martyrs, the confessors, the apostles, Mary Immaculate, Jesus Christ, and the Eternal Father.

One day, the great Pope St. Clement was receiving the vows of consecration of some generous souls. At a certain point in the sacred rite, the holy Pontiff was sweetly rapt up into ecstasy (...). Coming to, he exclaimed: O my children, I deeply rejoice with you. Exult, weep for joy, and bless God who has called you to such glory. I saw your

¹⁰⁰ Letter to Fr. D. Vicentini, September 1894 (AGS 3023/2).

¹⁰¹ From his personal diary (AGS 3027/2).

consecration rise up to the heavens like a brilliant wave that gladdened the heavenly court with new and ineffable joy. I saw the Mother of God, the Immaculate One, present your vows before the throne of Jesus the Redeemer. I saw a shower of mercy, of pardon and grace come pouring down upon your souls.

You blessed ones, rejoice, weep for joy, renew all your promises to God. On your knees ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints we will be invoking, to fill in for you.

When, in the name of Jesus Christ and the Church, I will raise my hands over you and pronounce those most holy words: “Deign, O great God, to bless, sanctify, and consecrate these chosen souls,” you must pray fervently that God’s plans will be fulfilled in you, that he will let you die here and now rather than allow you to lose, to your utter misfortune, the blessing, the sanctification, and the consecration God deigns to grant you today through the hands of Mary.¹⁰²

“You will be faithful to your vows”

As the representative of Jesus Christ -- unworthy though I be -- and successor of the apostles, I accept these vows you have just made, these generous promises of yours, these most noble sentiments of your heart. I receive them with joy and exultation through the hands of the Immaculate Virgin. I place them on this altar dedicated to her glorious mother, on this day full of joy for her and for us. Indeed, I beg her to place them herself in the heart of Jesus so that he, the source of all blessings, may confirm them and strengthen them.

My dear sons, I am sure you will be faithful to your vows with God’s help and the blessing of his Immaculate Mother to whom -- I am pleased to see -- you were divinely inspired to consecrate this first most solemn act of your career, the first fruits of your apostolate. Yes, you will be constantly faithful to your vows, faithful in the midst of labors and tribulations, faithful on your trips, faithful in the anxieties of your sublime mission, unto the shedding of your blood; faithful unto death. Beloved sons, this is how you will obtain the glory of God, the salvation of souls, your sanctification, the joy of the Church triumphant, the glory of the Church militant. Because you will manifest, in deed, the holiness and divinity of her teaching, you will be a living apologia of the Church, our most loving mother, who is so much persecuted in our day.

To this end, hold on tight to the crucifix I have just given you (...). Never forget those divine words: “Always be on the watch.” May God grant you this grace, dearly beloved sons. Join me, all of you, in the unbloody Sacrifice and implore God Almighty to make you leave this church transformed, as once the apostles left the Cenacle transformed. May he keep you always in his care.¹⁰³

“The life of the missionary in the Missions”

¹⁰² Notes for the first profession of perpetual vows, Dec. 8, 1894 (AGS 7/2).

¹⁰³ Notes for the sermon at the profession of Frs. Sovilla and Bertorelli, Dec. 8, 1891 (AGS 3018/2).

As a gospel worker, the Missionary must remember that he is bound to spread the beautiful fragrance of Jesus by his own life, to preach the gospel more by example than by word. He will observe his rule always and everywhere and practice especially temperance, meekness, humility, chastity, modesty, and charity, as well as a great spirit of detachment. This also holds true for the brother catechists.

The Missionary will make the following great maxim the foundation of all his activity: Never so apply yourself to the exercise of the apostolic ministry as to neglect your interior life and never so abide in the joys of the interior life as to neglect the exercise of your apostolic ministry. The Missionary should also remember that, if he neglects prayer and meditation, he will have a hard time remaining in God's grace (...).

The Missionaries should make every effort always and everywhere to preserve close unity with their confreres in the Congregation, dealing with each other with an open heart and sincere love.¹⁰⁴

“Though few, you can still do very much if you are animated by the spirit of the Apostles”

Thanks be to God, our humble Congregation has been able to assert itself so as to gain in a short time the love of good people, as well as the sympathy of honest men in all circles. My dear, venerable brothers, notwithstanding the immense difficulties you in your zeal had to confront at the outset, you were still able to accomplish prodigious works. I say with pleasure: you have deserved well of religion and country. God will know how to reward you in a way worthy of Himself.

A good start is not enough, however. You must persevere to the very end, as there is still much more to do. I know, you are too few for the need. Yet, though so few, you can still accomplish very much if you are keenly aware of the importance and high worth of your vocation and are animated by the spirit of the apostles.

The honor Jesus Christ has conferred on you by calling you to take part in his redemptive work and counting you among his apostles is great, ineffably great. It is to you in particular that he repeats even today those words of comfort: “I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.” Notice that he does not say: “You have been called,” but “I myself have called you;” I, the Son of the living God; I, the immortal King of the ages; I, who have founded the Church and guide it to victory in the midst of the battles and storms of the world. “I have chosen you and have appointed you.” What predilection!¹⁰⁵

“Union with Jesus Christ”

You have answered His call, dearly beloved. You have gone forth and you have done much good. But, I repeat, this is not enough. This good must be lasting: “that you should bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.”

¹⁰⁴ *Rule of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the Italians*, Piacenza 1895, pp. 73-74.

¹⁰⁵ *Ai Missionari per gl'Italiani nelle Americhe*, Piacenza, 1892, pp. 3-4.

What does the shoot need to bring forth fruit? That it remain attached to the vine. Now the vine is Jesus and you, beloved ones, are the shoots: "I am the vine, you are the branches." Jesus Himself said so!

Therefore, as long as you remain in him, you will feel full of superhuman energy, and the results you will reap cannot but be fruitful and lasting. Everything will be possible to you, even when faced with the most serious difficulties. Instead, detached from him you will become like a body without a soul, destitute of all good works. You will be like branches good for nothing except to be cast into the fire: "Without me, you can do nothing."

Therefore, beloved brothers and sons, first and foremost you must be united with Jesus Christ. You will realize this union by nourishing your faith with the steady exercise of piety and by persevering in the state of grace.¹⁰⁶

Such a union will result in unity among yourselves. Jesus Christ prayed so hard for his disciples to have this unity, something truly so necessary.

No group of people, however great their abilities as individuals, will ever be able to achieve great things if they do not submit to the great law of unity. Even less will Missionaries be able to achieve great things because, in working with souls, they -- as simple instruments of Jesus Christ -- derive all their efficacy from this sovereign principle of unity animating them.

For this reason, dearly beloved, I beseech you and implore you, out of love for Jesus Christ and for the good of our brethren, not to scatter your forces by each one using them according to his individual whim, without any other guide except his own will. Instead, you must be united and be as one. "That they may be one."

You must be united in thought, affections, and desires, just as you are united for the same end. "I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose."

How can you succeed in this? With all humility and meekness, and by supporting one another with all patience. This is, after all, the secret of the Apostle: "With all humility and gentleness, with patience bearing with one another through love."

So let injurious words, vain jealousy, conflict, and rivalry be alien to the Missionary! Let each one be at peace and tolerant in the fulfillment of his own duties. Let each bear with the faults of others. Let each do what he can "to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."¹⁰⁷

"Let there be peace inside as well as outside the home. Let there be peace with everyone"

Let there be peace not only among yourselves, dearly beloved, but also with your brother priests in the ministry. Because of your mission you will often come into contact with priests and missionaries of different nationalities. You must benefit from their experiences. Have the greatest regard for them. Love them cordially and always respect them. Let there be peace inside as well as outside the home. Let there be peace with everyone.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

But peace is not possible without order, and there can be no order without a rule. My brothers and sons, you have your Rule, approved by the Apostolic See. Be scrupulous in its observance. But that is not enough. Only then will there be peace among men, writes St. Augustine, when each and all keep to the place assigned them by Divine Providence. "Peace consists in this, that all keep to their place." Therefore let the one among you who is in command fulfill his office with firmness and modesty, and the one who must obey do so "willingly, simply, promptly and at all times," in the words of St. Bernard. Let obedience to your superiors be your badge of honor.¹⁰⁸

St. Charles, a splendid model

From now on, you will have the honor of calling yourselves *The Missionaries of Saint Charles*.

Saint Charles! He was one of those men of action who do not hesitate, do not bend or ever retreat: who throw into every act the whole strength of their conviction, all the energy of their will, their whole personality, all of themselves, and win.

Saint Charles! What a marvelous example of undaunted constancy, of generous patience, of enlightened, unrelenting, and magnanimous zeal -- an example of all those virtues that make a person a real apostle of Jesus Christ. He thirsted for souls. He desired nothing but souls, did not ask for anything but souls. "Give me souls; take everything else away," he used to say. My God, to gain souls for Jesus Christ what did he not do! What did he not endure! What did he not say!

Saint Charles! This is a name which the Catholic missionary should never hear without being inflamed with the noblest and liveliest enthusiasm, without feeling profoundly moved (...).

Dearly beloved, pattern yourselves after him. Recommend yourselves to him. Put all your trust in him. You can be certain of his protection.¹⁰⁹

"Help each other grow in the knowledge and love of Our Lord Jesus Christ"

I congratulate you and Fr. Vittorio on the work you are doing. Pursue the work of God with cheerfulness of spirit. Help each other grow in the knowledge and love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Be saints and everything will blossom in your hands. This is my hope and prayer for you and all the rest.¹¹⁰

"Work diligently but without agitation, in the peace of God"

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁰ Letter to Fr. O. Alussi, Aug. 26, 1893 (AGS 3023/2).

You ask me what your duties are. My answer: Do everything you can for our little orphans. Always work in full agreement with your provincial. Try to keep peace and harmony among the confreres and you will have done your duty.

Meditate often on the wise words of Kempis: “If we try to stand up in the battle like brave men, we will at once see the help of the Lord upon us.”

Surely, in your place, young as you are, you cannot be without crosses and difficulties. This is just as well, because they foster humility and defend us against vainglory.

The field you must till is beautiful and fruitful. You will receive a reward for your work from him who said: “Let the little children come to me.” Work diligently but without agitation, in the peace of God, expecting everything from him. This is the secret of victory in the midst of the most serious difficulties.¹¹¹

“Let everything be done according to our Rules”

I strongly urge you to introduce the exercises of piety, to be done in common as far as possible: meditation, spiritual reading, visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and the Rosary. Start with Boston if it is not the practice there. When the new ones arrive, make sure everything is done according to our Rules. This is supremely important. Our men who have left for Brazil write back very encouraging letters, like the real missionaries that they are, full of fervor, of love for the Congregation, of desire to sanctify themselves through the exact observance of the Rules and through the steady exercise of the sacred ministry. Letters like these are really uplifting. I have them read in the community for the edification of all. May God bless these good sons of mine, who make every effort to make up for the disappointments caused me by others. Let us pray much and have others do likewise so that God’s adorable plans may be accomplished in us and in our confreres.¹¹²

“Revive the spirit of piety, harmony, and obedience in our confreres”

Now, with all my heart I urge you to be faithful to the practices of piety, especially to meditation, in common in keeping with the Rule. You must insist “in season and out of season,” even in virtue of your authority if exhortation is not enough. But you must absolutely enforce what is prescribed in this regard. Meditation and the annual retreat are essential to priestly life, and one should want to do them at all costs. You will be doing an inestimable service to our cause if, with God’s help, you succeed in this most holy goal.

I have noted with great joy that God is blessing your mission and your calm, firm, and prudent work. I am confident you will know how to revive the spirit of piety, harmony, and obedience in our confreres.¹¹³

“It is important that the rules be put into practice”

¹¹¹ Letter to Fr. C. Pedrazzani, May 16, 1905 (AGS 357/2).

¹¹² Letter to Fr. F. Zaboglio, Aug. 31, 1895 (Archives of the Seminary of Como).

¹¹³ Id., Sept. 21, 1895.

Make sure the rules are put into practice, especially those that have to do with the practices of piety in common, and *meditation at all costs* (...). I must call your attention to this very serious matter (...). Admonish, be vigilant, exhort, and, if necessary, give orders. This is such a necessary goal that no sacrifice should be too much to achieve it.

As I have already told you, the Lord is blessing your work. Once again we can see that “the obedient person speaks of victories.” But, in my opinion, the greatest victory will be ensuring the observance of the rules in the two houses I mentioned before and subsequently the observance of the rules also in the other houses where there are at least two Fathers. I think we understand each other. “Fight like a good soldier of Christ” and God will reward you.¹¹⁴

“Putting together those who have perpetual vows”

The year about to end has been full of crosses for me; but perhaps it has been the most productive of holy works, thanks be to God. How true it is: “in the Cross strength, in the Cross power” (...).

How are things by you? How is your health? How have you assigned the Fathers? Who stays on? Who is to return? Regarding assignments, I strongly insist on one thing: make sure you put together those who have perpetual vows. In this way, they can more easily observe the rules and feel more at ease (...).

The financial reports that every house should send you and you to me are due. It is important to review the financial administration so as to ascertain how the money is being spent and with what criteria. Here we are living in destitution, I even more so than our house. So you must keep in mind the needs of the Motherhouse and send as much as you can.¹¹⁵

It is hard for one to keep the spirit of his vocation for long if he lives alone”

Through good Fr. Marchetti I received your very kind letter of Nov. 11. I cannot tell you how happy it made me. I am always overjoyed whenever I meet talented and compassionate people who harness mind and heart and strength to the alleviation of the miseries of others.

Your Honor, I thank you for your noble concern for our poor emigrants. Personally, I would be very happy to satisfy the desire you expressed to me. To me, the most serious problem is that of leaving the Missionaries separated from each other. You are a man of experience and know how hard it is for one to keep the spirit of his vocation for long if he lives alone, in the midst of people of different backgrounds with whom one must more or less always contend. Over the long haul, the inner life becomes weak and, every now and then, needs to be nourished and strengthened in the spirit of the Rule by the word and example of confreres.

¹¹⁴ Id., Sept. 23, 1895.

¹¹⁵ Id., Dec. 11, 1896.

There should be at least two Missionaries, and they should also be able to live the common life. In the beginning it would be enough for them to have a little church or even some oratory with a residence nearby. One of the two could go to the barracks of the emigrants and, as a rule, return to the residence.¹¹⁶

“There should be at least two of them”

As soon as the Archbishop and you give me a sign, I will immediately send two Missionaries and a brother catechist to Boston. You must insist that there be at least two of them. With uncommon speed, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide has approved our Rule and insists that there be at least two priests in every house. I don't foresee any opposition (...).

I consider it a wise rule. What can you expect of a priest isolated in the midst of a clergy that, at least in the beginning, may not be too friendly to him? He would get disheartened. So there should be at least two of them together. On Sundays they will go wherever they are needed.¹¹⁷

“Let them keep up the spirit of their vocation”

You already have with you, or soon will, the two new priests. I cordially and warmly entrust them to you. Love them as a father loves his children. Encourage them; correct them; see to it that they keep up the spirit of their vocation.

To this end, I urge you to have the Rules strictly observed, especially the practices of piety in common, meditation first and foremost.

You must give your residences the atmosphere of a religious house. Otherwise, you won't be able to do all the good you and all of us desire. These are good young men; they will be what you want them to be. Begin at once: “Let everything be done according to order.” It is a serious obligation of conscience, and to fulfill it one must impose all kinds of sacrifices on oneself.¹¹⁸

“Entrusting oneself to God in all simplicity”

Will the Institute endure, will it not endure? It will endure as long as it pleases God. Dear Monsignor, those who have a vocation enter the Institute without worrying at all about their future, knowing that the future is in the hands of God. Entrusting oneself to God in all simplicity is worth much more than an obsession with guarantees for the Institute's moral, financial, and stable conditions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Letter to Gherardo Pio di Savoia, Dec. 26, 1894 (AGS 7/2). Count Gherardo Pio di Savoia was consul general of Italy in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

¹¹⁷ Letter to Fr. F. Zaboglio, Oct. 17, 1888 (Archives of the Seminary of Como).

¹¹⁸ Letter to a missionary, s.d. (AGS 3023/2).

¹¹⁹ Letter to Canon A. Valdameri, July 1891 (AGS 3022/32).

“We form a small, humble Congregation but a Congregation nonetheless”

I congratulate you and your confreres on the good you are doing. Of course, we have to accept the good with the inevitable defects of our human frailty. But we cannot deny that we are doing good, lots of good. Let us give infinite thanks to the Lord for this. I tell you these things to encourage you in your difficulties and make you eager to do your good work with ever increasing perfection.

The holy founder of a religious order used to say that in the beginning Divine Providence sent him a few very generous men who -- plunging ahead blindly, it seemed -- would sometimes undertake works that were above their possibilities and unpopular with their more cautious confreres. In the end, the holy founder had to confess publicly that without these men his institute would have died or almost.

Dear Fr. Domenico, let us pray the good Lord to grant us the same grace. He will do so if we become ever more worthy of his blessings. We form a small, humble Congregation but a Congregation nonetheless. So it is only fair that what little money the Lord sends us be used for it. So when Fr. Morelli is in need and you can help him, by all means do so “in the name of the Lord” (...).

Whenever possible remember to help our Motherhouse. I warmly recommend her to you because she is always poor and needy. Right now, we are planning to buy a new house and church. For this we will need about one hundred thousand lire. And where will we find them? I am sure God will provide.¹²⁰

“The backbone and life of every community”

We must thank the Lord for the immense good our Congregation has done so far despite formidable difficulties and many deficiencies.

Nevertheless, I want her to flourish ever more for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. For this reason, taking into account, as I told you orally, the desires expressed to me by a number of our missionaries as well as the needs of the Congregation and having invoked the help of our heavenly patron, St. Charles, I have ordered and do hereby order the following:

1. Every day all will do their spiritual reading and meditation and recite the rosary in common.
2. Every year -- or every two years, depending on the custom of the different dioceses -- all will make their spiritual exercises together with the clergy of the diocese in which they reside.
3. Every year the missionaries will send the provincial the certificate for confessions.
4. Every year, upon notification of the provincial, the local superiors will meet in one of our houses, selected by the provincial himself, to discuss and recommend the most suitable means for continually improving our missions (...).

¹²⁰ Letter to Fr. D. Vicentini, March 5, 1892 (AGS 3023/2). The “new house and church” are the Istituto Cristoforo Colombo with the attached St. Charles Church, the Motherhouse of the Scalabrinians. It was bought in 1892.

8. The financial administration of the house must be scrupulously kept. The income and expenses are to be entered into the journal daily in a clear and detailed way, and every month there will be the balancing of the budget.
9. Every month, after deducting from the closing balance enough money for house expenses and a reasonable sum for unforeseen expenses, the house treasurers will send the rest to the provincial, who, in turn, will forward it to the superior of the Motherhouse. No one must neglect this serious obligation, meager as the savings may be sometimes (...).

Dear Father, you will notify all the Missionaries of the Congregation of these directives as soon as you get to America, and you personally will make every effort to see to their exact observance (...).

You well know that the backbone and life of every community is harmony and discipline. You will strongly recommend these two things to your confreres. Without them, they would accomplish very little even if they were an army. With them, they will perform miracles even if they are just a few.

In every house, increasingly, you must foster and cultivate the spirit of piety and prayer: the foundation and support of everything.¹²¹

“All this is necessary for the good functioning of the Congregation”

1. The provincial superior at least every six months and the superiors of the houses at least once a year must communicate directly with the superior general who resides in Italy. They will give him an exact account of all the activities promoted or organized in each mission of America, of the results obtained and those hoped for, as well as of the financial condition of these missions.
2. The Provincial, who, as you know, has ultimate authority over all the houses and the power to give orders to all the missionaries residing in his province, must see to the exact observance of the rules. He will communicate all the orders of the superior general and see to it that they are carried out.
3. The provincial will periodically visit each house of the Province and make the decisions that urgent situations require. He will also obtain a faithful account of the income and expenses of each house.
4. He will be assisted in the government of the Province by two consultors (...). He will listen to their advice on the situation of our missions and on the transfer of missionaries, as well as -- and I hope this will never happen -- on the application of canonical penalties, such as the Spiritual Exercises, suspension from hearing confessions, and so on.
5. At least once a year, the Provincial will call a meeting of the local superiors so that they can discuss the needs of the missions and come to an agreement on common policies. Those who for whatever reason cannot attend these meetings must send in their proposals in writing.

¹²¹ Letter to Fr. P. Novati, April 2, 1905 (AGS 3023/2). Fr. Paolo Novati was the provincial superior in the United States from 1901 to 1905.

6. Besides seeing to it that “duties are performed sincerely and properly,” the superiors of the houses must try to foster and increase in their subjects the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, a spirit of humility and sacrifice, a spirit of meekness and charity.¹²²

“The superior of the house is a real superior”

To my great chagrin, I have learned of something I can hardly believe, namely, that some of our missionary priests look on the superior of the house as an honorary superior rather than as a real superior.

To root out this error that tends, believe it or not, to the disintegration and destruction of our little, humble Congregation, I hereby solemnly declare that the superior of the house is the real superior of all the Missionaries -- both priests and brothers -- who reside in that house and that they therefore owe him respect and obedience in everything he sees fit to prescribe or command on behalf of the community and of the individuals. If they fail in this matter of obedience, they will have to give a serious account to God and to me both for the evil action itself as well as for the scandal given. I trust no one will ever dare propose this false theory any more.¹²³

“Prudence and firmness: these are what make for good government”

Governing human beings is hard and the cross of command is heavy.

This is what came to my mind when I got your last few letters. But it is also true that “I can do all things in him who gives me strength”. And this happens whenever we are worthy of it: “The Lord stood by me and strengthened me.” So, have courage, be calm, and trust in God (...).

You did the right thing in answering Fr. Vicentini as you did. It would have been an invalid dispensation. If he had had a little more courage in the beginning, things would not have come to this point. But the fear of something worse made him close an eye, or both eyes, without thinking of the *necesse est*, etc. A superior must be strong when his duty calls for it and not let himself be frightened by what might happen. Prudence and firmness: these are the qualities that make for good government and these I daily beg God to grant you.¹²⁴

¹²² *Ai Missionari per gl’Italiani nelle Americhe*, Piacenza 1892, pp. 9-10.

¹²³ Circular to the local superiors, Feb. 15, 1893 (AGS 7/1).

¹²⁴ Letter to Fr. F. Zaboglio, Nov. 29, 1895 (Archives of the Seminary of Como).

4. LAY PEOPLE AND EMIGRATION

It is also the duty of the State to guide and assist emigration, for the State must ensure the moral and material protection of the emigrants through international agreements and through legislation that will defend the human and civil rights of the emigrants, protect them from the greedy speculation of recruiters, and prevent the plunder of the savings sent to their families back in the homeland.

Since "the needs of our emigrants can be divided into two kinds, material and moral," Bishop Scalabrini wanted the work on behalf of the emigrants to be "at once religious and lay, so as to meet both these needs." So, besides the religious Congregations, he founded the St. Raphael Society on behalf of the emigrants. Its purpose was to provide legal assistance and health protection, to furnish information on available jobs and help in obtaining them, to help abolish the "white slave trade" engaged in by the emigration recruiters, and to provide religious care for the emigrants from the moment they leave their country until they reach their destination.

Hence, branches of the St. Raphael Society were to be established both in the principal ports of embarkation and debarkation and in areas contributing most of the emigrants. To this end, all were to work together: ecclesiastics and lay people, all parties, "all those in whose heart burns love of country and who have a sense of deep compassion for the sufferings and needs of our brothers and sisters who have abandoned this motherland of ours."

Bishop Scalabrini concerned himself above all with the Italian emigrants because they were among the poorest and most abandoned and also because he wanted to begin the reconciliation of Church and State by deeds: "this work is dear to my heart not only because in it I see a means for fulfilling my episcopal duties toward such a great number of unfortunate souls -- many of whom come from my own diocese -- but also because religion and country can work hand in hand in this common cause. I believe this is the beginning of that reconciliation of hearts that has always been one of the fondest desires of my life."

a) THE DUTY OF THE STATE AND OF THE RULING CLASS

“A bishop involved in social questions and parliamentary bills”

Most Honorable friend,

Since Parliament will shortly discuss the ministerial bill on emigration, I cannot refrain from sharing with you some thoughts that came to me as I read that bill, appropriately amended by the parliamentary committee.

I turn to you not only because of my affection and esteem for you, which began in the classroom and has continued uninterruptedly for many, many years, but also because I know you as an unabashed friend of the poor (and these days this is a feather in one's hat) and a patient, unassuming, intelligent student of social problems.

I am addressing you publicly not because I want to garner vain attention, which I shun on principle and by nature, but because the question I am raising is one that needs to be discussed. I have found no other means to attract the notice of an indifferent and heedless public which does not read unless led to do so by headlines that arouse its curiosity. I thought an open letter addressed to a member of Parliament from a bishop concerned with social questions and proposals for legislation might present a headline capable of shaking up the unwholesome indifference of the public and be reason enough, at last, to spark discussion of a law, a discussion that might be tedious, if you will, but quite productive.

I also consider it my duty as a citizen. Ever since I published my study on *Italian Emigration in America*, I have been collecting data and coming to some conclusions that might be useful to so many of our poor countrymen. This is the purpose I had in mind when I compiled those facts and those conclusions for this letter. If I have erred in evaluating them and wasted my time, may my extensive study and great love be an incentive for you and all people of good will.¹²⁵

“Internal, political, and agricultural-commercial emigration”

Emigration of civilized people may be internal, political, or agricultural-commercial, that is to say, by infiltration.

By *internal migration* I do not mean that ebb and flow of people who move about periodically within a given area for different social or personal reasons. I mean a true colonization -- within the boundaries of one's homeland -- of uncultivated land that may be abundant in one area and scarce in another.

Everybody knows the meaning of *political emigration* and colonization and what they imply. Their purpose is to give one's country more territory -- extending its borders -- where the laws of the homeland prevail, where religion, language and customs -- in a word, all the elements composing the religious, civil, and national identity of a people -- will help keep alive in the distant descendants the memory of, and love for, the country of their forefathers and mothers (...).

Agricultural-commercial colonies or those resulting from infiltration aim to establish in other countries groups of people of a given nationality who will engage in commerce,

¹²⁵*Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, p. 6-7.

industry, and agriculture and live among a foreign population without losing their own identity. This was the kind of emigration and colonization preferred by our glorious maritime republics (...).

To many people, internal migration seems the ideal type of migration. It is very useful and, for all of us, very easy to carry out. They cannot understand why our Government has not yet decided to adopt this system, which would make us rich and powerful. It would increase our population and give workers their daily bread in abundance (...).

Colonize the hinterland, if you will. Free vast expanses of Italian soil from malaria and make agriculture more intensive and hence more productive. It all sounds so beautiful! Still, let us not deceive ourselves. Yes, let us colonize as much as possible. But to avoid disillusionment, we must be convinced that it is not as easy as it looks. For sure, it could not keep pace with the fast growth of our population.¹²⁶

“For Italy there only remains the third kind of emigration”

Political colonies are another way by which modern countries fulfill their migratory responsibilities, a way that perhaps takes in the largest number of interests and most awakens national pride. The great activity and jealous care with which, in our day, the various countries are defending their ancient colonial possessions and acquiring new ones are the most eloquent proof of my statement. Unfortunately, the hopes of our country for an extensive political colonization were dashed and put off until who knows when by our recent disasters in Africa, the mere thought of which saddens every Italian heart.

This data and these observations should convince us that Italy, at least for the time being, is left with only the third form of emigration, namely that of pouring out its surplus population into the midst of other peoples and into lands belonging to others. Though more modest than the other two, this form satisfies Italy’s immediate needs. Hence, the new emigration process now going on among us meets the political, territorial, and economic needs of our country and does not exceed its reproductive capacity. As such, it has the character of a permanent phenomenon and is a source of personal and social prosperity. But what guarantees does the law accord to this type of emigration? How is the State fulfilling its duty of moral and material support for the emigrant? How are we, the leaders, fulfilling this duty?¹²⁷

“A law, albeit good, is not enough”

For the complex reality of emigration to meet the noble social purposes for which God destined it, a law, albeit good, is not enough. The law must be buttressed by all those wise public and private institutions, by that complex of religious and civil activities that have given excellent results to the countries that first employed them. Those activities not only encourage the poor emigrants to continue on their way with confidence, knowing they are protected; but they also tell foreigners that those poor people are not forgotten or *res nullius*

¹²⁶ *L’Italia all’estero*, Torino 1899, pp. 8-9. In this context, to “colonize” means to become a settler on a homestead.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

(nobody's property) but part of a great country that knows its duty and fulfills it by extending the shadow of its flag over its distant sons and daughters, helping them in their material needs and ennobling their moral character with religion and education.¹²⁸

"Our emigrants are the least protected"

From separate accounts and facts reported from time to time in the press, I note that our countrymen abroad are the least protected, are often victims -- either through ignorance or good faith -- of contemptible exploiters, and are the least likely to have recourse to consular authorities when they need to assert their rights or are in trouble. This may all be due to a spirit of independence or to the fact that Italians are not used to looking on the Government of their country as their natural and valuable protector. But it may also be a grave indication of mistrust, the product of the habitual neglect or impotence of our authorities, so much so that our countrymen find it better to fend for themselves as best they can rather than wait for the tardy and ineffectual protection of their distant homeland.

By this, I do not mean to condemn anyone in particular or even a whole class of very honorable public officials, who, I am sure, are zealous in their duty and conscious of the noble mission entrusted to them. I simply wish to point out a situation and deplore it.

Now, in the light of this situation, what steps have been taken, or even attempted, to improve this state of affairs? I must state frankly, albeit with deep sorrow: the Government has done very little and private people nothing. Now and then, when some sad incident is brought to the attention of the public, there is a bit of agitation, some parliamentary inquiries, an occasional newspaper article. To inquiries the Government responds that it will take care of the matter. The outcries of the newspapers are followed by the indignation of some kind souls. But soon oblivion descends upon everything, all things subside, all is still again in the treacherous stillness of the wave that hides its victim in its turbulent depths. We have been going on this way year after year as if nothing could be done for our distant brothers and sisters except give them much talk, flavored with a little rhetoric so as to beguile those who are waiting for help and divert the attention of those who, out of a sense of humanity and Christian charity, would like to apply the surgical knife to modern society's cancerous wound, namely, egoism (...).

The fault lies at the top! The Government has so little to brag about in this regard that all are deeply convinced that Italians are the least protected of all emigrants (...).

True, Government and Parliament have had lengthy discussions on this vital subject. But interpellations by an occasional parliamentarian, relevant bills, the usual responses of the Ministers, the circular letters of the Prefects, and the articles by semi-official bulletins are inadequate remedies. All these things are a waste of time if they do not produce decent laws (...).

If we page through parliamentary proceedings and through the archives of Prefectures and newspapers, we would easily discover some rather eloquent data, facts and figures, a number of effective temporary measures, and a lot of useful observations on the general subject of emigration. But we would look in vain for a law in our code or an organization in our country that has taken those facts, figures, and observations into account.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, pp.34-37.

¹²⁹ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 24-28.

“The greedy speculation of the recruiters”

Let us consult the legislative wisdom of the countries that have had a much longer experience with emigration than we. We will discover that they either do not allow the activity of recruiting agents or circumscribe it with more precautionary measures than are found in the Italian legislative bill. Remember, dear friend, that the English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish emigrants are leaving their lands with much better prospects than ours do, well knowing that they will find in their country's vast possessions across the Ocean a vibrant and noble image of the motherland, reflected in law, language, and religion. So those Governments could grant full freedom of recruitment without failing in their duty of special care and protection because for them such activities are not a waste of time and energy or a vile exploitation but a beneficial expansion that enhances their power and increases their wealth. How different is the situation of our emigrants!

Generally, our emigrants are sent by greedy, speculating recruiters to places where the disease-ridden air kills them or where they are employed in humiliating jobs because the profit of the agent increases in proportion to the scarcity of workers and the difficulty of recruitment. There is a scarcity of workers for land reclamation or public works in places where death thins out the work force and fear so scares off the survivors that there is always need for new workers unaware of the dangers. In all catastrophes of this kind, the Italians will be largely represented, too much so, until a strong and respected Government fulfills once and for all its supreme duty of effectively safeguarding the unfortunate emigrants from snares and high-handedness.¹³⁰

“The new parliamentary bill on emigration”

Gentlemen, we must use all our influence so that the new emigration bill introduced by the Hon. Visconti Venosta and accepted by the Hon. Canevaro, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, will soon receive the approval of Parliament. In this way, many serious abuses against the emigrants will be eliminated, and a serious and insidious gap in our legislation will be filled.

Another providential bill, *On the Protection of Remittances and Savings of Italian Emigrants in the Two Americas*, which should soon receive parliamentary approval, is the bill introduced by the Hon. Luzzati, the former Treasury Minister, along with his colleagues Rudinì, Visconti Venosta, Sineo, and Branca.

The lengthy report that preceded the bill lists the facts and ways by which the hard won, hoarded earnings of our countrymen abroad are always eroded by the exchange rate and the transmittal because of the machinations of greedy and often dishonest pseudobankers. Unfortunately, those meager savings quite often are entirely lost through one of those acts of bank banditry that are not infrequent overseas -- where everyone may claim to be a banker, even without accumulated capital -- a banditry that consists in absconding with all the deposits and fleeing to another country. In just one year and in just one city of North America, four such disappearances took place, and the savings lost by our emigrants amounted to L. 200,000!

¹³⁰ *Il disegno di legge sulla emigrazione italiana*, Piacenza 1888, pp. 29-30.

Some of these facts alone -- and there are hundreds of them -- are enough to justify and give urgency to the legislative provision formulated by the distinguished statesman from Padua that aims at cutting out at the root all the parasites that thrive and get fat on the people's savings through the shameful exploitation of the workers' ignorance and good faith.¹³¹

"The work of the ruling classes"

However, laws are not enough to heal the wounds of our emigration. Some of these wounds are in fact inherent in the nature of emigration while others come from remote causes that escape the control of laws. Those evils would not be uprooted even with the best laws in the world and with numerous, first-rate government officials. For that matter, we all know that the hands of governments and their officials are tied by international customs and practices. They cannot enforce certain measures and, if they tried, would only aggravate the wounds they are trying to heal.

The work of the ruling classes must begin here where the work of law and government ceases. How? First, by studying and debating the great problem of emigration and by making the religious, economic, and civic well-being of so many unfortunate brothers and sisters of ours a top priority on the agenda of the regional, diocesan, and parochial committees. This is the plea I make to the leaders of the Catholic movement. The work of these committees would consist in collecting funds for the emigrants, vigorously counseling against emigration when this would have disastrous consequences, defending the emigrants from snares and fraudulent contracts, in a word, lavishing on emigration all possible religious and civil assistance so that it will be strong, united, and invincible before all enemies, for in this case the safety of each becomes the safety of all.¹³²

"Make the exile of our brothers and sisters less bitter"

Gentlemen, the cause for which you have assembled here is indeed beautiful. It deserves all your attention because it is worth the concern of all people of good will.

It is a question of protecting and guiding our emigration in the best possible way, making the exile of our expatriates less bitter and harnessing for the good of Italy a force that is being too easily wasted.

Anyone with a genuine love for religion and country cannot help but feel the need to be a part of this work and to devote at least some of his energies to it.

We will let others study the phenomenon of emigration in the rich variety of its forms. That emigration is a natural and inalienable right, as the statesman says; that it is a source of prosperity for those who leave and those who stay, as the sociologist proclaims; that it is the natural evolution of things or the progressive development of the races, as the philosopher maintains; all this matters very little to us at the moment. We have to come down to something practical and concrete. This meeting of ours, gentlemen, aims to be something

¹³¹ *L'Italia all'estero*, Torino 1899, p. 15. The two proposed bills were approved by Parliament in 1901.

¹³² *L'emigrazione degli operai italiani*, Ferrara 1899.

practical and concrete. It is a friendly and familiar get-together, not an academic performance. So let us do away with rhetoric. Let us just remember that the evils that bedevil our emigration are countless and that something must be done.

Those evils escape the control of the authorities because, to a large extent, they escape the control of the law. It is up to private initiative to make up for one and the other.

So, gentlemen, let us roll up our sleeves. We are working for a cause that has the blessing of both God and man. Let us make the most of this fact. Let us tighten ever more those bonds of fraternal solidarity that will make the weak strong and the strong invincible.¹³³

“Lay collaboration”

The proposal regarding the temporary migrants surely deserves a warm welcome, but I would not want the excessive zeal of your friends to make it assume political tones. Yes, it may help in some way, but it can also do great harm. A word to the wise is sufficient. I would have preferred it if you had undertaken this matter yourself alone, with the understanding of Rome, without tying yourself to people who are well-meaning and altruistic but always likely to be the object of much bias. I’m referring to the political aspect, of course.¹³⁴

I don’t look down on the collaboration of lay people either. But in strictly religious matters I am not keen about lay activists because they rarely set aside secondary motives, especially political ones. Wasn’t there a lot of criticism against the so-called top hat bishops? I love to be fair and consistent with everybody. The older I get, the more convinced I become that a lot of good is done when each one keeps to his or her place.¹³⁵

b) THE ST. RAPHAEL SOCIETY

“A committee of lay people under the supervision of a bishop”

Your Excellency, I am taking the liberty of sending you a copy of a modest paper of mine on Italian emigration as a small token of my great esteem for you. Since I know this matter is of great concern to you, I hope you will give it your wise and powerful support.

¹³³ Notes for a conference on emigration (AGS 3014/6).

¹³⁴ Letter to G. Bonomelli, March 2, 1900 (Carteggio S.B, p. 357). The presidency of the Institute for the care of the Italian emigrants in Europe, founded by Bonomelli in 1900, was entrusted to lay people.

¹³⁵ Id., April 24, 1900 (ibid., p. 359). The so-called “top hat bishops” were the intransigent lay leaders of the Opera dei Congressi, whom the Bishops of Piacenza and Cremona criticized for their tendency to go over the heads of the bishops.

I would say that the idea was received with enthusiasm everywhere. Already a number of rather distinguished priests and lay people have volunteered to set up an appropriate committee to collect funds and asked me to take charge of the committee.

Monsignor, I am convinced we should welcome these generous dispositions, promptly roll up our sleeves, and not let others beat us to the punch. I believe that a committee of lay people under the supervision of a bishop answerable to Propaganda Fide is necessary to prepare the vast work that must precede the realization of the program of evangelization being prepared by the Sacred Congregation.

It is extremely important, first of all, to free our emigrants from the hands of speculating agents who are driving so many poor souls, especially young boys and girls, to eternal ruin. I believe that the help of the secular arm is indispensable for this purpose. A lay, or mostly lay, committee could have freer recourse to it with better hopes of success than would a church commission. Moreover, I think that the lay project dealing with humanitarian assistance should be kept separate from the church organization in charge of spiritual care. As I said before, the lay committee should do all the ground work and provide the means needed to make the mission of the church organization possible.

In agreement with the distinguished Bishop of Cremona, who would also become a board member of the general committee, I would be prepared to open here in Piacenza a house for priests whom God will inspire to dedicate themselves to this work of charity. I have no doubt that the people who will be on this committee and other well-wishers will provide the material means for it; but I trust most of all in divine Providence. In this way, the project of Propaganda Fide will have a clear path ahead and will not come to grief, which might happen if it were entrusted to a few ecclesiastics and were to run into obstacles and impediments.¹³⁶

“An Association of Assistance that is at once religious and lay”

The needs of our emigrants are of two kinds: moral and material. I would like an Association of Assistance to be organized in Italy, which would be both religious and lay and would thus be fully responsive to both needs.

From the religious point of view, the field of action is very vast; but the economic one is just as vast.

As I have already stated, the task of such an association should be to look after the spiritual and material interests of those unfortunate people who leave the land of their birth to cross the ocean. In a word:

1. To keep the emigrant from falling victim to the shameful exploitation of certain emigration agents who, in order to make money, morally and materially destroy the poor wretches who fall into their nets;
2. To set up an office that will do what is necessary for the employment of emigrants upon their arrival in America so that whenever an Italian emigrant contacts the association, he will be able to find gainful employment; otherwise, the association should make every effort to convince him not to emigrate in the first place;

¹³⁶ Letter to Mons. D. Jacobini, July 2, 1887 (AGS 1/1).

3. To provide help in case of emergency or sickness, both during the voyage and after arrival;
4. To declare open war, if I may use this term, on the merchants in human flesh who are prepared to use the most sordid means for the sake of money;
5. To provide religious care during the crossing and after arrival, and in the places where the emigrants will be settling.

Regarding the first point: I would like the Association to have not just contributing members but active members as well. The tasks of the latter should be various and well distributed. First of all, we should set up committees in the main ports of the Kingdom as well as in those of foreign countries where our emigrants are embarking, to welcome them, watch over them, counsel them, and defend them. Other committees should be set up in the ports to which the Italian emigrants are heading so as to forestall those very same dangers and problems that all too often are found at the ports of embarkation.

To carry out the second point, the Association should be in contact not only with the Italian Government but also with the American Governments so as to give our Italian emigration a logical and practical direction and thus ensure that, upon arriving in America, the poor peasants will know where to go and avoid making wrong decisions that will usher in an endless chain of troubles for themselves and their families. In this way, we would enable our communities to be more prosperous, better organized, and in a better position to receive help and protection from the national Government.

The third point is also very important and closely related to the previous two. The Association should make sure that, during the voyage, the emigrants are accompanied by a member of the Association or at least are entrusted to a responsible person who will help them in case of need. On the boat, there should always be a priest to minister to everyone, especially the sick.

The Association should also make sure that, where there are masses of Italian settlers, the sick are not abandoned and that those reduced to poverty because of an accident get the help they need. But to reach this goal, we should make sure that emigration is regulated and that Italians do not spread out in small groups over the vast American continent but settle instead in strong and well organized communities.

The fourth point refers to a vigorous suppression of white slavery. To achieve positive results, the Association will need the effective support of the Government, which I believe will be forthcoming if the organization brings to light the wicked things presently going on unnoticed because of general apathy.

As I have already pointed out, all too often heartless and unscrupulous emigration agents dupe families and take their young ladies away, dooming them to moral degradation and disgrace. These truly heartbreaking cases are practically the order of the day. The news media, which loves to report the most trivial gossip of city life with gleeful interest, is silent about these abominable crimes. It ignores them or feigns not to know them. An association established for the protection of the emigrants must openly and constantly wage war on this wicked trade. When unable to act alone, this association should have recourse to public opinion and try to stir up people's moral indignation by denouncing at important gatherings the abuses and horrors committed against human and divine law.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ *L'emigrazione italiana in America*, Piacenza 1887, pp. 41-44.

“A work of religious, patriotic, and economic liberation”

It was then that, trusting in God and his Providence, I dared to do something. The evils of our emigration, not to mention those that are part and parcel of emigration itself, stem from the neglect in which emigration is left. We can sum them up as follows: loss of faith for lack of religious instruction, a loss of a sense of nationality for lack of any motivation to keep it alive, and financial ruin as a result of shameful exploitation.

So I founded two societies with the purpose of lessening and, if at all possible, eradicating those evils; two societies, one made up of priests, the other of lay people; one religious, the other lay; two societies to help and complement each other. The first is the Congregation of the Missionaries focusing especially on the spiritual welfare of our emigrants, the other on their material welfare. The first attains its purpose by setting up churches, schools, orphanages, and hospitals through priests united family-like by the religious vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, ready and willing to rush wherever they are sent, as apostles, teachers, doctors, or nurses, according to the needs. The second society carries out its task by discouraging emigration when it is unwise, keeping an eye on the work of emigration agents, seeing to it that they do not violate the law, and, if everything else fails, counseling the emigrants and channelling them toward good destinations.

It is surely a tremendous task for anyone, but even more so for me, bereft as I am of means and ability. I thought -- and the facts proved me right -- that our indifference was due to the lack of a spirit of initiative, to ignorance of what is going on, and, if you wish, to the fact that our country has lost the habit of undertaking certain ventures, rather than to ill will. I felt that if even one voice, motivated simply by love of religion and country, were raised to awaken the sleepy and the indolent, it would not be a cry in the desert. I felt that a person firmly determined to eradicate so many evils would also find people with equal determination to fight alongside of him. I felt that Italy, which gives the world heroic missionaries, missionaries who bring the light of the Gospel and of civilization to the most inhospitable lands and who lead uncivilized nations to the feet of the Cross; Italy which makes a generous contribution and lends its weight to the abolition of the black slave trade, would not remain indifferent, much less disdainful, to the white slave trade, to this work of religious, patriotic, and economic liberation of our brother and sister emigrants.¹³⁸

“Founding just an ecclesiastical institute would not have been enough”

Founding just an ecclesiastical institute would not have been enough to provide adequate care for our emigrants (...).

I am planning an association more or less like the one founded in Germany in 1868, headed by the Prince Iseburg-Birnstein and incorporated under the name of *Raphaels Verein*. The purpose of this association is to defend the emigrants through a well-coordinated protective network from the numerous dangers that surround them as soon as they leave their native country.

My idea found favor and effective support in a rather large group of people who are very close to me. So last year I set up in Piacenza the central committee of the *Italian*

¹³⁸ First Conference on Emigration (AGS 5/3).

Emigration Welfare Association, headed by Marquis and Attorney Gianbattista Volpe Landi, who dedicates all his energies and enthusiasm to the association.

The members of this committee come from all walks of life. Though not all sharing the same convictions, they are all universally esteemed, respected, and well known for their warm, genuine love of country and for their enlightened charity.

With the help also of people living in other cities of Italy, provisional by-laws were drafted in which the nature and purpose of the association were formulated. Its purpose is to give appropriate guidance and help to those who have decided to emigrate. The association does this by providing useful information on the countries most suitable for emigration because of their soil fertility, ease of finding jobs, and availability of religious and civil care. The association offers its services free to the emigrants at the ports of embarkation. It recommends them to national committees set up in countries overseas and, above all, to the delegate or his associate who receives them at the port of debarkation. In the foreign land, the delegate begins anew with them the same work of charity, which, rather than just useful, will become necessary in view of the new dangers which they are to face.

The Genoa committee is proud to have the worthy Marquis Vittorio del Carretto di Balestrino as its head. Before the end of this year, it will begin its work of assistance for the emigrants leaving from that port, the most important in Italy. For this purpose, it has decided to open a special aid and information office, staffed by one of its representatives.

Moreover, the committee has seen to it that, beginning this coming January 1892, every time a ship leaves for America, a special religious function will be celebrated in the Church of San Giovanni di Prè, which is very close to the port.¹³⁹

“Committees in the areas that contribute the most emigrants”

Here in Italy, besides the central committee and the committees already set up or about to be set up in the ports of embarkation, it was necessary to establish others in the more important centers, especially in the areas that contribute the most emigrants. These committees were to enlist supporters and helpers who would ensure that the work of protection would really reach those who most needed it.

The central committee is turning its attention mainly to this problem. I founded this central committee some time ago and now plan to make it known through a future series of special conferences illustrating the nature and purpose of the organization.

This past winter, I spoke to the good and gracious public of Genoa, Rome, Florence, Turin, and Milan. Committees were founded also in these last four cities, among the most important in Italy. Genoa already had its committee since the end of 1890. Besides soliciting the indispensable funds, like all the others, the Rome committee also has the task of being the Association's information center vis-à-vis the national Government and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. This committee is not complete as yet; but a group of intelligent and active young people, headed by Prince D. Luigi Boncompagni Ludovisi, have volunteered to lead it. I am confident that soon, with the help of outstanding people who are not indifferent to the sorrowful plight of the emigrants and see their needs,

¹³⁹ *Dell'assistenza alla emigrazione italiana e degli Istituti che vi provvedono*, Piacenza 1891, pp. 13-16. The Raphaelsverein had been founded by Peter Paul Cahensly.

the Rome committee will be complete and will offer the Association the services the latter rightly expects of it.

The venerable prelate Di Calabiana and the illustrious Cardinal Bausa -- who so honors the sacred purple with his doctrine and virtue -- have, as Archbishops respectively of Milan and Florence, consented to endorse the committees in their respective cities with their name and with the prestige accruing to them in the Church Hierarchy. Better yet, the latter reserved to himself the chairmanship of the Florence committee. The president of the Milan committee is General Thaon de Revel, a scion of the ancient Piedmontese aristocracy that has given much service to the country in war and to civil government. The Turin committee is headed by Baron Antonio Manno, also an aristocrat, who bears an honored and respected name.

Other committees are still in the embryonic stage, or are about to be set up, in Treviso, Brescia, Cremona, Bergamo, Lucca, and other cities.¹⁴⁰

“The duties of the local committees”

The duties of the local committees will be outlined in greater detail in the final by-laws submitted to the deliberations of a Convention, held in Piacenza this past September, of representatives of committees already existing and of those in the process of being formed. The Convention’s decisions are presently being processed in line with instructions received. Well knowing the mind of the central committee, I can state that it is its intention that the committees in the different Provinces serve as intermediaries and vehicles for a faster and easier communication between the central committee -- in which the information service is located -- and the emigrants. This will be done through delegates or assistant delegates distributed in all the areas that contribute any amount of emigrants.

The emigrants must know the countries of immigration in their true colors. But everyone must also receive advice in accordance with one’s personal and family situation. Now, by multiplying the committees and, through the committees, the delegates and assistant delegates (in the countryside pastors, teachers, and municipal secretaries could assume this task), every emigrant will find a trusted person nearby willing to counsel him with full knowledge of the facts. In turn, the delegates and assistant delegates -- through the committees and these through the central committee -- seek and receive instructions, news, and information from the surest sources and, above all, verify their reliability through the missionaries living in America. Besides all this, the committees do all they can to obtain the funds that are indispensable to the Association with the help of committees made up of the most outstanding women, like in Turin, Milan, etc.¹⁴¹

“The Association needs everybody’s help”

To achieve the favorable results it hopes for, the Association needs the help of all those in whose heart burns the bright and serene love of country and the fire of a gentle compassion for the sufferings and needs of their brothers and sisters who have left this common land of

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 18-20.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 20-22.

ours. It is important that they become supporters and helpers of the Association with their modest offerings or with their own personal work. It is necessary that they contribute their moral or material support and make the work known.

Such a vast, difficult and complex enterprise demands not only persevering effort and total self-sacrifice on the part of the leaders but adequate resources as well.

I have full confidence that this appeal will not go unheeded.¹⁴²

“The St. Raphael Society has been founded in the United States”

The St. Raphael Society was founded in the United States two months ago.

Article 1 of the by-laws states its goals:

- a) To help the Italian immigrants upon their arrival in the United States and see to it that they do not fall into the hands of dishonest people;
- b) To help the immigrants find jobs, to the extent possible;
- c) To see to it that they do not lack religious care after debarkation and in the places where they will be living;
- d) To acquire a building, as soon as possible, to provide lodging for poor immigrants, as well as for young boys and girls, until such time as they find a place or have been consigned to their parents.

The 6th and last article provides that the *Italian Society of St. Raphael* keep in close contact with the analogous society set up in Italy with the name, *Italian Emigration Welfare Society*.

Thus, the good work begun in Italy is complemented in the New World and continues to assist the emigrants in the United States, the only place -- among the various American nations our emigrants are heading for -- where help and protection are effectively and concretely provided.¹⁴³

“Assistance from the Port of Genoa to the ports of America”

One of our emigrants' greatest needs was that of getting help at the Genoa port of embarkation, where those poor people were treated as the cheapest merchandise or worse. Even there I spoke in public, in 1888 I think, on the work of the St. Raphael Society. Archbishop Magnasco, the venerable prelate of that See, and the port inspector, Cav. Malnate, begged me with tears in their eyes to send some missionaries to Genoa for the care of those unfortunates, criminally betrayed and exploited in every way. As soon as I could, I satisfied this holy desire, which was also mine, and there I opened a house. The good the missionaries accomplished there so far is unbelievable. For this reason and, above all, to make so many abuses and frauds disappear, they had to expose themselves to the fury of interested parties and Masonic newspapers. But, with the help of God, they overcame

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

everything. Now, their work is appreciated by all, and the name of Fr. Maldotti, the first missionary sent to Genoa, is held in benediction by all.

As soon as news of the institution of the Missionaries of St. Charles and of the St. Raphael Society for our migrants spread around, people wrote to me from various parts of Italy, pointing out the serious need to assist them during the ocean voyage. At once I contacted the various shipping lines asking for a free round trip ticket for the priests who would like to volunteer for such a great act of charity. But only one, the *S/S Veloce*, gladly answered my appeal. Still, there were ten or twelve priests who every year left the Port of Genoa to accompany the poor emigrants. On the ship, they would celebrate Mass, preach, hear confessions, and assist the sick, of which there were always some. In just one crossing, eighteen people died. Fortunately, a priest was aboard. He was able to assist the dying and comfort the survivors by word and example. This went on for four years. But the *S/S Veloce* fell into decline and, unfortunately, had to restrict the concession and limit it to just the missionaries in Genoa. If the means were available, how much more could be done!

The mission at the Port calls for special mention. The missionaries assigned to it are recognized as legal representatives for Italian emigration with the Labor Bureau or Public Works Ministry. Residing in the Barge Office or "The Immigration Office of the Port," they can give their prompt assistance to all the Italian emigrants who land there, especially those who have been recommended to them and come with special papers from the committees of the Welfare Association founded in Italy.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Report on the Institute of the Missionaries of St. Charles for the Italian Emigrants, Aug. 10, 1900 (AGS 7/5). The mission at the Port that Scalabrini is referring to is that of New York City. For this and for the mission in the Port of Genoa, see *Biografia*, pp. 1133-1147.