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Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae

The Reunion of Christendom

Pope Leo XIII - 1894

To Our Venerable Brethren, all Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic World
In Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction,

The splendid tokens of public rejoicing which have come to Us from all sides in the whole course of last year, to commemorate Our Episcopal Jubilee, and which were lately crowned by the remarkable devotion of the Spanish Nation, have afforded Us special joy, inasmuch as the Unity of the Church and the admirable adhesion of her members to the Sovereign Pontiff have shone forth in this perfect agreement of concurring sentiments. During those days it seemed as if the Catholic world, forgetful of everything else, had centered its

gaze and all its thoughts upon the Vatican.

The special missions sent by Kings and Princes, the many Pilgrimages, the letters We received so full of affectionate feeling, the Sacred Services—everything clearly brought out the fact that all Catholics are of one mind and of one heart in their veneration for the Apostolic See. And this was all the more pleasing and agreeable to Us, that it is entirely in conformity with Our intent and with Our endeavors. For, indeed, well acquainted with Our times, and mindful of the duties of Our Ministry, We have constantly sought during the whole course of Our Pontificate and striven, as far as it was possible, by teaching and action, to bind every Nation and people more closely to Us, and make manifest everywhere the salutary influence of the See of Rome. Therefore, do We most earnestly offer thanks in the first place to the goodness of God, by whose help and bounty We have been preserved to attain Our great age; and then, next, to all the Princes and Rulers, to the Bishops and Clergy, and to as many as have co-operated by such repeated tokens of Piety and Reverence to Honor Our Character and Office, while affording Us personally such seasonable consolation.

A great deal, however, has been wanting to the entire fullness of that consolation. Amidst these very manifestations of public joy and Reverence Our thoughts went out towards the immense multitude of those who are strangers to the gladness that filled all Catholic hearts: some because they lie in absolute ignorance of the Gospel; others because they dissent from the Catholic belief, though they bear the name of Christians.

This thought has been, and is, a source of deep concern to Us; for it is impossible to think of such a large portion of mankind deviating, as it were, from the right path, as they move away from Us, and not experience a sentiment of innermost grief.

But since We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty, Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth, and now that Our advanced age and the bitterness of anxious cares urge Us on towards the end common to every mortal, We feel drawn to follow the example of Our Redeemer and Master, Jesus Christ, Who, when about to return to Heaven, implored of God, His Father, in earnest Prayer, that His Disciples and followers should be of one mind and of one heart: I pray . . . that they all may be one, as Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us. And as this Divine Prayer and Supplication does not include only the souls who then believed in Jesus Christ, but also every one of those who were henceforth to believe in Him, this Prayer holds out to Us no indifferent reason for confidently expressing Our hopes, and for making all possible endeavors in order that the men of every race and clime should be called and moved to embrace the Unity of Divine Faith.

Pressed on to Our intent by Charity, that hastens fastest there where the need is greatest, We direct Our first thoughts to those most unfortunate of all nations who have never received the light of the Gospel, or who, after having possessed it, have lost it through neglect or the vicissitudes of time: Hence do they ignore God, and live in the depths of error. Now, as all salvation comes from Jesus Christ—for there is no other Name under Heaven given to men whereby we must be saved—Our ardent desire is that the most Holy Name of Jesus should rapidly pervade and fill every land.

And here, indeed, is a duty which the Church, faithful to the Divine Mission entrusted to her, has never neglected. What has been the object of her labors for more than nineteen centuries? Is there any other work she has undertaken with greater zeal and constancy than that of bringing the nations of the earth to the Truth and Principles of Christianity? Today, as ever, by Our Authority, the Heralds of the Gospel constantly cross the seas to reach the farthest corners of the earth; and We Pray God daily that in His goodness He may deign to increase the number of His Ministers who are really worthy of this Apostolate, and who are ready to Sacrifice their convenience, their health, and their very life, if need be, in order to extend the frontiers of the Kingdom of Christ.

Do Thou, above all, O Savior and Father of mankind, Christ Jesus, hasten and do not delay to bring about what Thou didst once promise to do—that when lifted up from the earth Thou wouldst draw all things to

Thyself. Come, then, at last, and manifest Thyself to the immense multitude of souls who have not felt, as yet, the ineffable Blessings which Thou hast earned for men with Thy Blood; rouse those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, that, enlightened by the rays of Thy Wisdom and Virtue, in Thee and by Thee “they may be made perfect in one.”

As We consider the Mystery of this Unity We see before Us all the countries which have long since passed, by the Mercy of God, from timeworn error to the wisdom of the Gospel. Nor could We, indeed, recall anything more pleasing or better calculated to extol the work of Divine Providence than the memory of the days of yore, when the Faith that had come down from Heaven was looked upon as the common inheritance of one and all; when civilized nations, separated by distance, character and habits, in spite of frequent disagreements and warfare on other points, were united by Christian Faith in all that concerned Religion. The recollection of that time causes Us to regret all the more deeply that as the ages rolled by the waves of suspicion and hatred arose, and great and flourishing nations were dragged away, in an evil hour, from the bosom of the Roman Church. In spite of that, however, We trust in the Mercy of God’s Almighty Power, in Him Who alone can fix the hour of His benefits and Who has Power to incline man’s will as He pleases; and We turn to those same nations, exhorting and beseeching them with Fatherly love to put an end to their dissensions and return again to Unity.

First of all, then, We cast an affectionate look upon the East, from whence in the beginning came forth the salvation of the world. Yes, and the yearning desire of Our heart bids us conceive and hope that the day is not far distant when the Eastern Churches, so illustrious in their ancient faith and glorious past, will return to the fold they have abandoned. We hope it all the more, that the distance separating them from Us is not so great: nay, with some few exceptions, we agree so entirely on other heads that, in defense of the Catholic Faith, we often have recourse to reasons and testimony borrowed from the teaching, the Rites, and Customs of the East.

The Principal subject of contention is the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff. But let them look back to the early years of their existence, let them consider the sentiments entertained by their forefathers, and examine what the oldest Traditions testify, and it will, indeed, become evident to them that Christ’s Divine Utterance, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, has undoubtedly been realized in the Roman Pontiffs. Many of these latter in the first gates of the Church were chosen from the East, and foremost among them Anacletus, Evaristus, Anicetus, Eleutherius, Zosimus, and Agatho; and of these a great number, after Governing the Church in Wisdom and Sanctity, Consecrated their Ministry with the shedding of their blood. The time, the reasons, the promoters of the unfortunate division, are well known. Before the day when man separated what God had joined together, the name of the Apostolic See was held in Reverence by all the nations of the Christian world: and the East, like the West, agreed without hesitation in its obedience to the Pontiff of Rome, as the Legitimate Successor of St. Peter, and, therefore, the Vicar of Christ here on earth.

And, accordingly, if we refer to the beginning of the dissension, we shall see that Photius himself was careful to send his advocates to Rome on the matters that concerned him; and Pope Nicholas I sent his Legates to Constantinople from the Eternal City, without the slightest opposition, “in order to examine the case of Ignatius the Patriarch with all diligence, and to bring back to the Apostolic See a full and accurate report”; so that the history of the whole negotiation is a manifest Confirmation of the Primacy of the Roman See with which the dissension then began. Finally, in two great Councils, the second of Lyons and that of Florence, Latins and Greeks, as is notorious, easily agreed, and all unanimously proclaimed as Dogma the Supreme Power of the Roman Pontiffs.

We have recalled those things intentionally, for they constitute an invitation to peace and reconciliation; and with all the more reason that in Our own days it would seem as if there were a more conciliatory spirit towards Catholics on the part of the Eastern Churches, and even some degree of kindly feeling. To mention an instance, those sentiments were lately made manifest when some of Our faithful travelled to the East on a Holy Enterprise, and received so many proofs of courtesy and good-will.

Therefore, Our mouth is open to you, to you all of Greek or other Oriental Rites who are separated from the Catholic Church, We earnestly desire that each and every one of you should meditate upon the words, so full of gravity and love, addressed by Bessarion to your forefathers: "What answer shall we give to God when He comes to ask why we have separated from our Brethren: to Him Who, to unite us and bring us into One Fold, came down from Heaven, was Incarnate, and was Crucified? What will our defense be in the eyes of posterity? Oh, my Venerable Fathers, we must not suffer this to be, we must not entertain this thought, we must not thus so ill provide for ourselves and for our Brethren."

Weigh carefully in your minds and before God the nature of Our request. It is not for any human motive, but impelled by Divine Charity and a desire for the salvation of all, that We advise the reconciliation and union with the Church of Rome; and We mean a perfect and complete union, such as could not subsist in any way if nothing else was brought about but a certain kind of agreement in the Tenets of Belief and an intercourse of Fraternal love. The True Union between Christians is that which Jesus Christ, the Author of the Church, instituted and desired, and which consists in a Unity of Faith and Unity of Government.

Nor is there any reason for you to fear on that account that We or any of Our Successors will ever diminish your rights, the privileges of your Patriarchs, or the established Ritual of any one of your Churches. It has been and always will be the intent and Tradition of the Apostolic See, to make a large allowance, in all that is right and good, for the primitive Traditions and special customs of every nation. On the contrary, if you re-establish Union with Us, you will see how, by God's bounty, the glory and dignity of your Churches will be remarkably increased. May God, then, in His goodness, hear the Prayer that you yourselves address to Him: "Make the schisms of the Churches cease," and "Assemble those who are dispersed, bring back those who err, and unite them to Thy Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." May you thus return to that one Holy Faith which has been handed down both to Us and to you from time immemorial; which your forefathers preserved untainted, and which was enhanced by the rival splendor of the Virtues, the great genius, and the sublime learning of St. Athanasius and St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzum and St. John Chrysostom, the two Saints who bore the name of Cyril, and so many other great men whose glory belongs as a common inheritance to the East and to the West.

Suffer that We should address you more particularly, nations of the Slavonic race, you whose glorious name and deeds are attested by many an ancient record. You know full well how much the Slavs are indebted to the merits of St. Cyril and St. Methodius, to whose memory We Ourselves have rendered due honor only a few years ago. Their virtues and their labors were to great numbers of your race the source of civilization and salvation. And hence the admirable interchange, which existed for so long between the Slavonic nations and the Pontiffs of Rome, of favors on the one side and of filial devotion on the other. If in unhappy times many of your forefathers were separated from the Faith of Rome, consider now what priceless benefits a return of Unity would bring to you. The Church is anxious to welcome you also to her arms, that she may give you manifold aids to salvation, prosperity, and grandeur.

With no less affection do We now look upon the nations who, at a more recent date, were separated from the Roman Church by an extraordinary revolution of things and circumstances. Let them forget the various events of times gone by, let them raise their thoughts far above all that is human, and seeking only truth and salvation, reflect within their hearts upon the Church as it was constituted by Christ. If they will but compare that Church with their own communions, and consider what the actual state of Religion is in these, they will easily acknowledge that, forgetful of their early history, they have drifted away, on many and important points, into the novelty of various errors; nor will they deny that of what may be called the Patrimony of Truth, which the authors of those innovations carried away with them in their desertion, there now scarcely remains to them any article of belief that is really certain and supported by Authority.

Nay, more, things have already come to such a pass that many do not even hesitate to root up the very Foundation upon which alone rests all Religion, and the hope of men, to wit, the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, Our Savior. And again, whereas formerly they used to assert that the books of the Old and the New

Testament were written under the inspiration of God, they now deny them that Authority; this, indeed, was an inevitable consequence when they granted to all the right of private interpretation. Hence, too, the acceptance of individual conscience as the sole guide and rule of conduct to the exclusion of any other: hence those conflicting opinions and numerous sects that fall away so often into the doctrines of Naturalism and Rationalism.

Therefore it is, that having lost all hope of an agreement in their persuasions, they now proclaim and recommend a union of brotherly love. And rightly, too, no doubt, for we should all be united by the bond of mutual Charity. Our Lord Jesus Christ enjoined it most emphatically, and wished that this love of one another should be the mark of His Disciples. But how can hearts be united in perfect Charity where minds do not agree in Faith?

It is on this account that many of those We allude to men of sound judgment and seeking after Truth, have looked to the Catholic Church for the sure way of salvation; for they clearly understand that they could never be united to Jesus Christ, as their Head if they were not members of His Body, which is the Church; nor really acquire the True Christian Faith if they rejected the Legitimate teaching confided to Peter and his Successors. Such men as these have recognized in the Church of Rome the Form and Image of the True Church, which is clearly made manifest by the Marks that God, her Author, placed upon her: and not a few who were possessed with penetrating judgment and a special talent for historical research, have shown forth in their remarkable writings the uninterrupted succession of the Church. of Rome from the Apostles, the integrity of her Doctrine, and the consistency of her Rule and Discipline.

With the example of such men before you, Our heart appeals to you even more than Our words: to you, Our Brethren, who for three centuries and more differ from Us on Christian Faith; and to you all likewise, who in later times, for any reason whatsoever, have turned away from Us: Let us all meet in the Unity of Faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God. Suffer that We should invite you to the Unity which has ever existed in the Catholic Church and can never fail; suffer that We should lovingly hold out Our hand to you. The Church, as the common mother of all, has long been calling you back to her; the Catholics of the world await you with brotherly love, that you may render Holy Worship to God together with us, united in perfect Charity Worship to God together with us, united in perfect charity by the profession of one Gospel, One Faith and One Hope.

To complete the harmony of this most desired unity, it remains for Us to address all those throughout the world whose salvation has long been the object of Our thoughts and watchful cares; We mean Catholics, whom the profession of the Roman Faith, while it renders them obedient to the Apostolic See, preserves in Union with Jesus Christ. There is no need to exhort them to True and Holy Unity, since through the Divine Goodness they already possess it; nevertheless, they must be admonished, lest under pressure of the growing perils on all sides around them, through negligence or indolence they should lose this great Blessing of God. For this purpose, let them take this Rule of thought and action, as the occasion may require, from those instructions which at other times We have addressed to Catholic people, either collectively or individually; and above all, let them lay down for themselves as a Supreme Law, to yield obedience in all things to the teaching and Authority of the Church, in no narrow or mistrustful spirit, but with their whole soul and promptitude of will.

On this account let them consider how injurious to Christian Unity is that error, which in various forms of opinion has oft-times obscured, nay, even destroyed the True Character and idea of the Church. For by the Will and Ordinance of God, its Founder, it is a Society perfect in its kind, whose Office and Mission it is to school mankind in the Precepts and Teachings of the Gospel, and by safeguarding the integrity of Morals and the exercise of Christian Virtue, to lead men to that happiness which is held out to every one in Heaven. And since it is, as we have said, a perfect Society, therefore it is endowed with a living Power and efficacy which is not derived from any external source, but in virtue of the Ordinance of God and its own Constitution, inherent in its very nature; for the same reason it has an inborn Power of making Laws, and Justice requires that in its exercise it should be dependent on no one; it must likewise have freedom in other matters

appertaining to its rights.

But this freedom is not of a kind to occasion rivalry or envy, for the Church does not covet Power, nor is she urged on by any selfish desire; but this one thing she does wish, this only does she seek, to preserve amongst men the duties which Virtue imposes, and by this means and in this way to provide for their everlasting welfare. Therefore is she wont to be yielding and indulgent as a mother; yes, it not infrequently happens that in making large concessions to the exigencies of States, she refrains from the exercise of her own rights, as the compacts often concluded with civil governments abundantly testify.

Nothing is more foreign to her disposition than to encroach on the rights of civil power; but the civil power in its turn must respect the rights of the Church, and beware of arrogating them in any degree to itself. Now, what is the ruling spirit of the times when actual events and circumstances are taken into account? No other than this: it has been the fashion to regard the Church with suspicion, to despise and hate and spitefully calumniate her; and, more intolerable still, men strive with might and main to bring her under the sway of civil governments. Hence it is that her property has been plundered and her liberty curtailed: hence again, that the training of her Priesthood has been beset with difficulties; that laws of exceptional rigor have been passed against her Clergy; that Religious Orders, those excellent safeguards of Christianity, have been suppressed and placed under a ban; in a word, the principles and practice of the regalists have been renewed with increased virulence.

Such a policy is a violation of the most Sacred Rights of the Church, and it breeds enormous evils to States, for the very reason that it is in open conflict with the Purposes of God. When God, in His most Wise Providence, placed over human society both temporal and Spiritual Authority, He intended them to remain distinct indeed, but by no means disconnected and at war with each other. On the contrary, both the Will of God and the common weal of human society imperatively require that the civil power should be in accord with the Ecclesiastical in its Rule and Administration.

Hence the State has its own peculiar rights and duties, the Church likewise has hers; but it is necessary that each should be united with the other in the bonds of concord. Thus will it come about that the close mutual relations of Church and State will be freed from the present turmoil, which for manifold reasons is ill-advised and most distressing to all well-disposed persons; furthermore, it will be brought to pass that, without confusion or separation of the peculiar interests of each, the people will render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

There is likewise a great danger threatening unity on the part of that association which goes by the name of Freemasons, whose fatal influence for a long time past oppresses Catholic nations in particular. Favored by the agitations of the times, and waxing insolent in its power and resources and success, it strains every nerve to consolidate its sway and enlarge its sphere. It has already sallied forth from its hiding-places, where it hatched its plots, into the throng of cities, and as if to defy the Almighty, has set up its throne in this very city of Rome, the Capital of the Catholic world. But what is most disastrous is, that wherever it has set its foot it penetrates into all ranks and departments of the commonwealth, in the hope of obtaining at last supreme control. This is, indeed, a great calamity: for its depraved principles and iniquitous designs are well known. Under the pretence of vindicating the rights of man and of reconstituting society, it attacks Christianity; it rejects revealed Doctrine, denounces practices of Piety, the Divine Sacraments, and every Sacred thing as superstition; it strives to eliminate the Christian Character from Marriage and the family and the education of youth, and from every form of instruction, whether public or private, and to root out from the minds of men all respect for Authority, whether human or Divine. On its own part, it preaches the worship of nature, and maintains that by the principles of nature are truth and probity and justice to be measured and regulated. In this way, as is quite evident, man is being driven to adopt customs and habits of life akin to those of the heathen, only more corrupt in proportion as the incentives to sin are more numerous.

Although We have spoken on this subject in the strongest terms before, yet We are led by Our Apostolic

watchfulness to urge it once more, and We repeat Our warning again and again, that in face of such an eminent peril, no precaution, howsoever great, can be looked upon as sufficient. May God in His Mercy bring to naught their impious designs; nevertheless, let all Christians know and understand that the shameful yoke of Freemasonry must be shaken off once and for all; and let them be the first to shake it off who are most galled by its oppression—the men of Italy and of France. With what weapons and by what method this may best be done We Ourselves have already pointed out: the victory cannot be doubtful to those who trust in that Leader Whose Divine Words still remain in all their force: I have overcome the world.

Were this twofold danger averted, and government and States restored to the Unity of Faith, it is wonderful what efficacious remedies for evils and abundant store of benefits would ensue. We will touch upon the principal ones.

The first regards the Dignity and Office of the Church. She would receive that Honor which is her due and she would go on her way, free from envy and strong in her liberty, as the Minister of Gospel Truth and Grace to the notable welfare of States. For as she has been given by God as a Teacher and Guide to the human race, she can contribute assistance which is peculiarly adapted to direct even the most radical transformations of time to the common good, to solve the most complicated questions, and to promote uprightness and justice, which are the most solid foundations of the commonwealth.

Moreover there would be a marked increase of union among the nations, a thing most desirable to ward off the horrors of war.

We behold the condition of Europe. For many years past peace has been rather an appearance than a reality. Possessed with mutual suspicions, almost all the nations are vying with one another in equipping themselves with military armaments. Inexperienced youths are removed from paternal direction and control, to be thrown amid the dangers of the soldier's life; robust young men are taken from agriculture or ennobling studies or trade of the arts to be put under arms. Hence the treasures of States are exhausted by the enormous expenditure, the national resources are frittered away, and private fortunes impaired; and this, as it were, armed peace, which now prevails, cannot last much longer. Can this be the normal condition of human society? Yet we cannot escape from this situation, and obtain True Peace, except by the aid of Jesus Christ. For to repress ambition and covetousness and envy—the chief instigators of war—nothing is more fitted than the Christian Virtues and, in particular, the Virtue of Justice; for, by its exercise, both the law of nations and the faith of treaties may be maintained inviolate, and the bonds of brotherhood continue unbroken, if men are but convinced that Justice exalteth a nation.

As in its external relations, so in the internal life of the State itself, the Christian Virtues will provide a guarantee of the commonweal much more sure and stronger far than any which laws or armies can afford. For there is no one who does not see that the dangers to public security and order are daily on the increase, since seditious societies continue to conspire for the overthrow and ruin of States, as the frequency of their atrocious outrages testifies.

There are two questions, forsooth—the one called the social, and the other the political question—which are discussed with the greatest vehemence. Both of them, without doubt, are of the last importance, and, though praiseworthy efforts have been put forth, in studies and measures and experiments for their wise and just solution, yet nothing could contribute more to this purpose than that the minds of men in general should be imbued with right sentiments of duty from the internal principle of Christian Faith. We treated expressly of the social question in this sense a short time ago, from the standpoint of principles drawn from the Gospel and natural reason.

As regards the political question, which aims at reconciling liberty with Authority—two things which many confound in theory, and separate too widely in practice—most efficient aid may be derived from the Christian Philosophy. For, when this point has been settled and recognized by common agreement, that, whatsoever the

form of government, the Authority is from God, reason at once perceives that in some there is a Legitimate right to command, in others the corresponding duty to obey, and that without prejudice to their dignity, since obedience is rendered to God rather than to man; and God has denounced the most rigorous judgment against those in Authority, if they fail to represent Him with uprightness and justice. Then the liberty of the individual can afford ground of suspicion or envy to no one; since, without injury to any, his conduct will be guided by Truth and rectitude and whatever is allied to public order. Lastly, if it be considered what influence is possessed by the Church, the mother of and peacemaker between rulers and peoples, whose mission it is to help them both with her Authority and Counsel, then it will be most manifest how much it concerns the commonweal that all nations should resolve to unite in the same belief and the same profession of the Christian Faith.

With these thoughts in Our mind and ancient yearnings in Our heart, We see from afar what would be the new order of things that would arise upon the earth, and nothing could be sweeter to Us than the contemplation of the benefits that would flow from it. It can hardly be imagined what immediate and rapid progress would be made all over the earth, in all manner of greatness and prosperity, with the establishment of tranquility and peace, the promotion of studies, the founding and the multiplying on Christian lines according to Our directions, of associations for the cultivators of soil, for workmen and tradesmen, through whose agency rapacious usury would be put down, and a large field opened up for useful labors.

And these abundant benefits would not be confined within the limits of civilized nations, but, like an overcharged river, would flow far and wide. It must be remembered, as we observed at the outset, that an immense number of races have been waiting, all through the long ages, to receive the light of Truth and civilization. Most certainly, the counsels of God with regard to the eternal salvation of peoples are far removed above the understanding of man; yet if miserable superstition still prevails in so many parts of the world, the blame must be attributed in no small measure to Religious dissensions. For, as far as it is given to human reason to judge from the nature of events, this seems without doubt to be the mission assigned by God to Europe, to go on by degrees carrying Christian civilization to every portion of the earth. The beginnings and first growth of this great work, which sprang from the labors of former centuries, were rapidly receiving large development, when all of a sudden the discord of the sixteenth century broke out. Christendom was torn with quarrels and dissensions, Europe exhausted with contests and wars, and the Sacred Mission felt the baneful influence of the times. While the causes of dissension still remain, what wonder is it that so large a portion of mankind is held enthralled with barbarous customs and insane rites?

Let us one and all, then, for the sake of the common welfare, labor with equal assiduity to restore the ancient concord. In order to bring about this concord, and spread abroad the benefits of the Christian Revelation, the present is the most seasonable time; for never before have the sentiments of human brotherhood penetrated so deeply into the souls of men, and never in any age has man been seen to seek out his fellowmen more eagerly in order to know them better and to help them. Immense tracts of land and sea are traversed with incredible rapidity, and thus extraordinary advantages are afforded not only for commerce and scientific investigations but also for the propagation of the Word of God from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

We are well aware of the long labors involved in the restoration of that order of things which We desire; and it may be that there are those who consider that We are far too sanguine and look for things that are rather to be wished for than expected. But we unhesitatingly place all Our hope and confidence in the Savior of mankind, Jesus Christ, well remembering what great things have been achieved in times past by the folly of the Cross and its preaching, to the astonishment and confusion of the wisdom of the world. We beg of Princes and Rulers of States, appealing to their statesmanship and earnest solicitude for the people, to weigh Our Counsels in the balance of Truth and second them with their Authority and favor. If only a portion of the looked-for results should come about, it will cause no inconsiderable boon in the general decadence, when the intolerable evils of the present day bring with them the dread of further evils in days to come.

The last years of the past century left Europe worn out with disasters and panic-stricken with the turmoils of

revolution. And why should not our present century, which is now hastening to its close, by a reversion of circumstances bequeath to mankind the pledges of concord, with the prospects of the great benefits which are bound up in the Unity of the Christian Faith?

May God, Who is rich in Mercy, and in Whose Power are the times and moments, grant Our wishes and desires, and in His great Goodness, hasten the fulfillment of that Divine Promise of Jesus Christ: There will be One Fold and One Shepherd.

As a pledge of these Heavenly Gifts, and in witness of Our good will to you, Venerable Brothers, and to the Clergy and people committed to each of you, We most lovingly grant in the Lord the Apostolic Benediction.

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