



Quod Hoc Ineunte

Encyclical Of Pope Leo XII

Proclaiming a Universal Jubilee

May 24, 1824

To all the Christian Faithful, Who will see this Present Letter; Greetings and Apostolic Benediction.

That which at the beginning of this century was grievously omitted because of the evil condition of the times now at last is at hand through the merciful intervention of God. We may now announce to you with joy that it will proceed in accord with the happy custom and institution of our ancestors. For that most auspicious year during which pilgrims from all over the world come to Our city, the seat of Saint Peter, is upon us. All the faithful are now summoned to pious duties, and perfect aids to reconciliation and grace are offered for the salvation of souls. We are happy to announce that an admirable occasion has now been given us, after a lamentable series of evils, to strive to renew all things in Christ by a salutary purification of the entire Christian people. We have therefore decided to throw open that heavenly treasure of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ the Lord, of his Virgin Mother and of all the saints, the treasure which the Author of human salvation has entrusted to Us for distribution. Indeed in this matter it is fitting that We esteem the infinite efficacy of merit which Christ poured out over all the parts of His mystical body. They in turn may be helped by mutual works and by the salutary benefits of faith, which operates through charity. Thus by the invaluable blood of the Lord and by the meritorious prayers of the saints, the faithful may obtain the remission of that temporal punishment which, as the fathers of Trent taught, is not always entirely removed in the sacrament of penance (as it is by baptism).

2. Therefore let the earth hear the words of Our mouth and the music of the sacerdotal trumpet sounding the sacred jubilee to the people of God, and may the whole world listen with joy. We announce that the year of expiation and forgiveness, of redemption and grace, or remission and indulgence has come, the year of renewal in Christ. The old law, a harbinger of the future, had already set aside every fiftieth year among the Jewish people. If indeed sold fields and the goods which had fallen into the hands of others were then restored, we now

receive back through the infinite liberality of God the virtues, merits, and gifts lost by sin. If the human law of servitude then ceased, now, with the yoke of diabolical domination cast off, we are recalled into the freedom of the sons of God, namely into that liberty which Christ himself gave us. If, finally, by provision of that law debts were cancelled, we are likewise absolved from the more serious debts of sin and the punishments for them.

3. Eager therefore for these great blessings, in accordance with the tradition of Our predecessors and with the consent of our Venerable Brothers, the Cardinals of the Roman Church, We publish and promulgate a great and universal jubilee in this sacred city. It shall begin with the first vespers of the coming vigil of the Nativity and last through the whole year 1825, to further the glory of God, the exaltation of the Catholic Church and the sanctification of all Christian peoples. Now during the year of the jubilee, to fulfill the requirements for a plenary indulgence, the Christian faithful must repent, confess their sins, and receive holy communion. They must then visit the basilicas of the blessed Peter and Paul, and also those of St. John Lateran and of St. Mary Major, at least once a day for thirty continuous or interpolated days, either natural or ecclesiastical, counted from the first vespers of one day to the evening twilight of the following day, if they live in Rome. If they are pilgrims from outside the city, at least fifteen such days are required. If they have poured out pious prayers to God for the exaltation of the Church and the extirpation of heresies, for concord among Catholic princes and the salvation of the Christian peoples, We impart a complete indulgence, remission, and pardon of all their sins.

4. Some of those who begin the journey may be prevented by some legitimate cause, such as illness or even death itself, from executing the prescriptions and visiting the basilicas. If they are truly penitent, have confessed, and have received holy communion, We desire that they share in the indulgence and remission just as though they had actually visited the basilicas on the days prescribed.

5. These things We announce to you with paternal affection, so that you who labor and are burdened may hurry there where you know for certain that you will be refreshed. It is hardly proper to be negligent in seeking the salutary riches from the eternal treasury of divine grace which now stands open, when such great zeal is spent to acquire earthly riches, which worms consume and rust destroys. A vast and continuous multitude of people of every class, even in past times, have streamed to Rome, the center of the arts, from all over the world, despite the dangers of the journey. It would be shameful and counter to the zeal for eternal beauty if the uncertain fortunes of the journey or any other similar reason were used as a pretext for not making the Roman pilgrimage. The pilgrimage will compensate you many times over, even for serious inconveniences. Indeed any sufferings you may incur will be insignificant compared with the blessings of God which you will reap. For you will reap the rich fruits of penitence, by which you may offer to God the punishment of the body from unpleasant acts. By performing the words prescribed by the law of indulgences, you may excel in holiness, and by the

accepted and constant will to overcome and drive off sins, you will add this new aggregate of good works.

6. Come therefore to this holy Jerusalem, a priestly and royal city which the sacred seat of Peter has made the capitol of the world. Truly it rules more widely by divine religion than by earthly domination. As St. Charles was wont to say to his fellow citizens in exhorting them to go to Rome during the holy year: This is a city whose ground and walls, altars and churches, martyrs tombs and whatever the eyes can see, impress on the soul something sacred. Those who, rightly prepared, visit her hallowed places, know this. Just think how much visiting these hallowed places enkindles faith and charity in the souls of the spectators. What profit is gained from visualizing the thousands of martyrs who sanctified this earth with their blood, from going to their basilicas, from reading their inscriptions and venerating their relics! Indeed, since the sky is so resplendent when illumined by the sun, what then of the city of Rome whose two lights, Peter and Paul, illumine the whole world? As St. John Chrysostom often said: Who except one on fire with the most intense devotion would dare to approach their reliquaries and kneel at their graves, or to kiss the chains more precious than gold or gems? Who, finally, could restrain his tears when he sees the birthplace of Christ and recalls the infant Jesus crying in the manger, or when he venerates the holy instruments of the passion of the Lord and meditates on the crucifixion?

7. By a special divine favor these memorials of Our religion have been assembled in this holy city alone. Surely they are a certain and pleasing pledge of how God loves the gates of Sion above all other tabernacles of Jacob. They invite all of you, Beloved Sons, to cast off your hesitation and to ascend the mountain where it has pleased God to dwell.

8. At this point we must remind all the citizens of Our city that the eyes of the faithful from all over the world are upon them. Therefore they should be restrained and moderate, as befits a Christian, so that others may find in their conduct an example of modesty, innocence, and virtue. May the visitors learn from this elect people to reverence the Catholic Church and her authority, to obey her precepts, and to honor ecclesiastical men and things. May due reverence for churches flourish among the people of Rome, so that the pilgrims may find nothing which suggests that worship and the place itself are despised, nothing which offends good and chaste souls. May the visitors learn that the people of Rome are present for divine services not only in body but also with devoted affection of mind and heart. This We also urge for the feasts, lest these times instituted for performing sacred rites and honoring God and the saints appear in this holy city to be devoted to banquets and games, to disorderly activities, and lascivious license. Finally whatever is true, whatever pure, whatever is just, whatever holy, whatever is amiable, whatever of good repute, may these shine forth in the Roman people, just as they received from their ancestors the glory of faith and piety commended even by the apostle Paul as the best of all possible inheritances. We rejoice that it is unstained and illumined with the zeal and distinguished habits of the heirs.

9. We indeed are refreshed with this good hope, that everyone will emulate the better gifts and that the sheep of the Lord will come running as in battle array under the standard of charity to the embrace of the pastor. Look about you, Jerusalem, and behold: your sons come from afar, and your heart will wonder and rejoice....Would that their sons would come prostrate to you, those who have humbled themselves, and may all who take away your honor worship the footprints of your feet! . . . We address all of you who are still removed from the true Church and the road to salvation. In this universal rejoicing, one thing is lacking: that having been called by the inspiration of the Heavenly Spirit and having broken every devious snare, you might sincerely agree with the mother Church, outside of whose teachings there is no salvation. We shall receive you happily with Our paternal embrace and praise the God of all consolation, who will enrich us with His mercies in the greatest triumph of Catholic truth.

10. Venerable Brothers, Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops: share in these cares and labors of Ours. Call an assembly, gather the people so that your sons may be eager to receive those gifts which God has entrusted to you for distribution to the chosen. Let them recall that the days of our sojourn here are brief, and We do not know at what hour the Father may come. We must therefore watch, carrying lighted lamps filled with the oil of charity, so that when He does come, We may run with eager love to meet him. You must also discuss carefully how much efficacy there is in indulgences; how great is the fruit of remission, not only of the canonical but also of the temporal punishment due for sins; and finally, how much aid from the treasure of merits from Christ and the saints may be applied to those who died truly penitent before they had made adequate satisfaction for their sins. Their souls must be purified in the fires of purgatory so that entry into the eternal fatherland may open to them. Be alert here, venerable brothers, for there are those who have followed a wisdom which is not from God. Clothed in sheep's clothing, and pretending for the most part a semblance of piety, they have spread falsehood among the people. Now teach the flock what they have to do, what works of piety and charity they must exercise, with what sorrow they are to weigh themselves and their lives. Teach them to eliminate and correct whatever may be defective in their habits, so that they may truly benefit from this holy indulgence.

11. Furthermore, you must see that those of your flock who have decided to make the pilgrimage may do so religiously, avoiding all the things on their journey which could disturb their pious determination and lead them to abandon their holy resolve. Rather may they follow eagerly and constantly those things which kindle and inspire religion. If you are free to come to this citadel of religion, you will add much splendor to this celebration. You will obtain the greatest blessings of divine mercies and, bringing them back as a rich reward, you will share them to the pleasure and profit of the rest of your people.

12. We have no doubt that the Christian princes will aid Us in this matter with all their authority, so that these plans for the salvation of souls may attain their

desired effect. We therefore exhort them to second the efforts of their bishops and aid them in their labors. We also ask them to prepare throughout their territories safe roads and hostels for the pilgrims, lest any harm come to them in this pious undertaking. The princes know what conspiracies have everywhere arisen to weaken both the sacred and civil law in this holy matter. They also know what wonders God has wrought, the God who has humiliated the arrogance of the mighty with his right arm. May they continue to give thanks to the victorious Lord of lords and with humble and frequent prayer seek His aid. Let them pray that, although the iniquity of the wicked and impious may still creep like a cancer, He may conclude the work that He began. We thought of this when We first considered the celebration of a jubilee. We know well what kind of sacrifice of praise is offered to God by this unanimity of striving for celestial gifts. To this same end therefore may the Christian princes also strain. Since they are of a generous and exalted character, may they zealously safeguard this most sacred undertaking. Furthermore, they will recognize that they will really have done for their own authority whatever they may have done for the safety of the sacred cause and for the promotion of piety, so that when every seed of vice has been killed, a happy harvest of virtues may grow strong.

13. So that all these things may happen, We ask your prayers to God. We trust indeed that with common desires and entreaties you may ask for the good of the Catholic faith, for the return to truth of those in error, and for the happiness of the princes. Thus you will support Our infirmity in bearing up under the duties of Our onerous office.

14. In order that this present letter may be more widely disseminated among the faithful, We desire that even printed copies, signed by a public notary and fortified with the seal of someone who has attained ecclesiastical dignity, should be given the same full confidence which this letter would itself arouse.

15. It is in no manner permitted anyone to infringe upon this page of our indiction, promulgation, concession, exhortation, rogation, and desire, or to go rashly against it. If anyone may have presumed to do so, let him know that he will incur the indignation of the omnipotent God and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of the Incarnation 1824, on May 24th, in the first year of Our Pontificate.