



Maximae Quidem

On The Church In Bavaria

Encyclical Of Pope Pius IX

August 18, 1864

To the Venerable Brothers Gregory Archbishop of Munich and Freising and Michael Archbishop of Bamberg and their Suffragan Bishops in Bavaria.

Venerable Brothers, Greetings and Apostolic Benediction.

Your very welcome letter of July 20, was a source of great consolation to Us, venerable brothers, amid the grave cares and concerns which press upon Us. It was sent from the synod which you convened at Bamberg where you took counsel together so that you might decree those things which are of use, especially in these difficult times, in safeguarding the Catholic cause and its doctrines and rights, and in providing for the salvation of its faithful. This same letter clearly shows on every page your renowned and proven faith, love, and obedience toward Us and toward this See of Peter; it also manifests the admirable zeal which animates you to do everything so that the faithful committed especially to your vigilance may reverently and obediently follow Us and the See of Peter. This center of Catholic unity is not only the head of all the churches, but also their mother and teacher; it dispels the darkness of error and is the safest port for all who are tossed about. Therefore We rejoice greatly because of your extraordinary episcopal virtue and solicitude. We warmly congratulate you that by your deeds and your pastoral letters sent to the faithful entrusted to your care, you have made known that most close and admirable union of all the bishops of the Catholic world; that union with the Vicar of Christ here on earth and this Apostolic See flourishes even in these most lamentable times by a singular blessing of God and shines forth daily in many splendid deeds.

2. And We rejoice at the synod which you celebrated in Bamberg, in which all of you with great harmony and mindful of the duties of your episcopal ministry, approved plans to safeguard the cause of the Church, to care for its affairs, and to repress the efforts of the nefarious enemies of men. These must be overcome by the united and persistent vigilance of the bishops. If at any time whatsoever, then surely now in this most sad age, it is the duty of bishops to battle most strenuously

against the enemies of the faith. Hence the bishops, relying on divine aid, must raise their episcopal voice and must preach the gospel to all. They must announce, teach, explain, and impress upon both the wise and the foolish, the eternal truths of our divine faith along with its doctrines and precepts. The bishops are also bound to explain and to show to both the highest princes and the government the deplorable evils and damage which affect the people and the princes themselves. This is the result of the present-day contempt of religion and of the spirit of unbelief rising from the darkness under the fallacious appearance of social progress; this, of course, harms the Christian and the civil government. Everywhere it daily grows stronger; it perverts and corrupts the minds and souls of men. Therefore We were glad to hear that you have sent a letter to the illustrious king of Bavaria concerning the defense of our religion and its rights. We hope that because of his piety, his justice, and his equity, he will earnestly and most willingly endeavor to grant your requests.

Defend the Rights of the Church

3. There is also something else that holy priests ought to do. They must defend the liberty of the Catholic Church and manfully fight in defense of the rights with which His Church has been divinely endowed. Bishops are also required to continually remind all people that this Church has always been not only the mother and teacher of all virtues, but also the founder and governor of civilization and its benefits, of peace, of progress, and of prosperity. She alone is able to preserve the public order which is so gravely disturbed by impiety and rebellion.

Public Schools

4. Moreover We praise you for in the letter you sent to the government concerning the administration of the public schools, you, concerned about the affairs of the Church, strenuously and knowledgeably defended her authority, doctrine, and rights. In the same sense We, in Our July 14 letter to Herman, Archbishop of Freiburg im Briesgau, were compelled to safeguard and vindicate these rights of the Church. The enemies of the Church in the Grand Duchy of Baden had already proposed laws which destroy and entirely eliminate the Christian nature of the schools. We understand why you were concerned with defending the rights of the Church with regard to public schools. We want you also to labor diligently so that these same rights of the Church are recognized and observed in schools of higher education and more serious studies. For you know well that if these schools stray from the doctrine, authority, and vigilance of the Church, serious harm and evil will result. Those honorable men who are destined for the duties of public government and who can contribute so much to the formation of the common spirit of civil society will be infected with errors and false doctrines. And here We ask you to not forget what We wrote last December 21 to Gregory, Archbishop of Munich concerning the teaching of the disciplines of theology and philosophy. We exhort you to promote daily the correct education of the clergy. Leave nothing untried in order that your clergy may have that solid instruction, drawn from uncontaminated

sources and based on the common teaching system of the Catholic Church. This system removes all those dangers inherent in the new modern style of teaching, which is based on the freedom-or rather license -- of knowledge. Wherefore We desire that you support everything which at other times We have commended concerning erecting and governing the seminaries according to the prescriptions of the Council of Trent. Because of your proven religious and episcopal zeal, We are convinced that you will assiduously defend other rights of the Church which up to now have not been fully recognized in Bavaria. The bishops of Bavaria, particularly in the Synod of Freising, registered their protest against such abridgement of the Church's rights. Therefore We entirely approve your proposal to have annual meetings among yourselves. This should in no way interfere, however, with your making every effort to hold provincial synods according to the prescriptions of the sacred canons, as do the other bishops in Germany. Nothing certainly can be more pleasing to Us than to offer you Our resources and help in this matter. Finally We desire that you consider as certain Our special benevolence for you. And as proof of it receive the apostolic benediction which proceeds from the bottom of Our heart, and which We lovingly impart to you, venerable brothers, to all the clergy and the faithful laity committed to your care.

Given at the Castel Gandolfo, August 18, 1864, the nineteenth year of Our Pontificate.