



## **Quartus Supra**

On The Church In Armenia

Encyclical Of Pope Pius IX

January 6, 1873

To Our Venerable Brothers Anthony Peter IX, Patriarch of Cilicia, and the Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and Laity, Our Beloved Children of the Armenian Rite Who are in Loving Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brothers and Beloved Children, We give you Greetings and Our Apostolic Blessing.

Four and twenty years have now gone by since We addressed Our Apostolic letter to the men of the East (ad Orientales)[1] at this most holy season in which a new star shone forth in the East to enlighten the nations. We wrote that letter to strengthen Catholics in the faith and to call back to the one fold of Christ those who were unhappily outside the Catholic Church. We entertained a joyous and vivid hope that with the help of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, the purity of the Christian faith would be spread abroad and the zeal for ecclesiastical discipline flourish once again in the East. We promised to support with Our authority the establishment of this discipline in accordance with the sacred canons. Our great concern for the men of the East and the kindness and charity which We have shown them since that time are known to God. But all men too know what We took on Ourselves to achieve this purpose -- if only all men correctly understood this as well! However by the mysterious judgment of God, these affairs have developed far differently from Our hopes and desires, and far from rejoicing, We must rather grieve and lament a new disaster which is afflicting some of the Eastern Churches.

Schism in Constantinople

2. Long ago Christ warned that many would come in His name, stating that they were the Christ, and as a result, seduce many;[2] this has proved true. For by means of the new schism which arose three years ago among the Armenians in Constantinople, the common enemy of the human race is wholly engaged in undermining faith, destroying truth and disrupting unity by worldly wisdom, heretical discussion, subtle, clever deceit, and even, where possible, by the use of

force. While exposing the pretenses and plots of this enemy, St. Cyprian lamented that "he snatches human beings out of the very church and while they think they have already drawn near to the light and escaped from the night of the world, he brings darkness over them once more in ways of which they are unaware. Thus, although they do not observe Christ's gospel and His law, they call themselves Christians and judge that they possess the light while they walk in darkness, attracted and deceived by the adversary. For he transfigures himself like an angel of light, as the Apostle says (2 Cor 11.14) and disguises his ministers as ministers of justice who present night as day, ruin as salvation, hopelessness in the guise of hope, faithlessness under the pretext of faith, the antichrist with the title of "Christ." Thus while telling lies which resemble truths, they make vain the truth by their subtlety."<sup>[3]</sup>

3. The beginnings of this new schism were, as is usually the case, complicated by many contributory factors. However, We observed its wickedness and its dangers beforehand, and resisted it at once in two Apostolic letters, one February 24, 1870, *Non sine gravissimo*, and the other on May 20 in the same year, *Quo impensiore*.<sup>[4]</sup> The affair has gone so far, however, that despite the urging, warnings and censures of this Apostolic See, the originators of this schism and their adherents have fearlessly chosen for themselves a false patriarch. We have declared in Our letter of 11 March 1871, *Ubi prima*,<sup>[5]</sup> that this election is wholly invalid and schismatic, and that the man elected and those who elected him have incurred canonical penalties. Furthermore, they have taken possession of Catholic churches by violent means: they have forced the lawful Patriarch, Our venerable brother Anthony Peter IX, to depart from the territories of the Ottoman Empire; they have even seized with military aid the patriarchal see of Cilicia which is in Lebanon; and having won the civil command of this province, they have assailed the Catholic people of Armenia, and are trying by every means to detach them from their communion with and obedience to the Apostolic See. John Kupelian, one of the neo-schismatic priests, is working vigorously to ensure that the affair proceeds according to their plan. By Our authority, this man has previously been publicly and specifically excommunicated and declared cut off from the Catholic Church by the Apostolic delegate for Mesopotamia and other districts, Our venerable brother Nicholas Archbishop of Mardin; the specific charge was encouraging disorder and fomenting schism in the state of Diarbekr or Amida. After being sacrilegiously consecrated as bishop by the pseudopatriarch, and having gained power, he now attempts by argument and by open threats to bring the Catholics of the Armenian rite under his rule. If this should ever come about, the Catholics would be quite reduced to their wretched state of forty-two years ago when they were subjected to the power of the old schismatics of their rite.

Appeal to the Ottoman Emperor

4. We have indeed left no means untried in order to free you from this great evil. In this We follow the custom of Our predecessors whose authority, protection and help has usually been requested at such critical junctures by all the respected

bishops and fathers of the Eastern Churches. To this end also We have sent an extraordinary legate to that region. We recently asked the supreme Ottoman emperor himself in a special letter that the losses suffered by Armenian Catholics be made good by process of law, and that their exiled shepherd be restored to his flock. But the fulfillment of Our wishes has been hindered by those men who call themselves Catholics, but are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

#### Warning from the Holy See

5. We must now greatly fear that the originators of the new schism and their adherents may succeed in their plan of seducing both the weak in faith and the less prudent Catholics of the Armenian and other rites, leading them off on the path of perdition. Therefore We are compelled to address you again, and by dispelling that darkness and thick mist which, conceals the truth, to warn all men. It is Our duty to strengthen those who stand firm, to support the wavering, and also to recall to goodness, those men who have wretchedly abandoned the truth and Catholic unity, if only, they are willing to listen.

6. The chief deceit used to conceal the new schism is the name of "Catholic." The originators and adherents of the schism presumptuously lay claim to this name despite their condemnation by Our authority and judgment. It has always been the custom of heretics and schismatics to call themselves Catholics and to proclaim their many excellences in order to lead peoples and princes into error. St. Jerome, presbyter, referred to these men, among others, when he said: "The heretics are accustomed to say to their king or to Pharaoh, 'We are the sons of wise men who have handed down to us from the beginning the Apostolic teaching; we are the sons of ancient kings who are called kings of the philosophers; and we possess the knowledge of the scriptures in addition to the wisdom of the world.'"[6]

7. But to prove that they are Catholics, the neo-schismatics appeal to what they call a declaration of faith, published by them on February 6, 1870, which they insist disagrees in no regard with the Catholic faith. However it has never been possible to prove oneself a Catholic by affirming those statements of the faith which one accepts and keeping silence on those doctrines which one decides not to profess. But without exception, all doctrines which the Church proposes must be accepted, as the history of the Church at all times bears witness.

8. That the statement of faith which they published was deceitful and sophistical is proved also by the fact that they rejected the declaration or profession of faith which was proposed to them on Our authority in accordance with custom. They were commanded to accept it by Our venerable brother Anthony Joseph Archbishop of Tyana, Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople, in a letter of warning sent to them on September 29 of the same year. For any man to be able to prove his Catholic faith and affirm that he is truly a Catholic, he must be able to convince the Apostolic See of this. For this See is predominant and with it the faithful of the whole Church should agree.[7] And the man who abandons the See of Peter can

only be falsely confident that he is in the Church.[8] As a result, that man is already a schismatic and a sinner who establishes a see in opposition to the unique See of the blessed Peter[9] from which the rights of sacred communion derive for all men.[10]

### Authority of the Papacy

9. This fact was well known to the illustrious bishops of the Eastern Churches. Hence at the Council of Constantinople held in the year 536, Mennas the bishop of that city affirmed openly with the approval of the fathers, "We follow and obey the Apostolic See, as Your Charity realizes and we consider those in communion with it to be in communion with us, and we too condemn the men condemned by it." [11] Even more clearly and emphatically St. Maximus, abbot of Chrysopolis, and a confessor of the faith, in referring to Pyrrhus the Monothelite, declared: "If he wants neither to be nor to be called a heretic, he does not need to satisfy random individuals of his orthodoxy, for this is excessive and unreasonable. But just as all men have been scandalized at him since the chief man was scandalized, so also when that one has been satisfied, all men will doubtless be satisfied. He should hasten to satisfy the Roman See before all others. For when this See has been satisfied, all men everywhere will join in declaring him pious and orthodox. For that man wastes his words who thinks that men like me must be persuaded and beguiled when he has not yet satisfied and beseeched the blessed Pope of the holy Roman Church. From the incarnate word of God Himself as well as from the conclusions and sacred canons of all holy councils, the Apostolic See has been granted the command, authority and power of binding and loosing for all God's holy churches in the entire world." [12] For this reason John, Bishop of Constantinople, solemnly declared—and the entire Eighth Ecumenical Council did so later -- "that the names of those who were separated from communion with the Catholic Church, that is of those who did not agree in all matters with the Apostolic See, are not to be read out during the sacred mysteries." [13] This plainly meant that they did not recognize those men as true Catholics. All these traditions dictate that whoever the Roman Pontiff judges to be a schismatic for not expressly admitting and reverencing his power must stop calling himself Catholic.

10. Since this does not please the neo-schismatics, they follow the example of heretics of more recent times. They argue that the sentence of schism and excommunication pronounced against them by the Archbishop of Tyana, the Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople, was unjust, and consequently void of strength and influence. They have claimed also that they are unable to accept the sentence because the faithful might desert to the heretics if deprived of their ministrations. These novel arguments were wholly unknown and unheard of by the ancient Fathers of the Church. For "the whole Church throughout the world knows that the See of the blessed Apostle Peter has the right of loosing again what any pontiffs have bound, since this See possesses the right of judging the whole Church, and no one may judge its judgment." [14] The Jansenist heretics dared to teach such doctrines as that an excommunication pronounced by a lawful prelate

could be ignored on a pretext of injustice. Each person should perform, as they said, his own particular duty despite an excommunication. Our predecessor of happy memory Clement XI in his constitution Unigenitus against the errors of Quesnell forbade and condemned statements of this kind.[15] These statements were scarcely in any way different from some of John Wyclif's which had previously been condemned by the Council of Constance and Martin V. Through human weakness a person could be unjustly punished with censure by his prelate. But it is still necessary, as Our predecessor St. Gregory the Great warned, "for a bishop's subordinates to fear even an unjust condemnation and not to blame the judgment of the bishop rashly in case the fault which did not exist, since the condemnation was unjust, develops out of the pride of heated reproof." [16] But if one should be afraid even of an unjust condemnation by one's bishop, what must be said of those men who have been condemned for rebelling against their bishop and this Apostolic See and tearing to pieces as they are now doing by a new schism the seamless garment of Christ, which is the Church?

11. The charity which obliges priests in particular to attend to the faithful should derive "from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" [17] as the Apostle warned. In reviewing the qualities which we ought to display as ministers of God, he also included "in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth." [18] But Christ Himself, however, the God who "is charity," [19] openly declared that those who do not listen to the Church should be regarded as gentiles and publicans. [20] And Our predecessor St. Gelasius answered Euphemius, Bishop of Constantinople, when he stated that "the flock ought to follow the shepherd who calls them back to safe pastures, rather than the shepherd follow the flock as it wanders off the road." [21] For "the people must be taught, not followed: and if they do not know, we must impress on them what is permitted and not permitted, rather than give them our approval." [22]

### Definition of a Schismatic

12. But the neo-schismatics say that it was not a case of doctrine but of discipline, so the name and prerogatives of Catholics cannot be denied to those who object. Our Constitution Reversurus, published on July 12, 1867, [23] answers this objection. We do not doubt that you know well how vain and worthless this evasion is. For the Catholic Church has always regarded as schismatic those who obstinately oppose the lawful prelates of the Church and in particular, the chief shepherd of all. Schismatics avoid carrying out their orders and even deny their very rank. Since the faction from Armenia is like this, they are schismatics even if they had not yet been condemned as such by Apostolic authority. For the Church consists of the people in union with the priest, and the flock following its shepherd. [24] Consequently the bishop is in the Church and the Church in the bishop, and whoever is not with the bishop is not in the Church. Further more, as Our predecessor Pius VI warned in his Apostolic letter condemning the civil constitution of the clergy in France, [25] discipline is often closely related to doctrine and has a great influence in preserving its purity. In fact, in many

instances, the holy Councils have unhesitatingly cut off from the Church by their anathema those who have infringed its discipline.

### Authority of the Holy See

13. But the neo-schismatics have gone further, since "every schism fabricates a heresy for itself to justify its withdrawal from the Church." [26] Indeed they have even accused this Apostolic See as well, as if We had exceeded the limits of Our power in commanding that certain points of discipline were to be observed in the Patriarchate of Armenia. Nor can the Eastern Churches preserve communion and unity of faith with Us without being subject to the Apostolic power in matters of discipline. Teaching of this kind is heretical, and not just since the definition of the power and nature of the papal primacy was determined by the ecumenical Vatican Council: the Catholic Church has always considered it such and abhorred it. Thus the bishops at the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon clearly declared the supreme authority of the Apostolic See in their proceedings; then they humbly requested from Our predecessor St. Leo confirmation and support for their decrees, even those which concerned discipline.

14. Indeed, "the successor of blessed Peter, by the very fact that he is such, has been assigned the whole flock of Christ, so that together with his bishopric he receives the power of universal rule. Then the other bishops must be assigned their portions of the flock so that they can rule over their flock." [27] If the supreme authority of this assignment to blessed Peter and his successors is rejected, the very foundations and prerogatives of the patriarchal churches in particular would be shaken. "Even if Christ willed that Peter and the other leaders have something in common, the other leaders have this only through Peter." [28] "And in fact Peter himself honored the See (of Alexandria) when he sent his disciple, the evangelist: he strengthened the See (of Antioch) which he occupied for seven years, even though he was going to leave it." [29] And both Anatolius, [30] Bishop of Constantinople, and Marcian, [31] the emperor, openly acknowledged that the approval and confirmation of the Apostolic See was altogether necessary to the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon concerning the see of Constantinople.

15. Accordingly, then, unless they abandon the unchanging and unbroken tradition of the Church which is so clearly confirmed by testimonies of the Fathers, the neo-schismatics can in no way convince themselves that they are Catholics even if they declare themselves such. If We did not thoroughly know the clever and subtle deceits of heretics, it would be incomprehensible that the Ottoman regime still regards as Catholics people it knows to be cut off from the Catholic Church by Our judgment and authority. For if the Catholic religion is to continue safe and free in the Ottoman dominion as the Emperor has decreed, then the essence of this religion should also be allowed, for instance the primacy of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. Most men feel that the Church's supreme head and shepherd should decide who are Catholics and who are not.

## False Accusations

16. But the neo schismatics declare that they do not oppose the Catholic Church's principles in the least. Their sole aim is to protect the rights of their churches and their nation and even the rights of their supreme Emperor; they falsely allege that We have infringed these rights. By this means, they fearlessly make us responsible for the present disorder. Exactly in this way did the Acacian schismatics act towards Our predecessor St. Gelasius.[32] And previously the Arians falsely accused Liberius, also Our predecessor, to the Emperor Constantine, because Liberius refused to condemn St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, and refused to support their heresy.[33] For as the same holy Pontiff Gelasius wrote to the Emperor Anastasius on this matter, "a frequent characteristic of sick people is to reproach the doctors who recall them to health by appropriate measures rather than agree to desist from and condemn their own harmful desires." These appear to be the main grounds on which the neo-schismatics gain their support and solicit the patronage of powerful men for their cause, most wicked as it is. Lest the faithful be led into error, We must deal with these grounds more fully than if We merely had to refute unjust accusations.

17. We do not wish to recall that after the schism succeeded, the fortunes of the Eastern Catholic Churches declined; then God overthrew the empire of the Greeks in punishment for the sundered unity of His Church. Neither do We desire to recall the energetic efforts of Our predecessors, as soon as it was possible, to call back the straying sheep to the one true flock of Christ the Lord. But even if the results did not fully match the efforts expended, still by God's mercy some churches of the different rites did return to the truth and Catholic unity of the Church. These the Apostolic See received in its arms like newborn infants and took particular care to strengthen them in the true Catholic faith and to keep them completely free from all stain of heresy.

## Schism at the Time of Pius VII

18. When it was reported that the evil doctrines of a sect that Pope Pius VII had already condemned were being spread in the East, Pius VII became alarmed. Because they were trying to suppress the primacy of papal jurisdiction, the Pope decided on immediate measures to prevent their futile ambiguities and contentions from deceiving the faithful. Accordingly he ordered the ancient formula of St. Hormisdas, Our predecessor, to be sent to the patriarchs and eastern bishops.[34] In addition he commanded each within his jurisdiction to have every present or future clergyman subscribe to the profession of faith prescribed for men of the East by Urban VIII, unless they had already done so.

## Continuation of Schisms

19. However soon afterwards, in the year 1806, the so-called Antioch Synod met at the monastery of Carcapha in the diocese of Beirut. The Pistoian Synod, which had

already been condemned, quietly and deceitfully influenced the synod in many matters. This synod reproduced several statements, in part verbatim and in part ambiguously expressed, even though these had been condemned by the holy Roman See. Still other statements smacked of Baianism and Jansenism, and disturbed the position of the Church by their opposition to ecclesiastical power, sound doctrine and the approved discipline of the Church. This Synod of Carcapha published its decrees in Arabic in 1810 without reference to the Apostolic See; as a result, it occasioned complaints from many bishops and was finally censured and condemned in an Apostolic letter by Gregory XVI.[35] He bade the bishops derive the norm of their rule and teaching from the other ancient councils long approved by the Apostolic See. If only the errors in which it abounded had come to an end when the synod was condemned! But such wicked teachings did not cease to creep secretly throughout the East, waiting for the right moment to emerge into common view. Despite an unsuccessful attempt about twenty years ago, the new Armenian schismatics have now daringly brought this about.

### Catholicism in Constantinople

20. But since discipline is the rampart of faith, the Apostolic See needed to restore discipline. It has certainly never abandoned this most serious duty even in adverse times when it could attend only to transitory needs while it awaited more the favorable times. The Ottoman emperor, at the insistence of Leo XII and Pius VIII, and relying on the support of the Catholic rulers of Austria and France, recognized the distinction which exists between Catholics and heretics; therefore, he removed Catholics from the civil power of the latter, decreeing that Catholics should have their own head or prefect. It was only then in Constantinople that bishops of the Armenian rite could safely exercise the authority of an ordinary, to raise Catholic churches of the same rite, and to profess and practice openly the Catholic religion. Accordingly Pius VIII set up at Constantinople the see of the primate and archbishop of the Armenians;[36] the Pope was eager that canonical discipline should thrive there in a suitable and timely manner.

21. After some years, as soon as it was clearly expedient, We set up episcopal sees subject to the primate at Constantinople and also prescribed the procedure to be observed for the election of bishops.[37] Finally in an imperial document issued on April 7, 1857, to Our venerable brother Anthony Hassoun, then the primate of that see, provision was made on the authority of the supreme Emperor of the Ottoman Empire to prevent the power of the civil Prefect, as he is called, from being exercised in religious affairs, which would be completely at variance with the laws of the Catholic Church. The Armenians themselves requested that We unite the primatial church at Constantinople to the patriarchal see of Cilicia; We did this and We abrogated the title of the former by Our Apostolic letter *Reversurus*. Then We decided that it was both timely and necessary to sanction certain chief points of discipline by the authority of the same Constitution. We commanded by Our Apostolic letter *Commisum* of July 12, 1867[38] that a patriarchal synod be held as soon as possible in order to carefully ensure that an exact order of discipline be

correctly established in the whole Armenian patriarchate.

22. But an enemy proceeded to sow weeds in the Armenian church at Constantinople when shortly afterwards some men raised the question about the civil prefecture of the Armenian community, which they complained had been stolen by the new Patriarch. A serious disturbance soon followed this controversy: the same Patriarch was accused of betraying the rights of the state in accepting Our previously mentioned Constitution as a Catholic bishop was bound to do. In this way at last all the plans, artifices, and abuse of the dissidents have come to bear on this particular Constitution.

23. In this affair two points in particular have been called criminal: that is, the decrees concerning the election of holy bishops and the administration of the Church's property. For it has been falsely asserted that these are opposed to the national laws and the laws of the supreme Emperor. Although Our prescription on each of these headings ought to be very well known, it is well to repeat them at this point. For many speak as if they understand in spite of their ignorance of what is in Our prescriptions[39] and others, like soothsayers and interpreters of dreams, judge what they do not know.[40]

#### Selection of Hierarchy

24. We commanded that a synod composed exclusively of bishops elect the patriarch. However, We forbade the man elected to be enthroned until he received a letter of confirmation from the Apostolic See. We ordered bishops to be elected in the following way: all the bishops of the province were to gather in a synod and recommend three suitable churchmen to the Apostolic See. If it were not possible for all the bishops to come to the synod, the recommendation could be made by a synod of at least three diocesan bishops together with the patriarch, if those absent indicated their triple recommendation in writing. When this is done, the Roman pontiff will choose one of those recommended and put him in charge of the vacant see. We declared that We were certain that the bishops would recommend worthy and suitable men so that We would never have to select someone different from those recommended to be in charge of the vacant see.

25. If you consider these measures with a mind free from the passions of faction, you will find them all sanctioned by the universal sense of the canons. Concerning the exclusion of the laity from the election of bishops, a clear distinction must be made, lest a doctrine at variance with the Catholic faith result. This distinction is between the right to elect bishops and the ability to give testimony as to their life and morals. The former claim must be credited to the wrong notions of Luther and Calvin, who even asserted that it was a matter of divine law that the bishops should be elected by the people; as everybody realizes, such false teaching has been and is still rejected by the Catholic Church. For no power of electing bishops or other ministers of religion has ever been given to the people by either divine or ecclesiastical law.

26. Testimony of the people concerning the life and morals of those who are to be raised to the episcopate became important "when the Arians, to whom the emperor Constantius was partial, began to eject Catholic prelates from their sees and replace them with adherents of Arianism, as St. Athanasius laments (History of the Arians, ch. 4). The people felt that if they were present and if their testimony were heard at the election of bishops, then they would be more likely to support and help them." [41] That custom indeed lasted for some time in the Church, but when recurrent discord, disturbance, and other abuses resulted from it, it was necessary to remove the people from the process. For as St. Jerome observes, "sometimes the judgment of the ordinary people is wrong and in approving of priests each man is partial to his own ways and seeks a superior who resembles himself rather than one who is good." [42]

27. Nevertheless, in imposing a procedure of election, We left the synod of bishops freedom to examine the talents of the men to be elected in whatever way they preferred, even to the extent of summoning the testimony of the people if they so chose. And in fact, since the publication of Our Constitution, such an examination was conducted three years ago by the Armenian prelates when a bishop was elected for the districts of Sebaste and Tokat. The proceedings sent to this Holy See testify to this. However We did not nor do We think it fitting to impose a similar procedure in the election of the patriarch for several reasons. In the first place, his rank is so high; secondly, he is in charge of all the bishops in his district; and lastly, it is clear to Us that only bishops have taken part in the election of the patriarch in each of the Eastern rites, except on particular and extraordinary occasions when circumstances demanded a different procedure. For instance, when the Catholics were protecting themselves against the strong power of the schismatics to whom they were subjected, they asked for a different patriarch for themselves. By this fact they ensured their separation from these schismatics and their true and sincere "conversion" to the Catholic faith as indeed happened when Abraham Peter I was elected.

28. However, some resent and bemoan both Our declaration that this Apostolic See has the right and power to elect a bishop either from the three names recommended or apart from them and Our prohibition against the enthronement of an elected Patriarch without Our prior confirmation. They call Our attention to the customs and canons of their churches as if We had abandoned the provisions of the sacred canons. We might respond to these men in the same way Our predecessor St. Gelasius did when the Acacian schismatics brought the same false accusation against him: "They cite the canons against Us without knowing what they are saying since they show that they are themselves in opposition to the canons by the very fact that they deny obedience to the first See although its advice is sound and correct." [43] For these are the very canons which recognize the full, divine authority of blessed Peter over the whole Church. Indeed, they proclaim that he lives and exercises judgment in his successors to the present time and forever, as the Council of Ephesus affirmed. [44] Rightly then did Stephan, Bishop of Larissa, give this firm answer to those who considered that the privileges

of the churches of Constantinople were somewhat diminished by the intervention of the Roman Pontiff: "the authority of the Apostolic See which was given by God and our Savior to the chief of the Apostles exceeds the privileges of all the holy churches. In acknowledging this, all the churches of the world should cease their opposition."[45]

29. Certainly, if you recall the history of your districts, you will find examples of Roman Pontiffs who used this power when they judged it necessary for the safety of the Eastern Churches. This was why the Roman Pontiff Agapetus used his authority to eject Anthimus from the See of Constantinople and replace him with Mennas without calling a synod. Our predecessor Martin I entrusted his power for the East to John, Bishop of Philadelphia, in regard to the regions of the East. He instructed him "by the Apostolic authority given to Us by the Lord through the most holy Peter, prince of the Apostles,"[46] to appoint bishops, priests and deacons in every city subject to the sees of Jerusalem and Antioch. In more recent times, you will recall that the bishop of Mardin of the Armenians was elected and consecrated by the authority of this Apostolic See even though Our predecessors granted the care of this see to the patriarchs of Cilicia. This was granted when the administration of the district of Mesopotamia was assigned to them by the Holy See. All these actions agree with the supreme power of the Roman See; the church of the Armenians has always recognized, proclaimed, and respected this except during unhappy times of schism. This is not surprising since even among your people still separated from the Catholic faith, the ancient tradition remains strong that the great bishop and martyr whom you regard as the Enlightener of your race, received his power from the Apostolic See. He came to the See in person, undeterred by the length and great hardship of the journey. This was Gregory whom Chrysostom described as a sun rising in the eastern regions whose shining rays reached as far as the Greek people.[47]

30. We decided on this arrangement by Ourselves after carefully studying both on ancient and recent events. Everyone knows that the eternal and at times the temporal happiness of people depends on the proper election of bishops; the circumstances of time and place must be considered referring all the authority for selecting the bishops to the Apostolic See. Still We decided to moderate the exercise of this power by allowing the synod of bishops to elect the patriarch and by having this synod recommend three suitable men to Us for vacant sees as was sanctioned in Our Constitution.

31. But on this matter too, to rouse the torpid and increasingly inspire those who are running well, We said that We hoped truly suitable men worthy of so important an office would be recommended to avoid the necessity of Our ever having to appoint to a vacant See someone apart from those recommended. This was provided for also in the procedure We established in 1853[48] for exactly the same purpose. We have heard that some have interpreted these otherwise mild words to mean that We would disregard and even deride the recommendations of the synod. Others have gone even further and developed a theory that a proposal to

entrust the care of the Armenians to Latin bishops is veiled in these words. Such foolish accusations indeed deserve no answer: for only fearful and foolish men could utter such statements. But We considered that We should not keep silence on Our right to elect a bishop apart from the three recommended candidates, in case the Apostolic See should be compelled to exercise this right in the future. But even if We had remained silent, this right and duty of the See of blessed Peter would have remained unimpaired. For the rights and privileges given to the See by Christ Himself, while they may be attacked, cannot be destroyed; no man has the power to renounce a divine right which he might at some time be compelled to exercise by the will of God Himself.

32. Although it is now nineteen years since these pronouncements were made to the Armenians, and although bishops have been elected many times, We have never used that power, not even when recently, after the publication of the Constitution *Reversurus*, We received a triple recommendation from which We could not elect a bishop. In this case We told the synod of bishops to recommence the process of recommendation in accordance with the laws We prescribed rather than Our electing a bishop apart from their recommendations. This has been hindered so far by the new schism which has begun to tear apart the church of the Armenians. We are confident, furthermore, that such distressful times will never befall the Catholic churches of Armenia as to compel the Roman Pontiffs to impose bishops on them who have not been recommended by the synod of bishops.

33. We will add some remarks on Our prohibition of the enthronement of Patriarchs before Holy See. The writings of the ancients testify that the election of Patriarchs had never been considered definite and valid without the agreement and confirmation of the Roman Pontiff. Accordingly, it is learned, those elected to patriarchal sees always sought such confirmation, with the support of the emperors. Thus, to pass over other names in a well known affair, Anatolius Bishop of Constantinople (a man who certainly did not serve the Apostolic See very well), and even Photius himself (the first cause of the Greek schism), requested the Roman Pontiff to confirm their elections by his consent. To this end they employed the intervention of the emperors Theodosius, Michael and Basil. For this reason the Fathers of Chalcedon, even though they declared all the acts of the robber synod of Ephesus invalid, willed that Maximus Bishops of Antioch remain in the see. He had replaced Domnus by authority of that synod since "the holy and blessed Pope who confirmed the holy and venerable Maximus as bishop of the church of Antioch appeared to have approved his merit in a just judgment." [49]

34. But if you consider the patriarchs of those churches which in more recent times have renounced schism and returned to Catholic unity, you will find that all of them asked for confirmation from the Roman Pontiff; the Roman Pontiffs confirmed them all by letter in such a way that at the same time the Pontiffs appointed them and placed them over their churches. The Apostolic See has at times tolerated elected patriarchs using their power before being confirmed by the See. It has done so because their districts were so distant or because the journey was dangerous or

because of the reverses threatening more and more frequently from the predominance of schismatics of the same rite. This dispensation has been granted even in the west to those who are very far away because of the needs and benefits of the churches.[50] But it is fair to remind you that such reasons are no longer valid since travel is much easier and since the Catholics have been delivered from the civil power of the schismatics by the kindness of the supreme Ottoman emperor. By following this procedure, safe provision is made for the preservation of the Catholic faith which could be disturbed at will by one who is unworthy of such high office occupying the patriarchal see before the Apostolic confirmation which might arise when an elected Patriarch is rejected by the holy Apostolic See and has to relinquish his place will be forestalled.

35. Everything which is sanctioned in Our Constitution contributes to the preservation and development of the Catholic faith. It contributes as well to the protection of the real liberty of the Church and the authority of the bishops, whose rights and privileges find strength and repose in the stability of the Apostolic See. The Roman Pontiffs have always strongly defended these rights and privileges from heretics and ambitious men at the request of bishops of every rank, nation and rite.

#### Ecclesiastical Laws

36. We do not need to give a long answer to the question of the so-called national laws. For if it is a matter of civil laws only, the supreme ruler has the power to judge and decide whether he deems them useful and beneficial to his subjects. But if it is a matter of ecclesiastical laws, no one can be unaware that Catholics have never recognized any national or popular laws against the Church, its hierarchy and ordinations. For although peoples and nations have entered the Church from all places, still God has united them all under the supreme shepherd blessed Peter, the prince of the Apostles. Thus there might no longer be Gentile and Jew, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free, but that Christ may be all things in all men.[51] From Him the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint, increases bodily and builds itself up in love.[52] For God has not given any peoples or nations power over the Church, but has entrusted them to the Apostles for teaching and has commanded the duty of belief.[53] For this reason too, the blessed Peter openly declared at the meeting of Apostles and presbyters that God had decreed that the nations should hear the word of the Gospel through him and should believe.[54]

#### Calumnies against the Church

37. But it is also said that We have infringed upon the rights of the supreme emperor. This is a common calumny worn thin by the long use heretics have made of it. The Jews first invented it in opposition to Christ and God; then pagans very often used it not only before the Roman emperors and heretics, but even before Catholic princes. I could wish they had not brought it for ward this time as well. To

counter it, St. Jerome wrote that "heretics cringe before royal rank and often impute their own pride to kings; assuming the king did what they do, they accuse holy men and preachers of the faith in his presence and forbid teachers to preach in Israel lest they act contrary to the king's will arguing that Bethel, the 'house of God,' and the false church is the sanctuary of the king and the temple of the kingdom." [55] It would indeed be quite enough to trample in contemptuous silence on these shameless calumnies which are so far removed from the teachings, habits, and practices of the Catholic faith. But it is necessary to ensure that the simple and inexperienced do not suffer by wrongly judging Us and the Apostolic See as a result of the statement of ill-wishers "who in the course of attacking others attempt to increase their vices." [56]

### Ecclesiastical Domain

38. Therefore, the teaching of the Catholic Church received from Christ Himself, and handed on by the holy Apostles, is that the things of Caesar must be given to Caesar, but to God must be given the things of God. For this reason, when it was necessary, Our predecessors never avoided impressing on princes their duty of faith and obedience. Hence the administration of civil affairs is proper to the ruler, but ecclesiastical affairs are entirely the concern of the priests. Among these affairs are to be reckoned everything which is necessary to establishing and maintaining the so-called exterior discipline of the Church. It would be heretical to affirm that the use of this power received from God is an abuse of the Church's authority; Pius VI already determined this. [57] The Apostolic See has often taken great pains to maintain this distinction of powers. St. Athanasius called the interference of secular rulers in Church affairs "a novel spectacle" and "an invention of the Arian heresy." [58] Other prelates openly condemned it, among them Basil of Caesarea, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom and John Damascene. The last named affirmed publicly that "no one would persuade him that the Church is governed by imperial edicts; it is ruled by the customs of the Fathers, both written and unwritten." [59] For the same reason the fathers of the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon declared publicly in the case of Photius, Bishop of Tyre, gaining the assent even of the servants of the Emperor, that "no pragmatic (that is, imperial decree) will be valid in opposition to the rules: let the canons of the Fathers be binding. "And when the imperial servants inquired "whether the holy synod wanted this to be defined in regard to all pragmatics which were in conflict with the canons, all the bishops answered, 'All the pragmatics will come to an end: let the canons be binding, and let you see to this.'" [60]

39. However there are two points in which it is said that We have injured the rights of the Emperor: that is, by determining the procedure to be observed in electing and establishing holy bishops, and by forbidding the Patriarch to alienate Church property without informing the Apostolic See.

40. Now, what can be said to belong more to the area of ecclesiastical affairs than the election of bishops? We have read nowhere in the holy writings that these

could be decided by princes or by peoples. Indeed, the Fathers of the Church, the ecumenical Councils, and the Apostolic constitutions have always both recognized and ordered that these elections constituted part of the Church's power. So if in the matter of establishing an ecclesiastical shepherd, the Apostolic See should define the procedure to be followed in conducting such elections, in what way could it be said that it has injured the rights of the supreme emperor? The rights it exercises are those of its own proper power, not those of another's power. The bishop has indeed a special and venerable authority over the people entrusted to him. The civil power need not fear it since the bishop will be no enemy to the civil power, but will affirm the legitimate rights of the ruler they share. But if it should turn out differently -- since human beings are weak -- the Apostolic See itself would attend to a bishop who was revolting against the faith and the subjection which is due his legitimate ruler. It need not be feared that anyone at enmity with the legitimate ruler will slink into the episcopal office. For according to the Church's laws, the qualities of the men being considered for promotion are carefully examined to determine that they are endowed with the virtues which the Apostle demands they have. The man outstanding in these virtues would heed the precept of blessed Peter: "Be subject to every human institution for God's sake: to the king as preeminent, to governors as sent by him to punish evildoers and to honor the good. For this is God's will, that by doing good, you may silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free men, do not use freedom as a pretext for wrongdoing, but use freedom for your work as servants of God." [61]

#### Combination of Civil Duties with Ecclesiastical

41. The first Ottoman emperor in Constantinople and his successors decided to confer civil duty and administration on bishops and other clerics. The full and unimpaired power of the Church in their election cannot be lessened for this reason. For it would be improper for heavenly and spiritual matters to be of smaller regard than earthly and civil affairs and to be their servant. But the supreme Emperor has the right to confer civil rank and power on another, if and when he judges this is expedient. He must, however, provide that the full and free exercise of ecclesiastical power remain with the Catholic bishops. However, a special document of the supreme Ottoman emperor in 1857 changed this.

False Accusations 42. We directed all these matters to the Ottoman court through the Archbishop of Thessalonica when he served as Our extraordinary legate at Constantinople. Now it is clearly time to put an end to the pain given by the repetition of these false and stale assertions, unless our opponents are envious men and prefer to be known as more eager for their faction than for the truth.

43. But We were astonished on learning that We were under attack for renewing and confirming the law on the alienation of ecclesiastical property. It was as if We wanted not only to infringe on the imperial rights, but even to claim for Ourselves the very property of the Armenian churches. Church property belongs to the churches and is under their power no less certainly than civilian property belongs

to civilians. This fact is sanctioned not so much by the canons, but rather acknowledged by each man's natural reason. In the first centuries of the Church, the administration of this property was entrusted to the judgment and conscience of the bishops. Subsequent councils carefully regulated it by publishing laws to settle the method by which the administration should be carried out and the reasons for which alienation should be allowed. In this way, the ancient power of the bishops was limited and subservient to the prudent judgment of synods or sometimes to that of higher prelates. But since at this point adequate provision for the indemnity of Church property did not seem to have been made, either because synods did not meet often enough or for other reasons, the authority of the Apostolic See was bound to intervene. In this way care was taken that the property of the churches would not be alienated without the advice of the Roman Pontiffs.

44. The matter indeed was considered very serious and necessary for the benefit of the churches; therefore, it was settled long ago that those who were elected to cathedral, metropolitan and even patriarchal churches should be obliged under solemn oath to observe this law. This oath was in fact taken also by the patriarchs of the Eastern rite in so far as their subsistence property was concerned ever since their churches returned to Catholic truth and unity. This is witnessed by the documents which are in Our Apostolic archives. Not even one of them declined to promise under oath that he would observe the aforesaid laws. The same oath is, and has been, taken daily by bishops of the Latin rite no matter what their nation, kingdom, or state, without the civil powers ever complaining that their rights were being injured by this action. And rightly so, for by these laws the Roman Pontiff does not claim or take anything for himself, but is concerned only with the benefit of the churches. This includes settling what a bishop should best do in particular cases by comparing counsels, or giving the bishop himself the power of determining what is best concerning a father's dealings with his sons. We had the most serious reasons, of which We will have to give an account to God, when We determined in Our Constitution that the law to which the Patriarchs were already subject, by which they were forbidden to alienate their subsistence property without the advice of the Apostolic See, should be extended to include other ecclesiastical property. Our Constitution ensures that safer and more effective measures children, We have decided in the present crisis to write all this to you to arouse your pure mind to the duty We have laid upon you. For you see that what the holy Apostles long ago foretold is still being fulfilled in your days, namely that in the last days, deceivers would come to deceive, walking according to their own passions. Be zealous then not to be won over from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel. They do indeed wish to change the gospel of Christ by attempting to remove the foundation laid for His Church by Christ. Also, they either deny or reduce the universal task of feeding the sheep and the lambs which was entrusted to blessed Peter in the gospel. Indubitably, "these things are permitted and borne by the Lord, since the free decision of each individual will is assured, in order that while the testing of the truth exercises your hearts and minds, the unimpaired faith of the approved way may shine with clear light." [64] Still you should avoid those who grow daily worse, as the Apostle commanded. And

you should continue to receive no one in your gathering under any pretext who holds communion with such men that you may preserve the Catholic faith unsullied in your hearts.

50. "But let no one try to trick you by saying that 'the controversy is not about religion but about customs,' as the ancient schismatics did, or that the Apostolic See is not dealing with the cause of Catholic communion and faith but is simply pained by the insult of being apparently despised by its critics since the dissidents do not rest from scattering such statements as these to deceive all the simple-minded." [65] For it is already clear from their declarations and published writings that they are openly assailing the primacy of jurisdiction given by Christ the Lord to this apostolic See in the person of blessed Peter; they do this when they attack the right of exercising this jurisdiction in the Churches of the Eastern rite. But Our Constitution could not be the cause of this error, although it has served as an opportunity and pretext for restless or inexperienced minds to bring it forth. "The Apostolic See, far from being grieved by insult, defends the faith and pure communion. It does this so that today, if all who have rebelled return in heartfelt sorrow to the fullness of faith and Catholic communion, it will receive them with love and full charity, following the regulations of the Fathers." [66] We have now long and fervently besought God in the humility of Our heart to deign to grant this favor. We desire and wish you also to do likewise.

51. For the rest, venerable brothers and beloved children, be strengthened in the Lord and the power of His might; receive the armor of God to enable you to stand fast in the evil day and take up the shield of faith in every affair; do not reckon your life more valuable than yourselves. Remember your ancestors who had no fear of suffering exile, imprisonment, and even death itself as they purposed to keep for themselves and you the unique gift of the true Catholic faith. For they rightly knew that not those who kill the body need be feared, but the one who is able to destroy body and soul in hell. Consequently cast all your concern on God: for He has care of you and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability. You will then rejoice that, at this time, you were somewhat saddened by different temptations so that your faith, more valuable than gold which is tested by fire, should on testing be found to merit praise, glory, and honor in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Finally We beseech you all to strive for perfect concord in your concern to preserve the unity of faith in the bond of peace. And may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, maintain your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus Our Lord. In His name and by His authority We lovingly impart Our Apostolic Blessing to you, venerable brothers and beloved sons, as you continue in communion with the obedience to the Apostolic See.

Given at Rome in St. Peter's on the 6th of January 1873, the 27th year of Our Pontificate.

For the Acta of the Holy See in relation to the Armenian schism see the Acta Sanctae Sedis, vol. 5, pp. 444ff., 500ff., and 572; vol. 6, pp. 273ff. See also the

Acta of the Sacred Consistory, vol. 3, pp. 337ff., and p. 386 for the famous bull *Reversurus*, and p. 394 for the apostolic letter *Commissum*. See also vol. 5, pp. 376, 380, and 615 for statutes of the Babylonian Patriarchate of the Chaldaeans passed after the bull *Reversurus*.

1. In suprema, 6 January 1848 (Acta Pii IX, vol. 1, p. 78).
2. Mt 24.5.
3. Lib. de Unit, no. 3.
4. Acta Pii IX, vol. 5, pp. 129 and 195.
5. Ibid., p. 290.
6. Comment. in Isaiae 19.12-13.
7. St. Irenaeus, *Contr. haeres.*, bk. 3, chap. 3.
8. St. Cyprian, *Lib. de Unitate*, no. 4.
9. St. Optatus of Milevis, *de schism. Donatist*, bk. 2.
10. Council of Aquileia and St. Ambrose, epistle 11 to the emperors.
11. Labbe, *Collect. Council.*, publ. Venice, vol. 7, cod. 1279.
12. Epistle *Ad Petrum illustrem*, *Coll. Counc.*, vol. 6, col. 1520.
13. *Libell. of John, bishop of Constantinople to St. Hormisdas*. Eighth Ecumenical Council, prop. 1.
14. St. Gelasius, epistle 26, sect. 5, to the bishops of Dardania.
15. *Const. Unigenitus*, prop. 91, 92, 93.
16. Hom. 26 on the Gospels, sect. 6.
17. I Tm 1.5.
18. 2 Cor 6.6.
19. 1 Jn 4.8.
20. Mt 18.17.
21. Epistle 3, no. 15 to Euphemius.
22. St. Celestine, Pope, to the bishops of Apulia and Calabria, no. 3.
23. Acta Pii IX, vol. 4, p. 304.
24. St. Cyprian, epistle 66 to Florentius Pupianus, no. 8.
25. *Quod aliquantum*, 10 March 1791.
26. St. Jerome on the epistle to Titus 3.10-11.
27. Pius VI in his *brev. Super soliditate*, 28 November 1786.
28. St. Leo, *serm. 3* on the anniversary of his elevation.
29. St. Gregory the Great, bk. 7, epistle 40 to Eulogius bishop of Alexandria.
30. Anatolius to St. Leo, epistle 132, no. 4.
31. Marcian to St. Leo, epistle 100.
32. St. Gelasius epistle 12 to the emperor Anastasius, no. 1.
33. St. Athanas., *hist. Arianor ad Monach.*, no. 35.
34. Encyclical of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, 6 July 1803.
35. Gregory XVI, apostolic letter *Melchitarum catholicorum*, 16 September 1835.
36. Apostolic letter *Quod iamdiu*, 6 July 1830.
37. Apostolic letter *Universis Dominici gregis*, 30 April 1850.
38. Acta Pius, vol. 4, p.318.
39. Eph 4.17-18.

40. Prv 23.7.
41. Pius VI, apostolic letter contr. civilem cleri constitutionem, 10 March 1791.
42. Advers. Iovinian, bk. 1, no. 34.
43. In Commonit. ad Faustum, no. 5.
44. Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, Act. 3.
45. Stephen, Bishop of Larissa, in Libell. to Boniface 11 and the Roman Synod in 531.
46. Epistle to John of Philadelphia in Labbe, Collect. Counc., tom. 7, col. 22.
47. Encomium of St. Gregory, Enlightener of the Armenians, from the Armenian homilies in the Opera of St. John Chrysostom, Paris, 1864, vol. 12, col. 943.
48. Instruction Licet. 20 August 1853.
49. Council of Chalcedon, Ac . 10.
50. Lateran Council IV, canon 26.
51. Col 3.11.
52. Eph 4.16.
53. Mt 28.19.
54. Acts 15.7.
55. Comment. on Amos 7.10-11.
56. Gregory Nazianzen, oration 43 in praise of St. Basil, no. 68.
57. Const. Auctorem fidei, prop. 4.
58. Hist. Arianor. ad Monach., no. 52.
59. Oration 2 de sacr. imaginib., no. 16.
60. Council of Chalcedon, prop. 4.
61. I P. 2.13.
62. Jn 10.5.
63. St. Cyprian, epistle to Antonianus, no. 24.
64. St. Cyprian, Lib. de Unit: Eccles., no. 10.
65. St. Gelasius, epistle 18 to the bishops of Dardania, no. 6.
66. Ibid.