



Luctuosissimi Eventus

To the Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brethren, Greetings and Apostolic Benediction

Our paternal heart is deeply moved by the sorrowful events which have befallen the people of eastern Europe and especially of Our beloved Hungary, which is now being soaked in blood by a shocking massacre. And not only is Our heart moved, but so too are the hearts of all men who cherish the rights of civil society, the dignity of man, and the liberty which is due to individuals and to nations.

2. And so, aware of Our Apostolic duties, We cannot but fervently appeal to all of you, Venerable Brethren, and to the flocks entrusted to each of you, that, animated by brotherly love, you raise suppliant prayers with Us to God, in Whose hands lie the destinies of peoples as well as the power and very lives of their rulers. Let us pray that an end may be put to this carnage and that a genuine peace founded on justice, charity, and rightful freedom may some day dawn again.

3. May all men come to realize that today's unsettled international order cannot be stabilized by an armed might which brings many to their death, nor by that violence inflicted upon citizens which is powerless to compel their inner assent, nor by those deceitful fictions which corrupt the mind and are as repugnant to the rights of a civic and Christian conscience as they are to the rights of the Church. Nor can the breath of just freedom ever be extinguished by external force.

4. In the midst of these oppressive conditions, which so torment a beloved part of the Christian flock, We recall with pleasure the day, now many years ago, when We journeyed to Budapest to take part in an international Eucharistic Congress as personal representative of Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI. We then had the joy and consolation of seeing the dear Catholics of Hungary follow with ardent piety and profoundest veneration the August Sacrament of the altar as it was carried in solemn procession through the streets of the city.

5. We are sure that the same faith in and love for our Divine Redeemer still inspire the hearts of this people even though the champions of atheistic communism attempt with every possible stratagem to despoil their minds of the religion of their forefathers. We have, therefore, the surest confidence that this great nation, even in the crisis which now tragically vexes it, will once again raise suppliant prayers to God, asking for that peace and domestic order which it so ardently desires. We also hope that all true Christians throughout the world, as evidence of their common charity, will join in prayer with these, their brothers, who are oppressed by so many calamities and so many wrongs.

6. We particularly exhort to this holy crusade of prayer all those whom We embrace in the same tender affection as did the Divine Redeemer whose person We represent on earth -- those who are in the flower of youth, resplendent with sweetness and grace. We have great confidence in their prayers for, though they are of this world, which is sullied by crime and sin, they can still, in a sense, be called angels. May all Christians join them in invoking the powerful patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for she has great influence for us before God since she is the Mother of the Divine Redeemer and our own most loving Mother.

7. We have no doubt that Christians everywhere, in cities, towns, and villages, wherever the light of the Gospel shines, and especially boys and girls, will most willingly respond to Our entreaties to which yours will be added.

8. So it will come to pass that the beloved Hungarian people who are tortured by such great suffering and drenched in so much blood, and the other peoples of eastern Europe who are deprived of religious and civil liberty, will be able -- with the inspiration and help of God, which is sought in so many suppliant prayers, and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary -- happily and peacefully to resolve these problems in justice and right order, with due respect for the rights of God and Jesus Christ, our King, whose kingdom is "a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace." (Preface of the Feast of Jesus Christ the King.)

9. Relying upon this sweet hope, We impart, as a token of Our esteem and in pledge of abundant heavenly graces, Our Apostolic Benediction lovingly in Our Lord, to each one of you, Venerable Brethren, and to your flocks, especially those in Hungary and the other countries of eastern Europe who are so sorely afflicted and oppressed by calamities, and particularly to those Consecrated Bishops of these same countries who are held in prison or places of custody or have been sent into exile.

10. Given at Rome from St. Peter's on the 28th day of October, the Feast of our Lord Jesus Christ the King, in the year 1956, the 18th of Our Pontificate.