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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 generation takes great pride in the remarkable products of its technology, but even though these advances are the result of human talent and toil, they are still gifts of God, our Creator, from Whom all good works proceed, "for He has not only brought forth creatures; He also sustains and fosters what He has brought forth." [1]

2. Some of these discoveries increase man's strength and capacities; still others affect his intellectual life and reach the masses of the people either directly or through the agency of sound and pictures. These very easily transmit news, ideas, or instructions to those whose minds they nourish during moments of rest or relaxation. Among advances of this last type, the most notable in our era have been in the fields of motion pictures, radio, and television.
3. The Church welcomed these technological advances as soon as they came into use, but in her maternal concern and watchfulness she was also disposed to guard her children from every danger as they entered upon this age of progress.
4. This vigilant care derives from the mission which the Church received from the Divine Redeemer, for these new means of communication clearly have a great influence on the way individuals and human society as a whole think and act.
5. But there is another reason why the Church regards this sort of matter as her particular concern: she has a far greater right than anyone else to announce the "news" to men. We refer to the tidings of eternal salvation; tidings of inestimable wealth and power; those tidings which men of every age and race must accept and embrace, as the Apostle to the Gentiles said: "Yes, to me, the very least of all saints, there was given this grace, to announce among the Gentiles the good

tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men as to what is the dispensation of the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things."[2]

6. It is not strange then that those who hold the Church's highest authority have concerned themselves with this serious subject in order that they might provide for the eternal salvation of those who were "redeemed not with perishable things, with silver or gold. . . , but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish."[3] They have examined carefully all the problems which motion pictures, radio, and television raise for Christians today.

7. More than twenty years ago Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, used "the remarkable invention of Marconi" to send the first radio broadcast "to all nations and to every creature."[4]

8. A few years later Our Predecessor sent that great Encyclical Epistle which opens with the words *Vigilanti cura*[5] to Our Venerable Brethren, the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States of America. In that Encyclical he laid down wise regulations regarding motion-picture shows and, among other statements pertinent to present problems, said: "It is urgently necessary that all progress made, by God's favor, in human learning and technology actually contribute to God's glory, the salvation of souls, and the spread of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, in such wise that we may all, as the Church bids us pray, 'so pass through the things of time that we may not lose those things that are eternal.'"[6]

9. We Ourselves, throughout Our Supreme Pontificate, have often, as opportunities arose, discussed this subject and given appropriate instructions not only to the Bishops but also to various organizations within Catholic Action and to Christian educators. It has also been Our pleasure to receive in audience those professionally engaged in motion pictures, radio, and television. After expressing to them Our wonder at the marvelous progress made by specialists in these fields, We have pointed out the duties incumbent upon each of them, the high praise they already deserve, the pitfalls into which they can easily fall, and the high ideals which should enlighten their minds and direct their wills.

10. We have also, as you know, established a special commission in the Roman Curia[7] and entrusted it with the careful consideration of the various problems arising from motion pictures, radio, and television which relate to Christian faith and morals. Bishops and other interested parties may obtain suitable directives from this commission.

11. We often use these wonderful modern means by which We can unite the world-wide-flock with its Supreme Pastor. Our words fly surely and safely over land and sea, and even over the turbulent tides of human souls, to move the hearts of men and exercise a saving influence on them, as is demanded by this supreme apostolate which has been entrusted to Us, and which has today grown to

immense proportions.[8]

12. We are deeply comforted by the knowledge that Our exhortations on this subject, and those of Our Predecessor, Pius XI, have had great influence in making motion pictures, radio, and television tend to summon men to pursue their spiritual perfection, and thus to promote God's glory.

13. For, with your zealous and watchful attention, Venerable Brethren, projects have been conceived and undertaken which have not only promoted this form of the apostolate in individual dioceses and countries, but have even spread it, through united effort and under a single program, to all mankind.

14. Many men, both Catholic and non-Catholic, from government, business, and the professions, have taken an interest in these forms of entertainment and demonstrated their integrity in this serious matter by the efforts they have made, with great personal labor and expense, to avert occasions of evil, make sacrosanct the commandments of God, and place the dignity of the human person in safety.

15. But, unfortunately, We must repeat the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles: "All do not obey the gospel." [9] For in this matter many neither understand nor acknowledge the teaching authority of the Church; they may even oppose it with all their resources. Others, as you know, are so gripped by an unrestrained craving for profit, or so blinded by errors, that they do not put the dignity and the liberty of human nature on the same plane. And, finally, there are those who adhere to incorrect philosophies of art.

16. However much their conduct fills Our heart with sorrow, yet how can We fail in Our duty and turn from the straight road and still be sure that those words will be applied to us that His enemies addressed to the Divine Redeemer:

"We know that thou art truthful and that thou teachest the way of God in truth, and that thou carest naught for any man." [10]

17. The remarkable progress made by modern technology in the fields of motion pictures, radio, and television have given rise to great benefits, and to just as great dangers. For these new means of communication are within the reach of almost everyone, and thus exercise a powerful influence over men's minds. They can enlighten, ennoble, and adorn men's minds, but they can also disfigure them with dark shadows, disgrace them with perversity, and expose them to unrestrained passions, according as the shows they offer present our senses with objects that are proper or improper. [11]

18. During the past century the technological progress made by industry has often had this result, that the machines which were intended to serve man have actually reduced him to serfdom, to his great loss. And so today the mounting technological advances in communicating pictures, sounds, and ideas must be subjected to the

sweet yoke of the law of Christ[12] if they are not to become a source of countless evils which will be all the more serious in that they will enslave not only the powers of nature but also those of the soul. In this event, man's inventions would be stripped of that beneficent usefulness which, in God's provident design, is their primary purpose.[13]

19. And so, as We ponder this serious matter with a fatherly concern that grows deeper from day to day, and reflect upon the good results that the Encyclical *Vigilanti cura* has produced in the field of motion pictures during the past twenty years, We have resolved, in response to the entreaties of bishops and laymen engaged in these fields, to set down norms and instructions pertaining also to radio and television.

20. We have, therefore, addressed Our earnest prayers to God, and sought the assistance of His Virgin Mother, and now address you, Venerable Brethren, whose wise pastoral concern is well known to Us, in order that Christian teachings on this subject might be clarified, and appropriate measures proposed and undertaken. With all the means at Our command, then, We wish to exhort you to guard the flock entrusted to you from every error and danger which the use of these media can raise against the conduct of Christian life to its serious detriment.

21. Before treating specific problems concerning motion pictures, radio and television (for We realize that in artistic, technical, and economic matters each has its own peculiar problems which require solution if it is to improve intellectual and spiritual life), We think it best to outline briefly principles pertaining to the widest possible enjoyment of these benefits meant for the whole human community and for individual citizens.

22. Since God is the Supreme Good, He continually bestows His gifts upon men, the objects of His special love and care. Some of these gifts look to the spirit; others to the conduct of earthly life. These latter gifts are clearly subject to the former, in much the same way that the body should be subject to the soul with which, before He communicates Himself by the beatific vision, God is joined by that faith and love which "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." [14]

23. Furthermore, since God desires to see the image of His own perfection reflected in man,[15] He has chosen him to partake in His divine generosity, and associated him in His works as a bearer of the good tidings, that he might be a liberal dispenser of them to the rest of his brethren and to the entire human community. For from earliest times man has been wont, by his very nature, to communicate his spiritual goods by symbols which he wrests from bodily things and which he attempts constantly to reduce to a more perfect form. From the art and letters of antiquity down to the technology of our day all the means by which men are united with one another have tended to this high end, that in this task men might in some way be ministers of God.

24. That this purpose of Divine Providence might be more surely and efficaciously realized among men, by Our Apostolic Authority[16] We constituted "Saint Gabriel, the Archangel who brought the longed for news of the Redemption to the human race, . . . heavenly patron before God" of those means whereby men are able by means of electricity to transmit words to others who are at a distance: to converse with them from afar, to send information over the air waves, or to view objects and events through images brought directly before their eyes.[17] In choosing this heavenly patron it was Our intention that all who use these beneficial instruments, by which the inestimable treasures of God may be spread among men like the good seed which bears fruit of truth and goodness, might have their attention focused on the nobility of the work entrusted to them.

25. As we consider the high purposes for which these noble means of communication are meant, this question presents itself: Why is it that they occasionally become the instruments of evil, or the paths which lead to it? "How then does it have weeds?"[8]

26. Of course, nothing evil, since it is opposed to sound moral principles, can come from God, Who is perfect and absolute Good, or from those means of communication which are His precious gifts, but only from the fact that men, endowed with free will, can abuse these gifts by committing and spreading evil and by allying themselves with the prince of darkness, the enemy of God: "An enemy has done this."[19]

27. True human liberty, then, requires that we utilize and share with others all those resources which can contribute to virtue and to the perfection of our nature.

28. But the Church, since she teaches the doctrine of salvation and has all that is needed for the attainment of holiness, has an inviolable right to communicate that which has been entrusted to her by divine command. This sacred right should be acknowledged by public authorities, so that the Church might have access to those means by which she can spread truth and virtue. Sincere and zealous sons of the Church, who recognize the inestimable gift of the Redemption, must exert every effort in seeing that she has the use of these technical advances to the extent that they can contribute to the sanctification of souls.

29. In claiming and championing these rights for the Church, we do not mean to deny to civil society the use of these same media for the spread of information and instructions, when these are genuinely necessary or useful for the common good of the human family.

30. And when circumstances call for it, and those principles on which the common good rests are safeguarded, individual citizens should be permitted to contribute, according to their abilities, to the enrichment of their own and others' intellectual and spiritual life by the use of these means of communication.

31. But altogether contrary to Christian teaching and the primary end of these media is the purpose and intent of those who would use these inventions solely to advance and advertise political matters or to further their economic purposes, and thus treat this noble cause as if it were solely a business venture.

32. So too, We cannot approve the stand of those who claim and defend their freedom to depict and display whatever they please, despite the perfectly evident fact that great harm has come to souls in days past as a result of this attitude. For here the issue is not real freedom, which We have discussed above, but unchecked license to express oneself without regard for prudence, even though this be contrary to sound morals and liable to result in serious danger for souls.

33. The Church encourages and fosters all that really assists in the enrichment of the mind (she is, after all, the patron and support of humane studies and liberal arts), but she cannot tolerate a breach of these rules and norms which direct and guide man to God, his final end. It is not surprising, then, that in a matter requiring such great caution she acts carefully and discreetly, in accordance with the Apostle's instruction: "But test all things; hold fast that which is good. Keep yourselves from every kind of evil." [20]

34. Wherefore they are certainly to be reprov'd who assert that the publication of matters which impede or are opposed to the principles of morality should be approved if they conform to technical and artistic norms. In a short address on the fifth centenary of the death of Fra Angelico We said: "Of themselves the liberal arts certainly do not demand direction to a moral or religious function. But if artistic expression, in words, sounds, or images, is equated with false, empty, and confused techniques which are out of harmony with the plan of the Divine Creator; if instead of raising the mind and heart to lofty sentiments it moves them rather to base passions and desires, then it can attract men by its novelty, which does not always have value or virtue, or by its slight content of truth (for truth is present in every being), but such art will have abandoned its position of honor, strayed far from its first and necessary principle, and so be neither universal nor perennial, as is the human spirit to which it speaks." [21]

35. Public authorities are bound, beyond all doubt, to oversee carefully these new means of communication. They should look on this matter not from a political point of view alone, but from that of public morals, whose sure foundation rests on the natural law. Which, as inspired words attest, is written in our hearts. [22]

36. This vigilant attention of civil authorities cannot be regarded as an unjust restriction on civil liberty, since it is not directed to private persons, but to the whole of human society, by whom these means of communication are shared.

37. "We are aware." We said on another occasion, "that public opinion is opposed today to intervention by public authority and would prefer regulation in this field that came from the community itself." [23] But rules and safeguards issuing from

persons professionally engaged in these fields should not be set up in opposition to the serious duty of public authority, although they may support its measures and avert evils that can easily damage sound morals.

38. For this reason Our immediate Predecessor and We Ourselves have been pleased to praise all who, in compliance with the office entrusted to them, have laid down suitable safeguards and rules which do not prejudice the competency of civil authority. For We believe that these modern means of communication can make their contribution to the sound intellectual development of those who use them only if the Church, the state, and those professionally employed in them pool their resources in an organized way and cooperate with one another in achieving the desired goal. If the opposite occurs, if these arts, without fixed laws or moral safeguards, set out on a headlong and unimpeded course, they will certainly become a threat to real culture and a menace to sound morals.

39. Among the various means by which man's ideas are diffused, those occupy a unique position today, as We have said, which transmit information of all kinds to both eyes and ears, by both sound and sight.

40. So far as concerns spiritual things, this manner of transmitting pictures and sounds is supremely adapted to human nature, for as Aquinas said, "Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge originates with the senses." [24] And indeed the faculty of sight, since it is nobler and more honorable than the other senses, leads men more easily to knowledge of spiritual things. [25]

41. And so the three principal means of transmitting sounds and pictures over a distance -- motion pictures, radio, and television -- are not only means of recreation and relaxation, though many listeners and viewers ask nothing more; they are also capable of furthering man's intellectual development and growth in virtue and can make a major contribution to the proper education and development of civil society in our times.

42. It is far easier for these means of communication than for printed books to bring men into contact with one another and to unite their efforts. And since this affects the growth of the civilization of all peoples, the Church, embracing the whole human family because of the mandate given her, desires to turn these media to the spread and advance of genuine goods.

43. Indeed, this should be the primary aim of motion pictures, radio, and television: to serve truth and virtue.

44. They should serve the spread of truth so that the bonds between peoples will be made closer, so that men will have better mutual understanding and will assist one another in time of crisis, and, finally so that there will be genuine cooperation between public authority and individual citizens.

45. To serve truth means more than simply to refrain entirely from falsehood, lies, and deceit; it means shunning everything that can encourage a way of life and action that is false, imperfect, or harmful to others.

46. But above all let the truths that have been given us by God's revelation be held sacred and inviolable. Rather, these noble means of communication should be directed particularly to this end: that they might spread the teachings of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ, "and instill into the minds of men that Christian truth which alone can provide men with the strength from above which will enable them, with calmness and courage, to overcome the perils of this present age, and to endure its trials."[26]

47. But it is not enough that these new inventions serve truth; they must also perfect human life and morals. They can contribute to this end in three ways which We intend to discuss: by announcing the news; by educating; by entertaining.

48. News of any event, even if it tells nothing but the bare facts, has a unique aspect which somehow concerns morality. "This aspect which affects human morals must never be overlooked; for all news evokes a judgment of the intellect and influences the will. The newsman who worthily fulfills his task should embarrass no one by his words, but should try to understand and explain misfortunes and misdeeds as best he can. To explain is not to excuse; it is, rather, to suggest the basis of a remedy, and thus to do something positive and constructive."[27]

49. What We have just written certainly has greater importance when applied to education. Educational films, radio broadcasts, and television shows assist in educating adults as well as the young. But every precaution must be taken to see that these instructions are not contrary to the Church's teachings, and that they neither impede nor oppose the duty of educating children within the family circle.

50. So too it is to be hoped that these new channels of communication, whether sponsored by private citizens or supported by the state, will not attempt to teach without mention of God's name or reference to His divine law.

51. But, alas, We are aware that in the countries controlled by atheistic communism radio and television are used by educators to eradicate all religious ideas from the mind. Anyone who considers this problem calmly and without prejudice cannot help but see that the consciences of children and young people deprived of divine truth, are being enslaved by a new and subtle technique (for they cannot learn that divinely revealed truth which, as our Redeemer said, makes us free,[28]) and that by this ingenious device a novel attack is being made upon religion.

52. But We earnestly desire, Venerable Brethren, that these means of easily and pleasantly drawing the eyes and ears to distant events should be employed to

form men in a fuller intellectual culture, in the knowledge necessary for fulfilling their particular duties, and "in those Christian principles, above all, whose neglect makes true human progress impossible."[29]

53. We desire, then, to pay tribute to all those teachers and educators who have used motion pictures, radio broadcasts, or television shows to achieve this most commendable objective.

54. It must also be pointed out that, besides publishing news and imparting instruction, these new means of communication can even contribute greatly to man's true good. For very frequently shows have this characteristic to some extent, that they are meant not only to amuse and inform the audience but also to train their minds. Thus Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, rightly and properly called motion picture theaters "schools." [30] For they can be called schools in this sense, that dramatic action is presented in scenes in which vivid pictures created by moving light are synchronized with voices and music in a fascinating way, so that they reach not simply the intelligence and other faculties, but the whole man, unite him to themselves, and almost force him to take part in the plot.

55. Although motion pictures, radio, and television embrace various types of shows that have long been in use, each contributes something new, and thus produces a different sort of show that is not directed to a few select spectators, but to vast numbers of men who differ in age, in walk of life, and in degree of culture.

56. In order, then, that these shows might be able to pursue their proper end under such conditions, it is important that the minds and hearts of the spectators be properly formed and educated, so that they will not only understand the artistic forms of each of these media, but will also be guided by a correct conscience in appraising them. Thus they will be able to weigh and judge with maturity what they see on a motion-picture or television screen or hear over the radio, and will not -- as has often happened -- be inordinately allured by their force and fascination.

57. In the absence of this training and information, enlightened by Christian teaching, neither legitimate pleasures (which "everyone admits are necessary for all who are involved in the business and the cares of life") [31] nor the advance of culture can be kept safe.

58. With commendable wisdom, Catholics have appreciated, especially in recent years, the need to educate spectators. Several programs have been undertaken which aim at making both youths and adults willing to examine more adequately and more competently the benefits and the dangers of these shows, and to assess them more carefully. This, however, should not provide them with an excuse for attending shows which are contrary to right morals; it should, rather, lead them to select and attend only those which are in accord with the Church's teachings on

religious and moral principles, and in harmony with the instructions issued by the ecclesiastical offices established for these matters.

59. If these programs, in accordance with Our hopes, are in conformity with sound pedagogical principles and right rules of mental development, We not only give them Our approval, but also heartily commend them, and thus We desire them to be introduced into schools of every level, Catholic Action groups, and parish societies.

60. Sound formation and education of spectators will ensure a lessening of those dangers which can threaten harm to morals; they will also permit Christians, through the new knowledge they acquire, to raise their minds to the contemplation of heavenly truths.

61. We wish to praise particularly those preachers of the divine word who, aware of their duty to preserve in their integrity the morals of those to whom they minister and whom they lead along the path of truth, make good use of the means provided by motion pictures, radio, and television to this end, and thus share with their flock the genuinely salutary benefits and inventions which our times have introduced. We therefore desire that those who wield authority, either in Church or state, should support in a special way the activity and enterprise of these preachers.

62. Yet it must be noticed that, in exercising control in this area, the sound training and education of spectators, of which We have spoken, is not in itself sufficient. Each of the shows must be suited and adapted to the intelligence of each age-group, the strength of their emotional and imaginative response, and the condition of their morals.

63. This, indeed, assumes a very great importance because radio and television shows, since they easily penetrate into the domestic circle, threaten to undermine the protective barriers by which the education of the young must be kept safe and sound until such time as advancing age gives the strength necessary to enable them to overcome the buffeting of the world.

64. For this reason, three years ago We wrote to the bishops of Italy: "Should we not shudder when we reflect attentively that through television shows all can inhale, even within the home, the poisoned air of those 'materialistic' doctrines which diffuse empty pleasures and desires of all kinds, just as was done over and over again in motion-picture theaters?"[32]

65. We are aware that public authorities and private groups engaged in the education of youth have introduced programs and plans by which they make every possible effort to keep young people from shows unsuited to their age, which they too often attend to their serious harm.

66. We heartily approve whatever is being done in this praiseworthy cause. Yet it

must be noted that, even more than the physiological and psychological disturbances which can arise there from, those dangers must be guarded against which affect the morals of youth, and which, unless prevented and forbidden in due season, can greatly contribute to the damage and ruin of human society itself.

67. Concerning this matter We make a father's appeal to Our dear young, trusting that -- since We speak of entertainment in which their innocence can be exposed to danger -- they will be outstanding for their Christian restraint and prudence. They have a grave obligation to check and control that natural and unrestrained eagerness to see and hear everything, and they must keep their minds free from immodest and earthly pleasures and direct them to higher things.

68. The Church knows well that from these new means of communication there arise many benefits and many evils and dangers, depending upon the use men make of them. And so in this matter also she desires to perform her duty, since it directly concerns not only culture in general, but also religion most especially, and the orientation and guidance of morals.[33]

69. To carry out this duty more efficiently and easily, Our Predecessor of immortal memory, Pius XI, declared and proclaimed: "It is absolutely necessary that the bishops set up a permanent national office of supervision to encourage decent films, to give others a recognized classification, and then to publish their judgment and make it known to priests and faithful." [34] It was also necessary, he added, that all the undertakings of Catholics with regard to motion pictures be directed to a worthy end.

70. In several countries, the bishops kept these directives before their eyes and set up offices of this kind not only for motion pictures, but also for radio and television.

71. As We consider, then, the spiritual advantages which can spring from these means of communication and the need to protect the integrity of Christian morals which such entertainments can easily endanger, We desire that, in every country, if the offices referred to do not already exist, they be established without delay. These are to be entrusted to men skilled in these fields, with a priest, chosen by the bishops, as their adviser. Moreover, Venerable Brethren, we urge that in each country, these offices dealing with motion pictures, radio, or television should depend on one and the same committee, or at least act in close cooperation.

72. We also urge the faithful, particularly those who are active members of Catholic Action, to be suitably instructed so that they may perceive the need to give willingly to these offices their united and effective support.

73. And since there are a number of questions on this subject not capable of easy explanation and solution in individual countries, it will certainly be very useful if the national offices of each country unite in an international association to which this Holy See, after due consideration, will be able to give approval.

74. We have no doubt, Venerable Brethren, that profitable and salutary results will issue from what you do, at some cost in toil and inconvenience, to obey these directives, but the result will be more easily and aptly attained if the particular rules which We are going to set forth in the course of this Encyclical with regard to motion pictures, radio, and television are carefully put into practice.

75. Motion pictures came into existence about sixty years ago and must be included today among the most important means for making known the ideas and innovations of our age. We have already spoken about their various processes and their power of attraction.[35] Out of this growth -- particularly in the case of films vividly telling a story through sound and picture -- there has arisen a great industry which unites the activities of craftsmen, laborers, and technicians to those of financial groups. For individuals cannot easily carry out such extensive and complex operations.

76. And so, in order that motion pictures may remain worthy instruments to guide men to salvation, raise them to higher things, and really improve them,[36] it is absolutely necessary for each of the groups just named to exercise a real sense of responsibility and to cooperate readily with one another in producing and distributing films that can merit approval.

77. To all those who give careful attention to motion-picture shows, We have made clear more than once the seriousness of the subject and exhorted them to produce, in particular, the sort of ideal film that can contribute in some way to sound education.[37]

78. You should take a special interest, Venerable Brethren, in seeing that individual national offices, set up under your authority (about which We have written above), impart to the various classes of interested citizens information about the films they may attend -- advice and directives by which this excellent art, which can contribute so much to the good of souls, may be advanced as far as possible.

79. To accomplish this, "tables or lists should be compiled and published in a definite arrangement, in which films distributed will be listed, as frequently as possible, so as to come to the attention of all." [38] This should be done by a committee of reliable men, which will depend on each of your national offices. These men must, of course, be eminent for their learning and practical prudence, since they must judge films according to the norms of Christian morality.

80. We earnestly exhort the members of such committees to devote to these topics, in a suitable manner, deep and prolonged study and devout prayer, for they must deal with a very important matter that is closely bound up with the Christian way of life, and thus must have a sound insight into the influence motion pictures exert in varying ways according to the circumstances of the spectators.

81. Whenever they pass moral judgment on a film, they should reflect attentively

on the norms We have often laid down, particularly when We have spoken about the elevation of motion pictures to the highest ideal of beauty and education, about plots which deal with religion, and about portrayal of evil deeds (which portrayal should never neglect and never offend human dignity, the modesty of the home, holiness of life, the Church of Jesus Christ, or human and civil society)

82. Moreover, they should remember that the task entrusted to them of passing moral judgment on motion pictures is meant to give clear and apt guidance to public opinion in order that all might be led to esteem those norms and principles of morality without which sound intellectual development and culture worth the name become impossible.

83. It is unquestionably necessary, then, to repudiate the behavior of those who, from excessive indulgence, tolerate films which, for all their technical excellence, offend right morals, or which, though they seem on the surface to conform to the principles of morality, contain something contrary to Catholic belief.

84. But if clear and public notice has been given of the films that can be seen by all, young or adult; those that could be an occasion of moral danger to the spectators; and, finally, those that are entirely bad and harmful, then all will be able to attend only those motion pictures from which "they will come out with minds happier, freer, and better,"[39] and will avoid those that can harm them -- and they will have the added motive that they will not have contributed to the profits of traffickers in evil or given bad example to others.

85. Repeating the timely instructions that Our Predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, gave in his Encyclical *Vigilanti cura*,[40] We earnestly desire that Christians be not only carefully warned on this subject as often as possible, but that they personally fulfill the grave obligation of acquainting themselves with and faithfully obeying the decisions handed down by ecclesiastical authorities on matters concerning motion pictures.

86. On this subject, if they deem it appropriate, the bishops may set aside a special day each year on which the faithful will be carefully instructed on their duties regarding motion pictures and urged to offer earnest prayers to God on this matter.

87. That all might become familiar with these decisions and follow them, these directives, with a brief explanation, should be published at suitable times and given the widest possible distribution.

88. In this area Catholic motion picture critics can exert a great deal of influence if they set moral issues in their proper perspective by championing those principles which will prevent a decline into what is called "relative morality," or an overthrow of that right order of things in which less important issues are subordinated to more important ones.

89. It is quite wrong, then, for Catholic magazines and newspapers not to give their readers a moral appraisal of the motion pictures that they review.

90. There is a duty binding the consciences of the spectators who, every time they buy a ticket, cast a vote for good or bad motion pictures. But an even greater duty binds those who manage movie theaters or distribute films.

91. We are well aware of the great problems which today confront the motion-picture industry for many reasons, among which is the great growth of television. Yet even in the face of these difficulties, they must remember that they are forbidden in conscience to present motion pictures that are contrary to faith and sound morals, or to enter into contracts by which they are forced to present shows of this kind.

92. In many countries those engaged in the industry have bound themselves not to exhibit, for any consideration, motion pictures that might prove harmful or evil. We trust that this excellent program will spread to all parts of the world, and that no Catholic in motion-picture management will hesitate to follow such sane and salutary proposals.

93. We must also warn vigorously against the display of commercial posters which ensnare or give scandal even though, as sometimes happens, the films which they publicize are irreproachable. "Who can estimate the harm such advertisements have done to souls, especially of the young, the number of base and impure feelings they have aroused, the extent to which they have contributed to the corruption of public morals, with serious prejudice to the well-being of the state itself?"[41]

94. As a consequence in motion-picture theaters conducted under church auspices, where shows are provided for the faithful, particularly for the young, that are truly educational and in keeping with the surroundings, it is apparent that only those films may be shown which are entirely beyond reproach.

95. Bishops should keep a watchful eye on such public theaters, including those of exempt Religious. They should warn all of the clergy on whom responsibility for them falls that, if they wish to take part in this ministry which the Holy See considers of the highest importance, they must observe faithfully and exactly the rules laid down for these theaters, and not be too much taken up with their personal advantage. We especially advise those who control these Catholic theaters to group themselves together -- as, with Our full approval and consent, has been done in a number of places -- in order effectively to put into practice the recommendations of the respective national offices, and to support their common advantages and policies.

96. The advice We have given to theater managers We wish to apply also to distributors who, since they sometimes contribute financially to the production of

films, obviously have a greater influence and, consequently, are bound by a more serious duty to support reputable films.

97. For distribution cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a mere technical function of business since films, as We have often stated, are not simply articles for sale, but also -- and this is far more important -- food for the mind and, as it were, a means of spiritual and moral training for the public.

98. As a result, those who release and those who distribute films share to the same degree the praise or blame for the good or evil that results from their showing.

99. Since the matter under consideration is that the motion-picture industry conform to higher standards, then there is also a weighty obligation in conscience resting on the actors. They should remember their dignity as human beings and experienced artists, and realize that they may not lend their talents to parts in plays, or be connected with the making of films, which are contrary to sound morals.

100. But an actor who has won great fame for his talent and skill, should use that just renown in such a way that he inspires the mind of the public with noble sentiments. In particular, he should remember to give others a notable example of virtue by his private life.

101. When addressing professional actors on one occasion in the past, We said: "Everyone can see that in the presence of a throng of people listening open-mouthed to your words applauding and shouting, your own hearts are stirred and filled with a certain joy and exaltation." [42]

102. But even if it be conceded that one is fully justified in feeling these emotions yet it does not follow that Christian actors may accept from their audience expressions of praise which savor of idolatry, since, in this case also, our Savior's words apply: "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." [43]

103. But the heaviest responsibility falls on the authors and producers, though for a different reason. Awareness of this burden does not impede worthwhile undertakings, but ought rather to strengthen the minds of those who are endowed with good will and are influential in the production of films by reason of their financial position or natural talent.

104. Oftentimes also authors and producers of motion pictures meet serious difficulties when the circumstances and demands of their art come into conflict with the precepts of religion and the moral law. In that case, before a film is printed, or while it is being produced, some competent advice should be sought and a sound policy adopted to provide for the spiritual good of the spectators and the perfection of the work itself.

105. These men should not hesitate to consult the local Catholic motion-picture office, which will be readily accessible and which, if it should be necessary, will, with the proper prudence, delegate a qualified ecclesiastical adviser to look after the matter.

106. The result of this confidence which they place in the Church will not be a lessening of their authority or popularity; "for the Faith, until the need of time, will be the bulwark of the human person,"[44] and by the production of such motion pictures the human person will be enriched and perfected in the light of Christian teaching and correct moral principles.

107. Nevertheless, clerics are not permitted to offer their cooperation to film directors without the express consent of their superiors, since, obviously, to give sound advice in this matter, special competence and extraordinary training are needed. Decisions in these matters cannot be left to the whim of individuals.

108. We therefore, with a father's interest, admonish Catholic directors and producers not to permit films to be made which are opposed to the faith or Christian morals. But if -- which God forbid -- this should happen, it is the duty of the bishops to admonish them and, if necessary, to impose appropriate sanctions.

109. But we are convinced that, to bring motion pictures to their highest and most perfect form, nothing is more effective than that those who produce motion pictures conform to the precepts of the Christian law.

110. Those responsible for making films should approach the sources from which flow all the highest gifts. They should master the Gospel teaching, and make themselves familiar with the Church's traditional doctrine on the certainties of life, on happiness and virtue, on sorrow and sin, on body and soul, on social problems and human desires. They will obtain new and excellent plots which they may adopt, and they will feel themselves inspired by a fresh enthusiasm to produce works of lasting value.

111. Those undertakings and practices, therefore, must be encouraged and extended by which the spiritual life is nourished, strengthened, and developed. But particular attention must be paid to the Christian training of those young people who are planning to enter the world of motion pictures professionally.

112. To conclude these instructions on motion pictures, We urge government officials not to lend support, on any account, to the production or distribution of films of low caliber, but to lay down suitable regulations to help provide decent, commendable motion pictures (particularly when they are intended for youth).

113. Since such large sums are being spent on public education, public authorities should also direct their attention to giving reasonable assistance in this matter, which is essentially a part of education.

114. And since in certain countries, and at international festivals, prizes are established and awarded to those films which are commended for their educative and spiritual value, We trust that all good and prudent men will follow Our counsels and strive to ensure that the applause and approval of the general public will be bestowed as a prize upon really worthwhile films.

115. No less carefully do We desire to express to you, Venerable Brethren, the anxiety that besets Us with regard to that other means of communication which was introduced during the same period as motion pictures. We refer to radio.

116. Although radio does not have the scenic and other visual advantages of motion pictures, still it has other advantages which have not been fully exploited as yet.

117. "For," as We once said to the members and directors of a broadcasting company, "this method of communication is such that it is, as it were, detached from and unrestricted by conditions of place and time which block or delay all other methods of communication between men. On winged flight, swifter than sound waves, it passes with the speed of light over all frontiers and delivers the news committed to it." [45]

118. Brought to almost complete perfection by recent inventions, wireless telegraphy brings outstanding advantages to technical processes; by means of a radio beam pilotless machines may even be directed to determined places. Yet We think that the most excellent function that falls to radio is this: to enlighten and instruct men; to direct their minds and hearts to higher and spiritual things.

119. There is in men, even though they may be in their own homes, a deep desire to hear other men, to learn of events happening far away, and to share in social and cultural life. Hence it is not strange that a large number of homes have, within a short time, been equipped with receiving sets by which, as through secret windows opening on the world, contact is made by night and by day with the daily lives of men of other cultures, languages, and races.

120. This is brought about by the countless radio programs which present news, interviews, lectures, and things that are both useful and entertaining, such as singing and orchestral music.

121. For as We said not long ago, "today men enjoy great advantages and bear great responsibilities. There have been great changes from the days when instruction in truth, in the commandments of brotherly love, in the promises of everlasting happiness came slowly to men through apostles who trod rough paths in that past age. In our day the divine message can be conveyed to tens and hundreds of thousands of men at one and the same time." [46]

122. It is fitting then that Christians should use this benefit conferred upon our age,

and enrich themselves with what comes over the air waves that pertains to learning, recreation, art, and the divine word itself, since thus they are able to increase their knowledge and expand, as it were, the frontiers of their spirit.

123. Everyone knows what a great contribution good radio programs can make to sound education. Yet from the use of radio, as with other means of communication, there arises an obligation in conscience since it can be employed for good or evil.

124. Those words which are written in Scripture can be applied to radio: "With it we bless God the Father; and with it we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing." [47]

125. Those who listen to the radio are duty bound to discriminate carefully and intelligently among the various programs, which should not be allowed to enter the house pell-mell, but should be given the same thoughtful and prudent invitation that you would extend to a friend. It would be wrong to admit acquaintances indiscriminately into your house. So too, the radio programs you admit should be such as encourage truth and goodness and will not distract members of the family from the fulfillment of their duties to individuals or society. They should, rather, give them strength to carry out these obligations properly, and, in the case of children and youths, they should work no harm, but assist and further the sound training being given by teachers and parents.

126. Catholic offices for radio should be set up in each country and, through Catholic newspapers and reviews, should endeavor to inform the faithful beforehand on the nature and value of the programs. Of course, it will not always be possible to give such advance notice; often these will only be summary views where the content of the program cannot be known easily in advance.

127. Parish priests should warn their flocks that they are forbidden by divine law to listen to radio programs which are dangerous to their faith or morals. They should exhort those engaged in the training of youth to be on the watch and to instill religious principles with regard to the use of radio sets installed in the home.

128. Moreover, it is the duty of the bishops to call on the faithful to refrain from listening to stations which defend matters formally opposed to the Catholic faith.

129. Another duty which binds listeners is to make known to the directors of the programs their wishes and justifiable criticism. This obligation arises clearly from the nature of radio, which is such that a wholly one-sided point of view is conveyed by the speaker to the listener.

130. Various systems of surveying public opinion are popular today for determining the degree of interest aroused in the listeners by each program, and are doubtless useful to those who direct the programs; but more or less vigorously expressed popular appreciation can sometimes be attributed to trivial or transient causes, or

to enthusiasms with no rational basis, so that a judgment of this kind cannot be taken as a sure guide for action.

131. That being the case, radio listeners ought to rouse themselves to create a well-balanced public opinion by which, while observing proper methods, these programs may be approved, supported, or rebuked, according to their merits, thus bringing it about that radio, considered as a method of education, "may serve the truth, good morals, justice, and love." [48]

132. To produce this result is the task of all Catholic organizations which are zealous for securing the good of Christians in this matter. But in those countries where local circumstances suggest it, groups of listeners or viewers can be organized for this purpose under the supervision of the national motion-picture, radio, and television offices established in each country.

133. Finally, let listeners to the radio be aware that they are obliged to encourage reputable programs, and particularly those by which the mind is directed toward God. In this age in particular when false and pernicious doctrines are being spread over the air; when, by deliberate "jamming," a kind of aerial "iron curtain" is being created with the express purpose of preventing the entry of truth which would overthrow the empire of atheistic materialism -- in this age, we say, when hundreds of thousands of the human race are still looking for the dawning light of the Gospel message, when the sick and handicapped look forward anxiously to taking part in some manner in the prayers and the ceremonies of the Mass of the Christian community, should not the faithful, especially those who make daily use of the advantages of the radio, show themselves eager to encourage programs of this kind?

134. We are fully aware of the effort that has been and is being made in some countries to increase the number of Catholic programs. Many, from among both clergy and laity, have been in the front of the fight, and by vigorous exertions have secured for religious radio programs a place befitting divine worship which is more important than all human affairs taken together.

135. But in the meantime, while we ponder the extent to which radio can assist the work of the sacred ministry, and while We are moved strongly by the command of our divine Redeemer, "Going into the whole world, preach the gospel to every creature," [49] We feel We must exhort you paternally, Venerable Brethren, to strive -- according to the needs and resources of your respective localities -- to increase in number, and make more effective, programs dealing with Catholic affairs.

136. Since a properly dignified radio presentation of liturgical ceremonies, of the truths of the Catholic faith, and of events connected with the Church, obviously demands considerable talent and skill, it is essential that both priests and laymen who are selected for this important activity should be well trained in suitable

methods. This end would clearly be assisted if, in countries where Catholics employ the latest radio equipment and have day-to-day experience, appropriate study and training courses could be arranged by means of which students from other countries could acquire that skill which is indispensable if religious radio programs are to attain the best artistic and technical standards.

137. It will be the function of the national offices to encourage the various types of religious programs within their territory and to organize and coordinate them with each other. They will, in addition, offer their cooperation as far as possible to the directors of the other radio stations, due care being observed that nothing creeps into these programs that is contrary to sound morals.

138. With regard to priests, including exempt religious, who are engaged in radio or television work, it will be the bishops' duty to impart suitable directives, the carrying out of which will be committed to the various national offices.

139. We should like particularly to speak words of encouragement to those who manage Catholic radio stations. We are fully aware of the almost countless difficulties which have to be faced in this sphere, and yet We trust that this apostolic work which we value so highly, will be pursued with energy and with mutual cooperation.

140. For Our part, We have arranged for the expansion and improvement of the Vatican radio station which has done excellent work for the Church. This station's salutary activity, as We declared to the Catholics of Holland, who contributed to it so generously, has responded well to "the ardent desires and the vital needs of the whole Catholic world." [50]

141. Moreover, We desire to extend Our thanks to all upright directors and producers of radio programs for their fair assessment of the needs of the Church, to which many of them have borne testimony either by freely assigning suitable time for the spread of God's word, or by supplying the necessary equipment.

142. Those who act in this way certainly share in the special reward of apostolic work -- even though it is being carried out over the air -- according to our Lord's promise: "He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." [51]

143. In these days, technical excellence in radio programs requires that they conform to true principles of art; hence authors and those engaged in preparing and producing them must be supplied with the riches of sound doctrine. And so, we earnestly invite them also, as We did the members of the motion-picture industry, to make full use of that superabundance of material in the storehouse of Christian civilization.

144. Finally, the bishops should remind government officials that it is part of their

duty to exercise appropriate diligence in safeguarding the transmission of programs relating to the Catholic Church, with special consideration to holy days and to the daily spiritual needs of Christians.

145. It remains, Venerable Brethren, to speak briefly to you about television, which in the course of Our Pontificate has taken tremendous steps forward in some nations and is gradually coming into use in others.

146. The growing development of this means of communication, which beyond all doubt is an event of great importance in human history, has been followed by Us with lively interest and high hopes, but also with serious anxiety. While We have from the beginning praised its potentialities for good and the new advantages springing therefrom, we have also foreseen and pointed out the dangers latent in it and the excesses of those who misuse it.

147. There are many characteristics common to both, television and motion pictures for, in both, pictures of the movement and the excitement of life are presented to the eye. Often, too, motion-picture films supply television with its material. But, television also shares, in a sense, the nature and influence of radio broadcasting, for it is directed to men in their own homes rather than in theaters.

148. We consider it superfluous to repeat here the warnings We have already given, with regard to motion pictures and radio programs, concerning the obligations binding in this matter on spectators, listeners, producers, and public officials. Nor need We again refer to the care and diligence which must be observed in the correct preparation and encouragement of the various types of religious programs.

149. We are aware of the deep interest with which great numbers of spectators watch television presentations of Catholic events. It is obvious, of course -- as We declared a few years ago^[52] -- that to watch a Mass on television is not the same as being actually present at the Divine sacrifice, as is required on Sundays and holy days. 150. However, religious ceremonies seen on television contribute greatly to strengthening the faith and renewing the fervor of all those who, for some reason, cannot be actually present. Consequently, We are convinced that We may wholeheartedly commend programs of this kind.

151. In each country it will be for the bishops to judge the suitability of televised religious programs, and to entrust their execution to the established office, which, of course, as in similar matters, will be active and alert in publishing information, instructing the minds of the audience, and organizing and coordinating everything in a manner in keeping with Christian morals.

152. But television -- besides the common element which it shares with the other two means of spreading information about which We have already spoken -- has a power and efficacy of its own.

153. By television it is possible for spectators to grasp, by the eye and the ear, events happening far away at the very moment at which they are taking place and thus to be drawn on, as it were, to take an active part in them. This sense of immediacy is increased very much by the home surroundings.

154. This special power which television enjoys, that of giving pleasure within the family circle, is very important, since it can contribute a great deal to the religious life, the intellectual development, and the habits of those who make up the family -- of the children, especially, whom the more modern invention will certainly influence and captivate.

155. But if that saying, "a little leaven ferments the whole mass"[53] is a full expression of the truth, and if the physical growth of youths can be prevented by some infectious germ from reaching full maturity, much more easily can some base ingredient of education steal its way into the sinews of religious life and check the proper development of morals.

156. Everyone knows well that children can often avoid an epidemic so long as the disease is outside their own home, but cannot escape it when it lurks within the home itself. It is an evil thing to bring the sanctity of the home into danger. The Church, therefore, as her right and duty demand, has always striven with all her resources to prevent these sacred portals suffering violence, under any pretext, from evil television shows.

157. It is one of television's advantages that it induces both old and young to remain at home; it can have, as a result, considerable influence in strengthening the bonds of loyalty and love within the family circle, provided the screen displays nothing which is contrary to those same virtues of loyalty and chaste love.

158. There are however, some who completely deny that, at least at the present time, these lofty demands can be put into practice. They repeatedly assert that the contract made with their spectators in no way permits any part of the time allotted to television to be left unoccupied, that the necessity of always having a variety of programs on hand forces them sometimes to put on shows which were originally intended only for the public theater, and finally, that television is an affair not just for the young but for adults as well.

159. We admit that difficulties readily occur in this matter, but their solution should not be postponed to some future date, since the use of television, when it is not controlled by the reins of prior prudent counsel, has already inflicted serious harm on individuals and on human society. The extent of this damage up to the present time can be gauged only with difficulty.

160. But in order that the solution of these difficulties may advance side by side with the increasing use of television in each country, the most urgent efforts should be devoted to the preparation of the various shows, ensuring that they

correspond to ethical and psychological requirements as well as to the technical aspects of television.

161. For this reason We paternally exhort Catholics qualified by their learning, sound doctrine, and knowledge of the arts -- and, in particular, clerics and members of Religious Orders and Congregations -- to turn their attention to this new art and give their active cooperation, so that whatever advantages tradition and true progress have contributed to the mind's development may be also employed in full measure to the benefit of television.

162. In addition, it is essential that producers of television films take care not only to keep religious and moral principles inviolate, but also to guard against the danger which the young may perhaps fall into if they are present at shows intended for adults.

163. With regard to similar performances in motion pictures or on the stage, appropriate precautions have been taken in almost all civilized countries to keep young people away from immoral entertainments. This has been done with the deliberate aim of preserving the common good. But it is common knowledge that television also -- and with greater reason -- needs the benefits and safeguards of alert vigilance. It is praiseworthy that in some countries subjects forbidden to the young are excluded from television programs; but if certain places admit such programs, then definite precautions, at least, are absolutely essential. It is useless for anyone to suppose that excellent principles and an upright conscience on the part of those engaged in television are sufficient either to ensure that nothing but good flows from the small white screen, or to remove all that is evil.

164. In this matter, then, prudence and vigilant care are especially demanded of those who use television. Due moderation in its use, prudence in allowing children to watch it according to their different ages, a balanced judgment based on what has been seen before, and finally exclusion of children from what are in any sense improper spectacles: all these are duties which weigh heavily on parents and on all engaged in education.

165. We do not overlook the fact that the directives We have given in the previous section can sometimes produce serious difficulties and considerable inconveniences. An awareness of their role as educators will often demand that parents give clear example to their offspring and also bid them deny themselves some programs they would like to see, even though this may entail some personal sacrifice. But who will regard the burden on parents as too heavy when the supreme good of the children is at stake?

166. This being so -- as We declared in a letter to the Italian bishops -- "it is a most pressing need that with regard to television the conscience of Catholics should be formed by the sound principles of the Christian religion";[54] the more so, in order that this means of communication may not be at the service of error or the snares

of vice, but may prove rather to be a help "in educating and training men, and in recalling them to their higher state." [55]

167. We cannot conclude this letter, Venerable Brethren, without recalling to your mind the importance of the function committed to the priest for encouraging and mastering the inventions which affect communication, not only in other spheres of the apostolate, but especially in this essential work of the Church. He ought to have a sound knowledge of all questions which confront the souls of Christians with regard to motion pictures, radio, and television.

168. As We said in a discourse to those taking part in a study week for bringing pastoral practice up to date in Italy at the present time: "The priest entrusted with 'the care of souls' can and ought to know whatever is offered by modern studies and developments in the arts and technology insofar as these pertain to the supreme end of man and his moral and religious life." [56]

169. He should learn to use these aids correctly as often as, in the prudent judgment of ecclesiastical authority, the nature of the ministry entrusted to him and the need of assisting an increasing number of souls demand it.

170. Finally, if these arts are employed by the priest to advantage, his prudence, self-control, and sense of responsibility will shine out as an example to all Christians.

171. We decided to lay before you, Venerable Brethren, Our thoughts and anxieties, which you of course also share, concerning the grave dangers which could beset Christian faith and morals if the powerful inventions of motion pictures, radio, and television were perverted by men to evil uses. We have not, however, passed over the benefits and advantages which these modern instruments can bring.

172. To this end, with the precepts of the Christian faith and natural law to enlighten Us, We have explained the principles which must guide and regulate both the activities of the directors of these means of communication, and the conscience of those who use them.

173. And for the same reason, namely that the gifts of Divine Providence may secure the good of souls, We have paternally exhorted you not only to exercise a watchful care but also to use positive action and authority.

174. For it is the function of those national offices, which on this occasion also We have commended to you, not only to preserve and defend but, more especially, to direct, organize, and assist the many educational projects which have been begun in many countries, so that, in this difficult and extensive province of the arts, Christian ideas may be ever more widely spread.

175. But since We have firm confidence in the ultimate triumph of God's cause, We do not doubt that these precepts and instructions of Ours -- which We entrust for due execution to the Pontifical Commission for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television -- can rouse new enthusiasm for the apostolate in this sphere which promises such a plenteous and fruitful harvest.

176. Relying on this hope, which Our well funded knowledge of your pastoral zeal very much strengthens, We impart with all Our heart, as a pledge of heavenly graces, the Apostolic Benediction on you, Venerable Brethren, as well as on the clergy and people committed to your care, and in particular on those who work actively to bring Our desires and instructions to fulfillment.

177. From St. Peter's, Rome, September 8, the feast of Our Lady's Nativity, 1957, the 19th year of Our Pontificate.

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