In Plurimis

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IN PLURIMIS

ON THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII promulgated on May 5, 1888.

To the Bishops of Brazil,

Amid the many and great demonstrations of affection which from almost all the peoples of the earth have come to Us, and are still coming to Us, in congratulation upon the happy attainment of the fiftieth anniversary of Our priesthood, there is one which moves Us in a quite special way. We mean one which comes from Brazil, where, upon the occasion of this happy event, large numbers of those who in that vast empire groan beneath the yoke of slavery, have been legally set free. And this work, so full of the spirit of Christian mercy, has been offered up in cooperation with the clergy, by charitable members of the laity of both sexes, to God, the Author and Giver of all good things, in testimony of their gratitude for the favor of the health and the years which have been granted to Us. But this was specially acceptable and sweet to Us because it lent confirmation to the belief, which is so welcome to Us, that the great majority of the people of Brazil desire to see the cruelty of slavery ended, and rooted out from the land. This popular feeling has been strongly seconded by the emperor and his august daughter, and also by the ministers, by means of various laws which, with this end in view. have been introduced and sanctioned. We told the Brazilian ambassador last January what a consolation these things were to Us, and We also assured him that We would address letters to the bishops of Brazil in behalf of these unhappy slaves.

2. We, indeed, to all men are the Vicar of Christ, the Son of God, who so loved the human race that not only did He not refuse, taking our nature to Himself, to live among men, but delighted in bearing the name of the Son of Man, openly proclaiming that He had come upon earth "to preach deliverance to the captives"[1] in order that, rescuing mankind from the worst slavery, which is the slavery of sin, "he might re-establish all things that are in heaven and on earth,"[2] and so bring back all the children of Adam from the depths of the ruin of the common fall to their original dignity. The words of St. Gregory the Great are very applicable here: "Since our Redeemer, the Author of all life, deigned to take human flesh, that by the power of His Godhood the chains by which we were held in bondage being broken, He might restore us to our first state of liberty, it is most fitting that men by the concession of manumission should restore to the freedom in which they were born those whom nature sent free into the world, but who have been condemned to the yoke of slavery by the law of nations."[3] It is right, therefore, and obviously in keeping with Our apostolic office, that We should favor and advance by every means in Our power whatever helps to secure for men, whether as individuals or as communities, safeguards against the many miseries, which, like the fruits of an evil tree, have sprung from the sin of our first parents; and such safeguards, of whatever kind they may be, help not only to promote civilization and the amenities of life, but lead on to that universal restitution of all things which our Redeemer Jesus Christ contemplated and desired.

3. In the presence of so much suffering, the condition of slavery, in which a considerable part of the great human family has been sunk in squalor and affliction now for many centuries, is deeply to be deplored; for the system is one which is wholly opposed to that which was originally ordained by God and by nature. The Supreme Author of all things so decreed that man should exercise a sort of royal dominion over beasts and cattle and fish and fowl, but never that men should exercise a like dominion over their fellow men. As St. Augustine puts it: "Having created man a reasonable being, and after His own likeness, God wished that he should rule only over the brute creation; that he should be the master, not of men, but of beasts." From this it follows that "the state of slavery is rightly regarded as a penalty upon the sinner; thus, the word slave does not occur in the Bible until the just man Noe branded with it the sin of his son. It was sin, therefore, which deserved this name; it was not natural."[4]

4. From the first sin came all evils, and specially this perversity that there were men who, forgetful of the original brotherhood of the race, instead of seeking, as they should naturally have done, to promote mutual kindness and mutual respect, following their evil desires began to think of other men as their inferiors, and to hold them as cattle born for the yoke. In this way, through an absolute forgetfulness of our common nature, and of human dignity, and the likeness of God stamped upon us all, it came to pass that in the contentions and wars which then broke out, those who were the stronger reduced the conquered into slavery; so that mankind, though of the same race, became divided into two sections, the conquered slaves and their victorious masters. The history of the ancient world presents us with this miserable spectacle down to the time of the coming of our Lord, when the calamity of slavery had fallen heavily upon all the peoples, and the number of freemen had become so reduced that the poet was able to put this atrocious phrase into the mouth of Caesar: "The human race exists for the sake of a few."[5]

5. The system flourished even among the most civilized peoples, among the Greeks and among the Romans, with whom the few imposed their will upon the many; and this power was exercised so unjustly and with such haughtiness that a crowd of slaves was regarded merely as so many chattels -- not as persons, but as things. They were held to be outside the sphere of law, and without even the claim to retain and enjoy life. "Slaves are in the power of their masters, and this power is derived from the law of nations; for we find that among all nations masters have the power of life and death over their slaves, and whatever a slave earns belongs to his master."[6] Owing to this state of moral confusion it became lawful for men to sell their slaves, to give them in exchange, to dispose of them by will, to beat them, to kill them, to abuse them by forcing them to serve for the gratification of evil passions and cruel superstitions; these things could be done, legally, with impunity, and in the light of heaven. Even those who were wisest in the pagan world, illustrious philosophers and learned jurisconsults, outraging the common feeling of mankind, succeeded in persuading themselves and others that slavery was simply a necessary condition of nature. Nor did they hesitate to assert that the slave class was very inferior to the freemen both in intelligence and perfection of bodily development, and therefore that slaves, as things wanting in reason and sense, ought in all things to be the instruments of the will, however rash and unworthy, of their masters. Such inhuman and wicked doctrines are to be specially detested; for, when once they are accepted, there is no form of oppression so wicked but that it will defend itself beneath some color of legality and justice. History is full of examples showing what a seedbed of crime, what a pest and calamity, this system has been for states. Hatreds are excited in the breasts of the slaves, and the masters are kept in a state of suspicion and perpetual dread; the slaves prepare to avenge themselves with the torches of the incendiary, and the masters continue the task of oppression with greater cruelty.

States are disturbed alternately by the number of the slaves and by the violence of the masters, and so are easily overthrown; hence, in a word, come riots and seditions, pillage and fire.

6. The greater part of humanity were toiling in this abyss of misery, and were the more to be pitied because they were sunk in the darkness of superstition, when in the fullness of time and by the designs of God, light shone down upon the world, and the merits of Christ the Redeemer were poured out upon mankind. By that means they were lifted out of the slough and the distress of slavery, and recalled and brought back from the terrible bondage of sin to their high dignity as the sons of God. Thus, the Apostles, in the early days of the Church, among other precepts for a devout life taught and laid down the doctrine which more than once occurs in the Epistles of St. Paul addressed to those newly baptized: "For you are all the children of God by faith, in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew, nor Greek; there is neither bond, nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."[7] "Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all."[8] "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink."[9] Golden words, indeed, noble and wholesome lessons, whereby its old dignity is given back and with increase to the human race, and men of whatever land or tongue of class are bound together and joined in the strong bonds of brotherly kinship. Those things St. Paul, with that Christian charity with which he was filled, learned from the very heart of Him who, with much surpassing goodness, gave Himself to be the brother of us all, and in His own person, without omitting or excepting any one, so ennobled men that they might become participators in the divine nature. Through this Christian charity the various races of men were drawn together under the divine guidance in such a wonderful way that they blossomed into a new state of hope and public happiness; as with the progress of time and events and the constant labor of the Church the various nations were able to gather together, Christian and free, organized anew after the manner of a family.

7. From the beginning the Church spared no pains to make the Christian people, in a matter of such high importance, accept and firmly hold the true teachings of Christ and the Apostles. And now through the new Adam, who is Christ, there is established a brotherly union between man and man, and people and people; just as in the order of nature they all have a common origin, so in the order which is above nature they all have one and the same origin in salvation and faith; all alike are called to be the adopted sons of God and the Father, who has paid the self-same ransom for us all; we are all members of the same body, all are allowed to partake of the same divine banquet, and offered to us all are the blessings of divine grace and of eternal life. Having established these principles as beginnings and foundations, the Church, like a tender mother, went on to try to find some alleviation for the sorrows and the disgrace of the life of the slave; with this end in view she clearly defined and strongly enforced the rights and mutual duties of masters and slaves as they are laid down in the letters of the Apostles. It was in these words that the Princes of the Apostles admonished the slaves they had admitted to the fold of Christ. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."[10] "Servants, be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ. Not serving to the eye, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With a good will serving as to the Lord, and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free."[11] St. Paul says the same to Timothy: "Whosoever are servants under the yoke, let them count their masters worthy of all honor; lest the name of the Lord and his doctrine be blasphemed. But they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but serve them the rather, because they are faithful and beloved, who are partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort."[12] In like manner he commanded Titus to teach servants "to be obedient to their masters, in all things pleasing, not gainsaying. Not defrauding, but in all things showing good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.[13]

8. Those first disciples of the Christian faith very well understood that this brotherly equality of all men in Christ ought in no way to diminish or detract from the respect, honor, faithfulness, and other duties due to those placed above them. From this many good results followed, so that duties became at once more certain of being performed, and lighter and pleasanter to do, and at the same time more fruitful in obtaining the glory of heaven. Thus, they treated their masters with reverence and honor as men clothed in the authority of Him from whom comes all power. Among these disciples the motive of action was not the fear of punishment or any enlightened prudence or the promptings of utility, but a consciousness of duty and the force of charity. On the other hand, masters were wisely counseled by the Apostle to treat their slaves with consideration in return for their services: "And you, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatenings; knowing that the Lord both of them and you is in heaven, and there is not respect of persons with Him."[14] They were also told to remember that the slave had no reason to regret his lot, seeing that he is "the freeman of the Lord," nor the freeman, seeing that he is "the bondman of Christ,"[15] to feel proud, and to give his commands with haughtiness. It was impressed upon masters that they ought to recognize in their slaves their fellow men, and respect them accordingly, recognizing that by nature they were not different from themselves, that by religion and in relation to the majesty of their common Lord all were equal. These precepts, so well calculated to introduce harmony among the various parts of domestic society, were practiced by the Apostles themselves. Specially remarkable is the case of St. Paul when he exerted himself in behalf of Onesimus, the fugitive of Philemon, with whom, when he returned him to his master, he sent this loving recommendation: "And do thou receive him as my own bowels, not now as a servant, but instead of a servant a most dear brother. . . And if he have wronged thee in anything, or is in thy debt, put that to my account."[16]

9. Whoever compare the pagan and the Christian attitude toward slavery will easily come to the conclusion that the one was marked by great cruelty and wickedness, and the other by great gentleness and humanity, nor will it be possible to deprive the Church of the credit due to her as the instrument of this happy change. And this becomes still more apparent when we consider carefully how tenderly and with what prudence the Church has cut out and destroyed this dreadful curse of slavery. She has deprecated any precipitate action in securing the manumission and liberation of the slaves, because that would have entailed tumults and wrought injury, as well to the slaves themselves as to the commonwealth, but with singular wisdom she has seen that the minds of the slaves should be instructed through her discipline in the Christian faith, and with baptism should acquire habits suitable to the Christian life. Therefore, when, amid the slave multitude whom she has numbered among her children, some, led astray by some hope of liberty, have had recourse to violence and sedition, the Church has always condemned these unlawful efforts and opposed them, and through her ministers has applied the remedy of patience. She taught the slaves to feel that, by virtue of the light of holy faith, and the character they received from Christ, they enjoyed a dignity which placed them above their heathen lords, but that they were bound the more strictly by the Author and Founder of their faith Himself never to set themselves against these, or even to be wanting in the reverence and obedience due to them. Knowing themselves as the chosen ones of the Kingdom of God, and endowed with the freedom of His children, and called to the good things that are not of this life, they were able to work on without being cast down by the sorrows and troubles of this passing world, but with eyes and hearts turned to heaven were consoled and strengthened in their holy resolutions. St. Peter was addressing himself specially to slaves when he wrote: "For this is thanksworthy, if for conscience towards God a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For unto this you are called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps."[17]

10. The credit for this solicitude joined with moderation, which in such a wonderful way adorns the divine powers of the Church, is increased by the marvelous and unconquerable courage with which she was able to inspire and sustain so many poor slaves. It was a wonderful sight to behold those who, in their obedience and the patience with which they submitted to every task, were such an example to their masters, refusing to let themselves be persuaded to prefer the wicked commands of those above them to the holy law of God, and even giving up their lives in the most cruel tortures with unconquered hearts and unclouded brows. The pages of Eusebius keep alive for us the memory of the unshaken constancy of the virgin Potamiana, who, rather than consent to gratify the lusts of her master, fearlessly accepted death, and sealed her faithfulness to Jesus Christ with her blood. Many other admirable examples abound of slaves, who, for their souls' sake and to keep their faith with God, have resisted their masters to the death. History has no case to show of Christian slaves for any other cause setting themselves in opposition to their masters of joining in conspiracies against the State.

Thence, peace and quiet times having been restored to the Church, the holy Fathers made a wise and admirable exposition of the apostolic precepts concerning the fraternal unanimity which should exist between Christians, and with a like charity extended it to the advantage of slaves, striving to point out that the rights of masters extended lawfully indeed over the works of their slaves, but that their

power did not extend to using horrible cruelties against their persons. St. Chrysostom stands pre-eminent among the Greeks, who often treats of this subject, and affirms with exulting mind and tongue that slavery, in the old meaning of the word, had at that time disappeared through the beneficence of the Christian faith, so that it both seemed, and was, a word without any meaning among the disciples of the Lord. For Christ indeed (so he sums up his argument), when in His great mercy to us He wiped away the sin contracted by our birth, at the same time healed the manifold corruptions of human society; so that, as death itself by His means has laid aside its terrors and become a peaceful passing away to a happy life, so also has slavery been banished. Do not, then, call any Christian man a slave, unless, indeed, he is in bondage again to sin; they are altogether brethren who are born again and received in Christ Jesus. Our advantages flow from the new birth and adoption into the household of God, not from the eminence of our race; our dignity arises from the praise of our truth, not of our blood. But in order that that kind of evangelical brotherhood may have more fruit, it is necessary that in the actions of our ordinary life there should appear a willing interchange of kindnesses and good offices, so that slaves should be esteemed of nearly equal account with the rest of our household and friends, and that the master of the house should supply them, not only with what is necessary for their life and food, but also all necessary safeguards of religious training. Finally, from the marked address of Paul to Philemon, bidding grace and peace "to the church which is in thy house,"[18] the precept should be held in respect equally by Christian masters and servants, that they who have an intercommunion of faith should also have an intercommunion of charity.[19]

11. Of the Latin authors, we worthily and justly call to mind St. Ambrose, who so earnestly inquired into all that was necessary in this cause, and so clearly ascribes what is due to each kind of man according to the laws of Christianity, that no one has ever achieved it better, whose sentiments, it is unnecessary to say, fully and perfectly coincide with those of St. Chrysostom.[20] These things were, as is evident, most justly and usefully laid down; but more, the chief point is that they have been observed wholly and religiously from the earliest times wherever the profession of the Christian faith has flourished. Unless this had been the case, that excellent defender of religion, Lactantius, could not have maintained it so confidently, as though a witness of it. "Should any one say: Are there not among you some poor, some rich, some slaves, some who are masters; is there no difference between different persons? I answer: There is none, nor is there any other cause why we call each other by the name of brother than that we consider ourselves to be equals; first, when we measure all human things, not by the body but by the spirit, although their corporal condition may be different from ours, yet in spirit they are not slaves to us, but we esteem and call them brethren, fellow workers in religion."[21]

12. The care of the Church extended to the protection of slaves, and without interruption tended carefully to one object, that they should finally be restored to freedom, which would greatly conduce to their eternal welfare. That the event happily responded to these efforts, the annals of sacred antiquity afford abundant proof. Noble matrons, rendered illustrious by the praises of St. Jerome, themselves afforded great aid in carrying this matter into effect; so that as Salvian relates, in Christian families, even though not very rich, it often happened that the slaves were freed by a generous manumission. But, also, St. Clement long before praised that excellent work of charity by which some Christians became slaves, by an exchange of persons, because they could in no other way liberate those who were in bondage. Wherefore, in addition to the fact that the act of manumission began to take place in churches as an act of piety, the Church ordered it to be proposed to the faithful when about to make their wills, as a work very pleasing to God and of great merit and value with Him. Therefore, those precepts of manumission to the heir were introduced with the words, "for the love of God, for the welfare or benefit of my soul."[22] Neither was anything grudged as the price of the captives, gifts dedicated to God were sold, consecrated gold and silver melted down, the ornaments and gifts of the basilicas alienated, as, indeed, was done more than once by Ambrose, Augustine, Hilary, Eligius, Patrick, and many other holy men.

13. Moreover, the Roman Pontiffs, who have always acted, as history truly relates, as the protectors of the weak and helpers of the oppressed, have done their best for slaves. St. Gregory himself set at liberty as many as possible, and in the Roman Council of 597 desired those to receive their freedom who were anxious to enter the monastic state. Hadrian I maintained that slaves could freely enter into matrimony even without their masters' consent. It was clearly ordered by Alexander III in the year 1167 to the Moorish King of Valencia that he should not make a slave of any Christian, because no one was a slave by the law of nature, all men having been made free by God. Innocent III, in the year 1190, at the prayer of its founders, John de Matha and Felix of Valois, approved and established the Order of the Most Holy Trinity for Redeeming Christians who had fallen into the power of the Turks. At a later date, Honorius III, and, afterwards, Gregory IX, duly approved the Order of St. Mary of Help, founded for a similar purpose, which Peter Nolasco had established, and which included the severe rule that its religious should give themselves up as slaves in the place of Christians taken captive by tyrants, if it should be necessary in order to redeem them. The same St. Gregory passed a decree, which was a far greater support of liberty, that it was unlawful to sell slaves to the Church, and he further added an exhortation to the faithful that, as a punishment for their faults, they should give their slaves to God and His saints as an act of expiation.

14. There are also many other good deeds of the Church in the same behalf. For she, indeed, was accustomed by severe penalties to defend slaves from the savage anger and cruel injuries of their masters. To those upon whom the hand of violence had rested, she was accustomed to open her sacred temples as places of refuge to receive the free men into her good faith, and to restrain those by censure who dared by evil inducements to lead a man back again into slavery. In the same way she was still more favorable to the freedom of the slaves whom, by any means she held as her own, according to times and places; when she laid down either that those should be released by the bishops from every bond of slavery who had shown themselves during a certain time of trial of praiseworthy honesty of life, or when she easily permitted the bishops of their own will to declare those belonging to them free. It must also be ascribed to the compassion and virtue of the Church that somewhat of the pressure of civil law upon slaves was remitted, and, as far as it was brought about, that the milder alleviations of Gregory the Great, having been incorporated in the written law of nations, became of force. That, however, was done principally by the agency of Charlemagne, who included them in his "Capitularia," as Gratian afterwards did in his "Decretum."[23] Finally, monuments, laws, institutions, through a continuous series of ages, teach and splendidly demonstrate the great love of the Church toward slaves, whose miserable condition she never left destitute of protection, and always to the best of her power alleviated. Therefore, sufficient praise or thanks can never be returned to the Catholic Church, the banisher of slavery and causer of true liberty, fraternity, and equality among men, since she has merited it by the prosperity of nations, through the very great beneficence of Christ our Redeemer.

15. Toward the end of the fifteenth century, at which time the base stain of slavery having been nearly blotted out from among Christian nations, States were anxious to stand firmly in evangelical liberty, and also to increase their empire, this apostolic see took the greatest care that the evil germs of such depravity should nowhere revive. She therefore directed her provident vigilance to the newly discovered regions of Africa, Asia, and America; for a report had reached her that the leaders of those expeditions, Christians though they were, were wickedly making use of their arms and ingenuity for establishing and imposing slavery on these innocent nations. Indeed, since the crude nature of the soil which they had to overcome, nor less the wealth of metals which had to be extracted by digging, required very hard work, unjust and inhuman plans were entered into. For a certain traffic was begun, slaves being transported for that purpose from Ethiopia, which, at that time, under the name of "La tratta dei Negri," too much occupied those colonies. An oppression of the indigenous inhabitants (who are collectively called Indians), much the same as slavery, followed with a like maltreatment.

16. When Pius II had become assured of these matters without delay, on October 7, 1462, he gave a letter to the bishop of the place in which he reproved and condemned such wickedness. Some time afterwards, Leo X lent, as far as he could, his good offices and authority to the kings of both Portugal and Spain, who took care to radically extirpate that abuse, opposed alike to religion, humanity, and justice. Nevertheless, that evil having grown strong, remained there, its impure cause, the unquenchable desire of gain, remaining. Then Paul III, anxious with a fatherly love as to the condition of the Indians and of the Moorish slaves, came to this last determination, that in open day, and, as it were, in the sight of all nations, he declared that they all had a just and natural right of a threefold character, namely, that each one of them was master of his own person, that they could live together under their own laws, and that they could acquire and hold property for themselves. More than this, having sent letters to the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, he pronounced an interdict and deprival of sacraments against those who acted contrary to the aforesaid decree, reserving to the Roman Pontiff the power of absolving them.[24]

17. With the same forethought and constancy, other Pontiffs at a later period, as Urban VIII, Benedict XIV, and Pius VII, showed

themselves strong asserters of liberty for the Indians and Moors and those who were even as yet not instructed in the Christian faith. The last, moreover, at the Council of the confederated Princes of Europe, held at Vienna, called their attention in common to this point, that that traffic in Negroes, of which We have spoken before, and which had now ceased in many places, should be thoroughly rooted out. Gregory XVI also severely censured those neglecting the duties of humanity and the laws, and restored the decrees and statutory penalties of the apostolic see, and left no means untried that foreign nations, also, following the kindliness of the Europeans, should cease from and abhor the disgrace and brutality of slavery.[25] But it has turned out most fortunately for Us that We have received the congratulations of the chief princes and rulers of public affairs for having obtained, thanks to Our constant pleadings, some satisfaction for the long-continued and most just complaints of nature and religion.

18. We have, however, in Our mind, in a matter of the same kind, another care which gives Us no light anxiety and presses upon Our solicitude. This shameful trading in men has, in- deed, ceased to take place by sea, but on land is carried on to too great an extent and too barbarously, and that especially in some parts of Africa. For, it having been perversely laid down by the Mohammedans that Ethiopians and men of similar nations are very little superior to brute beasts, it is easy to see and shudder at the perfidy and cruelty of man. Suddenly, like plunderers making an attack, they invade the tribes of Ethiopians, fearing no such thing; they rush into their villages, houses, and huts; they lay waste, destroy, and seize everything; they lead away from thence the men, women, and children, easily captured and bound, so that they may drag them away by force for their shameful traffic. These hateful expeditions are made into Egypt, Zanzibar, and partly also into the Sudan, as though so many stations. Men, bound with chains are forced to take long journeys, ill supplied with food, under the frequent use of the lash; those who are too weak to undergo this are killed; those who are strong enough go like a flock with a crowd of others to be sold and to be passed over to a brutal and shameless purchaser. But whoever is thus sold and given up is exposed to what is a miserable rending asunder of wives, children, and parents, and is driven by him into whose power he falls into a hard and indescribable slavery; nor can he refuse to conform to the religious rites of Mahomet. These things We have received not long since with the greatest bitterness of feeling from some who have been eyewitnesses, though tearful ones, of that kind of infamy and misery; with these, moreover, what has been related lately by the explorers in equatorial Africa entirely coincides. It is indeed manifest, by their testimony and word, that each year 400,000 Africans are usually thus sold like cattle, about half of whom, wearied out by the roughness of the tracks, fall down and perish there, so that, sad to relate, those traveling through such places see the pathway strewn with the remains of bones.

19. Who would not be moved by the thought of such miseries. We, indeed, who are holding the place of Christ, the loving Liberator and Redeemer of all mankind, and who so rejoice in the many and glorious good deeds of the Church to all who are afflicted, can scarcely express how great is Our commiseration for those unhappy nations, with what fullness of charity We open Our arms to them, how ardently We desire to be able to afford them every alleviation and support, with the hope, that, having cast off the slavery of superstition as well as the slavery of man, they may at length serve the one true God under the gentle yoke of Christ, partakers with Us of the divine inheritance. Would that all who hold high positions in authority and power, or who desire the rights of nations and of humanity to be held sacred, or who earnestly devote themselves to the interests of the Catholic religion, would all, everywhere acting on Our exhortations and wishes, strive together to repress, forbid, and put an end to that kind of traffic, than which nothing is more base and wicked.

20. In the meantime, while by a more strenuous application of ingenuity and labor new roads are being made, and new commercial enterprises undertaken in the lands of Africa, let apostolic men endeavor to find out how they can best secure the safety and liberty of slaves. They will obtain success in this matter in no other way than if, strengthened by divine grace, they give themselves up to spreading our most holy faith and daily caring for it, whose distinguishing fruit is that it wonderfully flavors and develops the liberty "with which Christ made us free."[26] We therefore advise them to look, as if into a mirror of apostolic virtue, at the life and works of St. Peter Claver, to whom We have lately added a crown of glory.[27] Let them look at him who for fully forty years gave himself up to minister with the greatest constancy in his labors, to a most miserable assembly of Moorish slaves; truly he ought to be called the apostle of those whose constant servant he professed himself and gave himself up to be. If they endeavor to take to themselves and reflect the charity and patience of such a man, they will shine indeed as worthy ministers of salvation, authors of consolation, messengers of peace, who, by God's help, may turn solicitude, desolation, and fierceness into the most joyful fertility of religion and civilization.

21. And now, venerable brethren, Our thoughts and letters desire to turn to you that We may again announce to you and again share with you the exceeding joy which We feel on account of the determinations which have been publicly entered into in that empire with regard to slavery. If, indeed, it seemed to Us a good, happy, and propitious event, that it was provided and insisted upon by law that whoever were still in the condition of slaves ought to be admitted to the status and rights of free men, so also it conforms and increases Our hope of future acts which will be the cause of joy, both in civil and religious matters. Thus the name of the Empire of Brazil will be justly held in honor and praise among the most civilized nations, and the name of its august emperor will likewise be esteemed, whose excellent speech is on record, that he desired nothing more ardently than that every vestige of slavery should be speedily obliterated from his territories. But, truly, until those precepts of the laws are carried into effect, earnestly endeavor, We beseech you, by all means, and press on as much as possible the accomplishment of this affair, which no light difficulties hinder. Through your means let it be brought to pass that masters and slaves may mutually agree with the highest goodwill and best good faith, nor let there be any transgression of clemency or justice, but, whatever things have to be carried out, let all be done lawfully, temperately, and in a Christian manner. It is, however, chiefly to be wished that this may be prosperously accomplished, which all desire, that slavery may be banished and blotted out without any injury to divine or human rights, with no political agitation, and so with the solid benefit of the slaves themselves, for whose sake it is undertaken.

22. To each one of these, whether they have already been made free or are about to become so, We address with a pastoral intention and fatherly mind a few salutary cautions culled from the words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Let them, then, endeavor piously and constantly to retain grateful memory and feeling towards those by whose council and exertion they were set at liberty. Let them never show themselves unworthy of so great a gift nor ever confound liberty with license; but let them use it as becomes well ordered citizens for the industry of an active life, for the benefit and advantage both of their family and of the State. To respect and increase the dignity of their princes, to obey the magistrates, to be obedient to the laws, these and similar duties let them diligently fulfill, under the influence, not so much of fear as of religion; let them also restrain and keep in subjection envy of another's wealth or position, which unfortunately daily distresses so many of those in inferior positions, and present so many incitements of rebellion against security of order and peace. Content with their state and lot, let them think nothing dearer, let them desire nothing more ardently than the good things of the heavenly kingdom by whose grace they have been brought to the light and redeemed by Christ; let them feel piously towards God who is their Lord and Liberator; let them love Him, with all their power; let them keep His commandments with all their might; let them rejoice in being sons of His spouse, the Holy Church; let them labor to be as good as possible, and as much as they can let them carefully return His love.

Do you also, Venerable Brethren, be constant in showing and urging on the freedmen these same doctrines; that, that which is Our chief prayer, and at the same time ought to be yours and that of all good people, religion, amongst the first, may ever feel that she has gained the most ample fruits of that liberty which has been obtained wherever that empire extends.

23. But that that may happily take place, We beg and implore the full grace of God and motherly aid of the Immaculate Virgin. As a foretaste of heavenly gifts and witness of Our fatherly good will towards you, Venerable Brethren, your clergy, and all your people, We lovingly impart the apostolic blessing.

Given at St. Peter's, in Rome, the fifth day of May, 1888, the eleventh of Our pontificate.

ENDNOTES:

1. Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:19.
2. Eph. 1:10.
3. Epist., lib. 6, ep. 12 (PL 77, 803C-804A).
4. "De civ. Dei," 19, 15 (PL 41, 643).

5. Lucan, "Phars." 5, 343.
6. Justinian, "Inst.," lib. I, tit. 8, n. I; in "Corpus jurs civilis" (4th ed., Berlin, Weidmann, 1886) Vol. 1, p. 3.
7. Gal. 3:26-28.
8. Col. 3:11.
9. I Cor. 12:13.
10. I Peter 2:18.
11. Eph. 6:5-8.
12. I Tim. 6: 1-2.
13. Titus 2:9-10.
14. Eph. 6:9.
15. I Cor. 7:22.
16. Philemon 12, 18.
17. I Peter 2:19-21.
18. Philemon 2.
19. John Chrysostom, "Hom. in Lazar." (PG 58, 1039); "Hom. xix in ep. I ad Cor." (PG 61,157-158); "Hom. l in ep. ad Phil." (PG 62, 705).
20. "De Jacob et de vita beata," cap. 3 (PL 14, 633A-636A); "De patr. Joseph," cap. 4 (PL 16, 680C-682B); "Exhort. Virgin.," cap. 1. (PL 16, 351A-352B).
21. "Divin. Instit.," lib. 5, cap. 16 (PL 6, 599A-600A).
22. Clement of Rome, I "Ep. ad Cor.," cap. 55 (PG 1, 319A).
23. Gratian, "Decretum," Part 1, dist. 54; ed. E. Friedberg, Vol. 1, cols. 206-214.
24. Paul III (1534-49), "Veritas ipsa" (June 2, 1559).
25. Gregory XVI (1831-46), "In Supremo Apostolatus Fastigio" (Dec. 3, 1837).
26. Gal. 4:31.
27. St. Peter Claver (1581-1654), joined the Society of Jesus in 1602; in 1610, he went to Cartagena, then the main slave market of the New World, and for forty-four years devoted himself to missionary work. He had declared his intention to remain "the slave of the Negroes" for his entire life and, in point of fact, is said to have baptized over 300,000 of them. He was canonized by Pope Leo XIII on January 15, 1888.