



AD PETRI CATHEDRAM

Encyclical of Pope John XXIII On Truth, Unity and Peace, In A Spirit of Charity, June 29, 1959

To the Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See, and to all the Priests and Faithful of the Catholic world.

Venerable Brethren and Beloved Sons, Greetings and Apostolic Benediction.

We who have been elevated despite Our unworthiness to the Chair of Peter have often reflected on the things We saw and heard when Our predecessor passed from this life. Virtually the entire world, regardless of race or creed, mourned his passing. And then when We were summoned to the dignity of Sovereign Pontiff, great numbers of people, although occupied with other things or weighed down with troubles and difficulties, turned their thoughts and affections to us, and placed their hopes and expectations in Us.

2. For these reflections of Ours, We have drawn comfort and instruction. For this experience certainly is clear indication that the Catholic Church is forever young and is indeed a standard raised before the nations.[1] From her come a pervading light and a gentle love which reach all men.

3. Then We revealed Our plans to summon an Ecumenical Council and a Roman Synod, as well as to revise the Code of Canon Law in accordance with present needs and to issue a new Code of Canon Law for the Church of the Oriental Rite. This announcement received widespread approval and bolstered the universal hope that the hearts of men would be stirred to a fuller and deeper recognition of truth, a renewal of Christian morals, and a restoration of unity, harmony, and peace.

4. Today as We address Our first Encyclical Letter to the entire Catholic world, Our apostolic office clearly demands that We discuss three objectives -- truth, unity, and peace -- and indicate how they may be achieved and advanced in a spirit of charity.

5. May the light of the Holy Spirit come upon Us from on high as We write this

letter and upon you as you read it. May the grace of God move all men to attain these objectives, which all desire, even though prejudices, great difficulties, and many obstacles stand in the way of their achievement.

6. All the evils which poison men and nations and trouble so many hearts have a single cause and a single source: ignorance of the truth -- and at times even more than ignorance, a contempt for truth and a reckless rejection of it. Thus arise all manner of errors, which enter the recesses of men's hearts and the bloodstream of human society as would a plague. These errors turn everything upside down: they menace individuals and society itself.

7. And yet, God gave each of us an intellect capable of attaining natural truth. If we adhere to this truth, we adhere to God Himself, the author of truth, the lawgiver and ruler of our lives. But if we reject this truth, whether out of foolishness, neglect, or malice, we turn our backs on the highest good itself and on the very norm for right living.

8. As We have said, it is possible for us to attain natural truth by virtue of our intellects. But all cannot do this easily; often their efforts will result in a mixture of truth and error. This is particularly the case in matters of religion and sound morals. Moreover, we cannot possibly attain those truths which exceed the capacity of nature and the grasp of reason, unless God enlightens and inspires us. This is why the word of God, "who dwells in light inaccessible,"[2] in His great love took pity on man's plight, "became flesh and dwelt among us,"[3] that He might "enlighten every man who cometh into the world"[4] and lead him not only to full and perfect truth, but to virtue and eternal happiness. All men, therefore, are bound to accept the teaching of the gospel. For if this is rejected, the very foundations of truth, goodness, and civilization are endangered.

9. It is clear that We are discussing a serious matter, with which our eternal salvation is very intimately connected. Some men, as the Apostle of the Gentiles warns us, are "ever learning yet never attaining knowledge of the truth."[5] They contend that the human mind can discover no truth that is certain or sure; they reject the truths revealed by God and necessary for our eternal salvation.

10. Such men have strayed pathetically far from the teaching of Christ and the views expressed by the Apostle when he said, "Let us all attain to the unity of the faith and of the deep knowledge of the son of God . . . that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, according to the wiles of error. Rather are we to practice the truth in love, and grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ. For from him the whole body (being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the functioning in due measure of each single part) derives its increase to the building up of itself in love."[6]

11. Anyone who consciously and wantonly attacks known truth, who arms himself with falsehood in his speech, his writings, or his conduct in order to attract and win over less learned men and to shape the inexperienced and impressionable minds of the young to his own way of thinking, takes advantage of the inexperience and innocence of others and engages in an altogether despicable business.

12. In this connection we must urge to careful, exact, and prudent presentation of the truth those especially who, through the books, magazines, and daily

newspapers which are so abundant today, have such a great effect on the instruction and development of the minds of men, and especially of the young, and play such a large part in forming their opinions and shaping their characters. These people have a serious duty to disseminate, not lies, error, and obscenity, but only the truth; they are particularly bound to publicize what is conducive to good and virtuous conduct, not to vice.

13. For we see with deep sorrow what Our predecessor of immortal memory, Leo XIII, lamented: "Lies are boldly insinuated . . . into weighty tomes and slender volumes, into the transient pages of periodicals and the extravagant advertisements of the theater." [7] We see "books and magazines written to mock virtue and exalt depravity." [8]

14. And in this day of ours, as you well know, Venerable Brethren and beloved sons, we also have radio broadcasts, motion pictures, and television (which can enter easily into the home). All of these can provide inspiration and incentive for morality and goodness, even Christian virtue. Unfortunately, however, they can also entice men, especially the young, to loose morality and ignoble behavior, to treacherous error and perilous vice.

15. The weapons of truth, then, must be used in defense against these weapons of evil. We must strive zealously and relentlessly to ward off the impact of this great evil which every day insinuates itself more deeply.

16. We must fight immoral and false literature with literature that is wholesome and sincere. Radio broadcasts, motion pictures, and television shows which make error and vice attractive must be opposed by shows which defend truth and strive to preserve the integrity and safety of morals. Thus these new arts, which can work much evil, will be turned to the well-being and benefit of men, and at the same time will supply worthwhile recreation. Health will come from a source which has often produced only devastating sickness.

17. Some men, indeed do not attack the truth willfully, but work in heedless disregard of it. They act as though God had given us intellects for some purpose other than the pursuit and attainment of truth. This mistaken sort of action leads directly to that absurd proposition: one religion is just as good as another, for there is no distinction here between truth and falsehood. "This attitude," to quote Pope Leo again, "is directed to the destruction of all religions, but particularly the Catholic faith, which cannot be placed on a level with other religions without serious injustice, since it alone is true." [9] Moreover, to contend that there is nothing to choose between contradictories and among contraries can lead only to this fatal conclusion: a reluctance to accept any religion either in theory or practice.

18. How can God, who is truth, approve or tolerate the indifference, neglect, and sloth of those who attach no importance to matters on which our eternal salvation depends; who attach no importance to pursuit and attainment of necessary truths, or to the offering of that proper worship which is owed to God alone?

19. So much toil and effort is expended today in mastering and advancing human knowledge that our age glories -- and rightly -- in the amazing progress it has made in the field of scientific research. But why do we not devote as much energy, ingenuity, and enthusiasm to the sure and safe attainment of that learning which

concerns not this earthly, mortal life but the life which lies ahead of us in heaven? Our spirit will rest in peace and joy only when we have reached that truth which is taught in the gospels and which should be reduced to action in our lives. This is a joy which surpasses by far any pleasure which can come from the study of things human or from those marvelous inventions which we use today and are constantly praising to the skies.

20. Once we have attained the truth in its fullness, integrity, and purity, unity should pervade our minds, hearts, and actions. For there is only one cause of discord, disagreement, and dissension: ignorance of the truth, or what is worse, rejection of the truth once it has been sought and found. It may be that the truth is rejected because of the practical advantages which are expected to result from false views; it may be that it is rejected as a result of that perverted blindness which seeks easy and indulgent excuses for vice and immoral behavior.

21 All men, therefore, private citizens as well as government officials, must love the truth sincerely if they are to attain that peace and harmony on which depends all real prosperity, public and private.

22. We especially urge to peace and unity those who hold the reins of government. We who are placed above international controversy have the same affection for the people of all nations. We are led by no earthly advantages, no motives of political dominance, no desires for the things of this life. When we speak of this serious matter Our thoughts can be given a fair hearing and judged impartially by the citizens of every nation.

23. God created men as brothers, not foes. He gave them the earth to be cultivated by their toil and labor. Each and every man is to enjoy the fruits of the earth and receive from it his sustenance and the necessities of life. The various nations are simply communities of men, that is, of brothers. They are to work in brotherly cooperation for the common prosperity of human society, not simply for their own particular goals.

24. Besides this, our journey through this mortal life should not be regarded as an end in itself, entered upon merely for pleasure. This journey leads beyond the burial of our human flesh to immortal life, to a fatherland which will endure forever.

25. If this teaching, this consoling hope, were taken away from men, there would be no reason for living. Lusts, dissensions, and disputes would erupt from within us. There would be no reasonable check to restrain them. The olive branch of peace would not shine in our thoughts; the firebrands of war would blaze there. Our lot would be cast with beasts, who do not have the use of reason. Ours would be an even worse lot, for we do have the use of reason and by abusing it (which, unfortunately, often happens) we can sink into a state lower than that of beasts. Like Cain, we would commit a terrible crime and stain the earth with our brother's blood.

26. Before all else, then, we must turn our thoughts to sound principles if we wish, as we should, to guide our actions along the path of justice.

27. We are called brothers. We actually are brothers. We share a common destiny in this life and the next. Why, then, do we act as though we are foes and enemies? Why do we envy one another? Why do we stir up hatred? Why do we ready lethal weapons for use against our brothers?

28. There has already been enough warfare among men! Too many youths in the flower of life have shed their blood already! Legions of the dead, all fallen in battle, dwell within this earth of ours. Their stern voices urge us all to return at once to harmony, unity, and a just peace.

29. All men, then, should turn their attention away from those things that divide and separate us, and should consider how they may be joined in mutual and just regard for one another's opinions and possessions.

30. Only if we desire peace, as we should, instead of war, and only if we all aspire sincerely to fraternal harmony among nations, shall it come to pass that public affairs and public questions are correctly understood and settled to the satisfaction of all. Then shall international conferences seek and reach decisions conducive to the longed-for unity of the whole human family. In the enjoyment of that unity, individual nations will see that their right to liberty is not subject to another's whims but is fully secure.

31. Those who oppress others and strip them of their due liberty can contribute nothing to the attainment of this unity.

32. The mind of Our predecessor, Leo XIII, squares perfectly with this view: "Nothing is better suited than Christian virtue, and especially justice, to check ambition, covetousness, and envy which are the chief causes of war." [10]

33. But if men do not pursue this fraternal unity, based on the precepts of justice and nurtured by charity, then human affairs will remain in serious peril. This is why wise men grieve and lament; they are uncertain whether we are heading for sincere, true, and firm peace, or are rushing in complete blindness into the fires of a new and terrible war.

34. We say "in complete blindness," for if -- God forbid! -- another war should break out, nothing but devastating destruction and total ruin await both victor and vanquished. The monstrous weapons our age has devised will see to that!

35. We ask all men, -but particularly rulers of nations, to weigh these considerations prudently and seriously in the presence of God our protector. May they enter with a will upon those paths which will lead to the unity that is so badly needed. This harmonious unity will be restored when hearts are at peace, when the rights of all are guaranteed, and when there has dawned that liberty due everywhere to individual citizens, to the state, and to the Church.

36. The harmonious unity which must be sought among peoples and nations also needs ever greater improvement among the various classes of individuals. Otherwise mutual antagonism and conflict can result, as we have already seen. And the next step brings rioting mobs, wanton destruction of property, and sometimes even bloodshed. Meanwhile public and private resources diminish and are stretched to the danger point.

37. On this point Pope Leo XIII made apt and appropriate comment: "God has commanded that there be differences of classes in the human community and that these classes, by friendly cooperation, work out a fair and mutual adjustment of their interests." [11] For it is quite clear that "as the symmetry of the human frame results from suitable arrangement of the various parts of the body, so in a body politic it is ordained by nature that . . . the classes should dwell in harmony and agreement, so as to maintain the balance of the body politic. Each needs the

other: capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital. Their mutual agreement will result in the splendor of right order." [12]

38. Anyone, therefore, who ventures to deny that there are differences among social classes contradicts the very laws of nature. Indeed, whoever opposes peaceful and necessary cooperation among the social classes is attempting, beyond doubt, to disrupt and divide human society; he menaces and does serious injury to private interests and the public welfare.

39. As Our predecessor, Pius XII, wisely said, "In a nation that is worthy of the name, inequalities among the social classes present few or no obstacles to their union in common brotherhood. We refer, of course, to those inequalities which result not from human caprice but from the nature of things -- inequalities having to do with intellectual and spiritual growth, with economic facts, with differences in individual circumstances, within, of course, the limits prescribed by justice and mutual charity." [13]

40. The various classes of society, as well as groups of individuals, may certainly protect their rights, provided this is done by legal means, not violence, and provided that they do no injustice to the inviolable rights of others. All men are brothers. Their differences, therefore, must be settled by friendly agreement, with brotherly love for one another.

41. On this point it should be noted, and this gives rise to hope for a better future, that in some places in recent days relations among the classes have been less bitter and difficult. As Our predecessor, addressing the Catholics of Germany, expressed it: "The terrible disasters of the recent war plunged you into hardship, but produced at least one blessing among the many classes of your population: prejudices and exaggerated ambitions for personal advantage have subsided; the conflicting interests of the classes are nearer to reconciliation. Closer association with one another since the war has done this. Hard times borne together have taught you all a helpful, though bitter, lesson." [14]

42. As a matter of fact, the distances which separate the classes of society are shrinking. Since it is no longer a matter merely of "capital" and "labor," the number of classes has multiplied, and all of them are readily accessible to all men. Anyone who is diligent and capable has the opportunity to rise to higher levels of society. As for the condition of those who live by their daily toil, it is consoling to note that recently undertaken improvements in working conditions in factories and other places of employment have done more than give these workers a greater economic value; they have made their lives nobler and more dignified.

43. But there is still a long way to go. For there is still too much disparity in the possession of material goods, too much reason for hostility among various groups, because of opinions on the right to property (opinions sometimes unsound, sometimes not entirely just) held by those who desire unfair advantages and benefits for themselves.

44. There is also the threat of unemployment, a source of anxiety and unhappiness for many men. And this problem can entail even greater difficulties today, when men are being replaced by all sorts of advanced machines. Of this kind of unemployment, Our predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, uttered this complaint: "There are," he said, "honest working men almost beyond number who want only

an opportunity to earn by honest means that daily bread for which, by divine command, we entreat our Father in heaven. But, instead, they are reduced to idleness and, along with their families, reach the very depths of privation. Their unhappiness touches Our heart; We are constrained to take pity and to repeat the merciful words that came from the heart of our Divine Master when He saw the multitude languishing in hunger: 'I have compassion on the crowd' (Mark 8.2)."[15]

45. Indeed, if we long hopefully -- as we should -- for the realization of this mutual union among the classes of society, then we must do all that we can to bring it about by public and private endeavor and cooperation in courageous undertakings, that all men, even those of the lowest classes, can obtain life's necessities by their toil and by the sweat of their brow, and that they can provide, in an honorable manner and with some degree of sureness, for their future and that of their families. In addition, contemporary progress has made many conveniences an integral part of everyday life; even the poorest citizens may not be excluded from the enjoyment of these advantages.

46. Moreover, we earnestly exhort all those who have responsible positions in the various areas of human endeavor and on whom the lot of the workers and sometimes their very lives depend, not only that they pay the just wages due to the labors of their workers or simply safeguard their rights so far as wages are concerned, but also that they really consider them as men, or rather, as brothers. And so they should see to it that in some suitable way their employees are able to share more and more in the fruits of their labor and come to regard themselves as partners in the entire enterprise.

47. We give this counsel in order that the rights and duties of employers may more and more be harmonized and reconciled with the rights and duties of employees, and that the associations representing the interests of each "will not seem like armies ready to make or repel attacks in such wise as to make the enemy more resolute or to incite counterattack, or like a river which engulfs every obstacle in its course; but like a bridge which joins opposite shores."[16]

48. It is very important, however, that moral progress should not lag behind economic progress. Anything else would be unworthy of men, not to say of Christians. If the working classes have an abundance of material goods and enjoy all the benefits of civilization while losing or neglecting those higher goods which pertain to the immortal soul, what does it profit them?

49. But all will come out well if the social teaching of the Catholic Church is applied as it should be to the problem. Everyone then must "strive to preserve in himself and to arouse in others, be they of high or low degree, the queen and mistress of all the virtues, charity. The salvation we hope for is to be expected primarily from a great outpouring of charity. We refer to that Christian charity which is a principle synthesizing the entire gospel. That charity is always ready to spend itself in the interest of others and is the surest remedy against worldly pride and immoderate self-esteem. St. Paul the Apostle described the characteristics of this virtue when he said: 'Charity is patient, is kind; is not self-seeking; bears with all things, endures all things; (1 Cor. 13.4-1)."[17]

50. We have called nations, their rulers, and all classes of society to harmonious unity. Now we sincerely urge families to achieve and strengthen this unity within

themselves.

51. For unless peace, unity, and concord are present in domestic society, how can they exist in civil society?

52. This harmonious unity which should exist within the family circle rises from the holiness and indissolubility of Christian marriage. It is the basis of much of the order, progress, and prosperity of civil society.

53. Within the family, the father stands in God's place. He must lead and guide the rest by his authority and the example of his good life.

54. The mother, on the other hand, should form her children firmly and graciously by the mildness of her manner and by her virtue.

55. Together the parents should carefully rear their children, God's most precious gift, to an upright and religious life.

56. Children must honor, obey, and love their parents. They must give their parents not only solace but also concrete assistance if it is needed.

57. The charity which burned in the household at Nazareth should be an inspiration for every family. All the Christian virtues should flourish in the family, unity should thrive, and the example of its virtuous living should shine brightly.

58. We earnestly pray God to prevent any damage to this valuable, beneficial, and necessary union. The Christian family is a sacred institution. If it totters, if the norms which the divine Redeemer laid down for it are rejected or ignored, then the very foundations of the state tremble; civil society stands betrayed and in peril. Everyone suffers.

59. Now we shall discuss a unity which is of particular concern to Us and is closely connected to the pastoral mission which God has entrusted to Us: the unity of the Church.

60. Everyone realizes, of course, that God our Redeemer founded this society which was to endure to the end of time, for as Christ said, "Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." [18] For this intention He addressed ardent prayers to His Father: "That all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in Us." [19] Surely this prayer was heard and granted because of His reverent submission. [20] This is a comforting hope; it assures us that someday all the sheep who are not of this fold will want to return to it. Then, in the words of God our Savior, "there shall be one fold and one shepherd." [21]

61. This fond hope compelled Us to make public Our intention to hold an Ecumenical Council. Bishops from every part of the world will gather there to discuss serious religious topics. They will consider, in particular, the growth of the Catholic faith, the restoration of sound morals among the Christian flock, and appropriate adaptation of Church discipline to the needs and conditions of our times.

62. This event will be a wonderful spectacle of truth, unity, and charity. For those who behold it but are not one with this Apostolic See, We hope that it will be a gentle invitation to seek and find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so ardently to His Father in heaven.

63. We are already aware, to Our great joy, that many of the communities that are separated from the See of Blessed Peter have recently shown some inclination

toward the Catholic faith and its teachings. They have manifested a high regard for this Apostolic See and an esteem which grows greater from day to day as devotion to truth overcomes earlier misconceptions.

64. We have taken note that almost all those who are adorned with the name of Christian even though separated from Us and from one another have sought to forge bonds of unity by means of many congresses and by establishing councils. This is evidence that they are moved by an intense desire for unity of some kind.

65. When the Divine Redeemer founded His Church, there is no doubt that He made firm unity its cornerstone and one of its essential attributes. Had He not done this -- and it is absurd even to make such a suggestion -- He would have founded a transient thing, which in time, at least, would destroy itself. For in just this way have nearly all philosophies risen from among the vagaries of human opinion: one after another, they come into being, they evolve, they are forgotten. But this clearly cannot be the history of a divine teaching authority founded by Jesus Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life." [22]

66. But this unity, Venerable Brethren and beloved sons, must be solid, firm and sure, not transient, uncertain, or unstable. [23] Though there is no such unity in other Christian communities, all who look carefully can see that it is present in the Catholic Church.

67. Indeed, the Catholic Church is set apart and distinguished by these three characteristics: unity of doctrine, unity of organization, unity of worship. This unity is so conspicuous that by it all men can find and recognize the Catholic Church.

68. It is the will of God, the Church's founder, that all the sheep should eventually gather into this one fold, under the guidance of one shepherd. All God's children are summoned to their father's only home, and its cornerstone is Peter. All men should work together like brothers to become part of this single kingdom of God; for the citizens of that kingdom are united in peace and harmony on earth that they might enjoy eternal happiness some day in heaven.

69. The Catholic Church teaches the necessity of believing firmly and faithfully all that God has revealed. This revelation is contained in sacred scripture and in the oral and written tradition that has come down through the centuries from the apostolic age and finds expression in the ordinances and definitions of the popes and legitimate Ecumenical Councils.

70. Whenever a man has wandered from this path, the Church has never failed to use her maternal authority to call him again and again to the right road. She knows well that there is no other truth than the one truth she treasures; that there can be no "truths" in contradiction of it. Thus she repeats and bears witness to the words of the Apostle: "For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth." [24]

71. The Catholic Church, of course, leaves many questions open to the discussion of theologians. She does this to the extent that matters are not absolutely certain. Far from jeopardizing the Church's unity, controversies, as a noted English author, John Henry Cardinal Newman, has remarked, can actually pave the way for its attainment. For discussion can lead to fuller and deeper understanding of religious truths; when one idea strikes against another, there may be a spark. [25]

72. But the common saying, expressed in various ways and attributed to various authors, must be recalled with approval: in essentials, unity; in doubtful matters,

liberty; in all things, charity.

73. That there is unity in the administration of the Catholic Church is evident. For as the faithful are subject to their priests, so are priests to their bishops, whom "the Holy Spirit has placed . . . to rule the Church of God." [26] So, too, every bishop is subject to the Roman pontiff, the successor of Saint Peter, whom Christ called a rock and made the foundation of His Church. [27] It was to Peter that Christ gave in a special way the power to bind and loose on earth, [28] to strengthen his brethren, [29] to feed the entire flock. [30]

74. As for unity of worship, the Catholic Church has had seven sacraments, neither more nor less, from her beginning right down to the present day. Jesus Christ left her these sacraments as a sacred legacy, and she had never ceased to administer them throughout the Catholic world and thus to feed and foster the supernatural life of the faithful.

75. All this is common knowledge, and it is also common knowledge that only one sacrifice is offered in the Church. In this Eucharistic sacrifice Christ Himself, our Salvation and our Redeemer, immolates Himself each day for all of us and mercifully pours out on us the countless riches of His grace. No blood is shed, but the sacrifice is real, just as real as when Christ hung from a cross of Calvary.

76. And so Saint Cyprian had good reason to remark: "It would be impossible to set up another altar or to create a new priesthood over and above this one altar and this one priesthood" [31]

77. Obviously, of course, this fact does not prevent the presence in the Catholic Church of a variety of approved rites, which simply enhance her beauty. Like a king's daughter, the Church wears robes of rich embroidery. [32]

78. All men are to have part in this true unity; and so, when a Catholic priest offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice, he presents our merciful God with a spotless Victim and prays to Him especially "for Thy holy Catholic Church, that it may please Thee to grant her peace, to protect, unite, and govern her throughout the world, together with Thy servant our Pope, and all who truly believe and profess the Catholic and Apostolic faith." [33]

79. We address Ourselves now to all of you who are separated from this Apostolic See. May this wonderful Spectacle of unity, by which the Catholic Church is set apart and distinguished, as well as the prayers and entreaties with which she begs God for unity, stir your hearts and awaken you to what is really in your best interest.

80. May We, in fond anticipation, address you as sons and brethren? May We hope with a father's love for your return?

81. Once when a terrible schism was rending the seamless garment of the Church, Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria addressed his sons and brethren with words of pastoral zeal. We take pleasure in addressing these same words to you: "Dearly beloved, we have all been invited to heaven. Let each, then, according to his abilities imitate Jesus, our model and the author of our salvation.

82. "Let us embrace that humility of soul which elevates us to great heights, that charity which unites us with God; let us have a genuine faith in revealed mysteries.

83. "Avoid division, shun discord, . . . encourage charity toward one another. Heed the words of Christ: 'By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have

love for one another." [34]

84. When We fondly call you to the unity of the Church, please observe that We are not inviting you to a strange home, but to your own, to the abode of your forefathers. Permit Us, then, to long for you all "in the heart of Christ Jesus," [35] and to exhort you all to be mindful of your forefathers who "preached God's word to you; contemplate the happy issue of the life they lived, and imitate their faith." [36]

85. There is in paradise a glorious legion of Saints who have passed to heaven from your people. By the example of their lives they seem to summon you to union with this Apostolic See with which your Christian community was beneficially united for so many centuries. You are summoned especially by those Saints who in their writings perpetuated and explained with admirable accuracy the teachings of Jesus Christ.

86. We address, then, as brethren all who are separated from Us, using the words of Saint Augustine: "Whether they wish it or not, they are our brethren. They cease to be our brethren only when they stop saying 'Our Father.'" [37]

87. "Let us love God our Lord; let us love His Church. Let us love Him as our father and her as our mother, Him as our master and her as His handmaid. For we are the children of His handmaid. This marriage is based on a deep love. No one can offend one of them and be a friend of the other. . . What difference does it make that you

have not offended your father, if he punishes offenses against your mother? . . . Therefore, dearly beloved, be all of one mind and remain true to God your father and your mother the Church." [38]

88. We address suppliant prayers to our gracious God, the giver of heavenly light and of all good things, that He safeguard the unity of the Church and extend the fold and kingdom of Christ. We urge all Our brethren in Christ and Our beloved sons to pray fervently for the same intentions. The outcome of the approaching Ecumenical Council will depend more on a crusade of fervent prayer than on human effort and diligent application. And so with loving heart We also invite to this crusade all who are not of this fold but reverence and worship God and strive in good faith to obey His commands.

89. May the divine plea of Christ further and fulfill this hope and these prayers of Ours: "Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are.... Sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth.... Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in me . . . that they may be perfected in unity. . ." [39]

90. We repeat this prayer, as does the whole Catholic world in union with Us. We are spurred by a burning love for all men, but also by that interior humility which the gospel teaches. For We know the lowliness of him whom God raised to the dignity of the Sovereign Pontificate, not because of Our merits, but according to His mysterious designs. Wherefore, to all Our brethren and sons who are separated from the Chair of Blessed Peter, We say again: "I am . . . Joseph, your brother." [40] Come, "make room for us." [41] We want nothing else, desire nothing else, pray God for nothing else but your salvation, your eternal happiness.

91. Come! This long-desired unity, fostered and fed by brotherly love, will beget a

great peace. This is the peace "which surpasses all understanding,"[42] since its birthplace is in heaven. It is the same peace which Christ promised to men of good will through the song of the angels who hovered over His crib;[43] it is the peace He imparted after instituting the Eucharistic Sacrament and Sacrifice: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."[44] 92. Peace and joy! Yes, joy -- because those who are really and effectively joined to the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Catholic Church, share in that life which flows from the divine Head into each part of the Body. Through that life, those who faithfully obey all the precepts and demands of our Redeemer can enjoy even in this mortal life that happiness which is a foretaste and pledge of heaven's eternal happiness.

93. And yet, as long as we are journeying in exile over this earth, our peace and happiness will be imperfect. For such peace is not completely untroubled and serene; it is active, not calm and motionless. In short, this is a peace that is ever at war. It wars with every sort of error, including that which falsely wears the face of truth; it struggles against the enticements of vice, against those enemies of the soul, of whatever description, who can weaken, blemish, or destroy our innocence or Catholic faith. This peace combats hatred, fraud, and discord, which can impair and cripple our faith.

94. This is why our Divine Redeemer left His peace with us, gave His peace to us.

95. The peace, then, which we must seek, which we must strive to achieve with all the means at our disposal, must -- as We have said -- make no concessions to error, must compromise in no way with proponents of falsehood; it must make no concessions to vice; it must discourage all discord. Those who adhere to this peace must be ready to renounce their own interests and advantages for the sake of truth and justice, according to the words: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice."[45]

96. We pray earnestly to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whose Immaculate Heart Our predecessor, Pius XII, consecrated the entire human race. May she seek and obtain from God this harmonious unity, this true, active, and militant peace, on behalf of Our children in Christ and all those who, though separated from Us, cannot help loving truth, unity and peace.

97. Now We wish to address a few fatherly words specifically to each of the ranks within the Catholic Church.

98. First of all "our heart is wide open to you,"[46] Venerable Brethren in the episcopacy of both the Eastern and Western Church. As guides with Us of the Christian people, you have borne the burden of the day's heat.[47] We know your diligence. We know the apostolic zeal with which, in your respective dioceses, you strive to advance, strengthen, and spread the kingdom of God.

99. And We also know your hardships, your sorrows. You grieve that so many of your children are lost, pathetically duped by falsehood; you are confronted by a lack of material means, which sometimes makes impossible a wider spread of Catholicism in your dioceses; and the number of priests at your disposal is in many places inadequate to the mounting demands for their services.

100. But trust in Him from whom comes "every good gift and every perfect gift."[48] Have confidence in Jesus Christ; pray without ceasing to Him, without

whom "you can do nothing." [49] By His grace you may each repeat the words of the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." [50]

101. "But may . . . God supply your every need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus," [51] that you may reap rich harvests and gather rich crops from the fields you have cultivated by your toil and your sweat.

102. We also address Ourselves with a father's love to the members of the diocesan and religious clergy: those who are your close assistants in your Curia, Venerable Brethren; those who toil in seminaries at a very important work, the formation and education of youths called to the Lord's service; those, finally, who are parish priests in crowded cities, in towns, or in distant and lonely outposts and whose mission today is very difficult, very demanding, and of the utmost importance.

103. We are sure it is unnecessary for us to mention it, but priests should be careful to be always obedient and submissive to their bishop. As Saint Ignatius of Antioch said: "Since you are subject to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, . . . whatever you do must be done in union with your bishop." [52] "All who belong to God and Jesus Christ are in union with their bishop." [53]

104. Priests should also be mindful that they are more than public dignitaries; they are sacred ministers. And so, as they work to bring God's light to the minds of men, to redirect the wills of sinners with heaven's help and with brotherly love, as they work to advance and spread the peace-bringing kingdom of Jesus Christ, they must never think that there is a fixed limit to their time and belongings, their expenditures, or of their personal inconvenience. They must seek God's grace in humble and ceaseless prayer, and they must rely on this grace far more than on their own toil and labor.

105. We also extend Our paternal best wishes to Our sons in religious orders and congregations. These men have embraced the various states of evangelical perfection and live according to particular rules of their Institutes in obedience to their superiors. We urge them to strive tirelessly and with all their strength for the achievement of the goals their founders have set forth in those rules. They should, in particular, be fervent in prayer and assiduous in works of penance; they should undertake the sound formation and education of the young and assist, so far as they can, those who are beset in any way by want or distress.

106. We know, of course, that due to various conditions many of these beloved sons of Ours are frequently called upon to undertake the pastoral care of the faithful; and this has redounded to the benefit of the Christian name and Christian virtue. Although We are sure they need no such admonition, We again exhort these religious to meet the present-day needs of the people spontaneously and enthusiastically, cooperating zealously and energetically with the efforts of the other clergy.

107. And now Our thoughts turn to those religious who have left the homes of their ancestors and their beloved countries and have gone to foreign lands where they experience serious inconveniences and overcome all sorts of difficulties. Today, in distant fields, they toil to impart the truth of the gospel and Christian virtue to the people who dwell there, that "the word of the Lord may run and be glorified" among them. [54]

108. A tremendous task is entrusted to these missionaries. To fulfill it and expand its scope, all Christians must cooperate by prayer and such contributions as their means permit. There is, perhaps, no undertaking that pleases God more than this one; it is an integral part of the duty all men have to spread the kingdom of God.

109. These heralds of the gospel dedicate and consecrate their lives to God in order that the light of Jesus Christ may enlighten every man who comes into the world,[55] that the grace of God may enter and support every soul, and that all men may be aroused to a life that is good, honorable, and Christian. These men seek not their own interests, but those of Jesus Christ.[56] They have answered with generosity the call of their Divine Redeemer and can apply to themselves the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles: "On behalf of Christ . . . we are acting as ambassadors,"[57] and "though we walk in the flesh, we do not make war according to the flesh." [58] They regard as a second fatherland and love with an active charity the land to which they have come to bring the light of the Gospel's truth. Although they will always have deep affection for their native land and their diocese or religious institute, they regard it as clear and certain that the good of the universal Church must be preferred and they must give it their first and wholehearted service.

110. We wish, therefore, to say that there is a special place in Our heart for these beloved sons, and for all who generously assist them in their fields of labor by teaching catechism or in other ways. Every day We offer humble prayers to God for them and their endeavors. We wish to confirm with Our authority, and with like affection, all that Our predecessors -- especially Pius XI[59] and Pius XII[60] -- have seen fit to set down on this subject in their Encyclical Letters.

111. We must also write of those holy virgins who by their vows have consecrated themselves to God that they might serve Him alone and unite themselves closely with their Divine Spouse in mystic nuptials.

112. They may lead, hidden lives in cloistered convents or dedicate themselves to the works of the apostolate. In either case, they can pursue their salvation the more easily and happily and also be of preeminent assistance in Christian countries and in those lands where the light of the Gospel has not yet shone.

113. How much these holy virgins accomplish! They render extensive and distinguished service which no one else could perform with the same blend of virginal and maternal concern! They do this not in one, but in many fields of endeavor. They attend to the sound formation and education of the young. They teach religion to boys and girls in parochial schools. They tend the sick in hospitals and lead their thoughts to heavenly things. They care for patients in homes for the aged with cheerful and merciful charity and move them in a wonderful and gentle way to a desire for eternal life. In homes for orphans, and for children born out of wedlock they stand in the place of a mother and cherish with a mother's love children who have lost their parents or been abandoned. They care for them, nurse them, and hold them dear.

114. These holy virgins have rendered outstanding services not only to the Catholic Church, to Christian education, to what are called the works of mercy, but to civil society as well. At the same time, they are winning for themselves that imperishable reward which lies ahead in heaven.

115. But as you well know, Venerable Brethren and beloved sons, the problems that beset men today -- and affect Christianity also -- are so vast and varied that priests, religious men, and holy virgins seem now unequal to the task of providing the complete remedy. Priests, religious men, and virgins consecrated to God cannot make contact with every class of person. All paths are not open to them. Many men ignore or avoid them; some, alas, even despise and abhor them.

116. This is a serious matter that has occasioned much sorrow and unhappiness and induces Our predecessors to summon the laity to the ranks of a peaceful militia, Catholic Action. It was their wise intention that the laity should cooperate in the apostolate of the hierarchy. In this way, what the hierarchy could not do under present circumstances, these Catholic men and women would accomplish in a spirit of generosity. They would work, of course, in union with their bishops and in constant obedience to them.

117. Over the years the bishops and priests of lands that are still mission territories have been assisted by laymen of every rank and condition. It gives Us great comfort to recall the projects they have undertaken and carried forward with swift and energetic resolution in order that all men might recognize the truth of Christianity and feel the force and attraction of Christian virtue.

118. But vast areas still await their efforts. Great numbers of men have not had the benefit of their shining example and apostolic labor. We think this matter is so serious and important that We intend at some other time to discuss it at greater length.

119. Meanwhile, We are confident that all who serve in the ranks of Catholic Action, or in the many pious associations which flourish in the Church, will pursue this apostolate with very great diligence. The more overwhelming the needs of our age, the greater should be their efforts, concern, industry, and zeal.

120. Let all be of one mind, since -- as all know well -- in unity there is greater strength. When it is a matter of the cause of the Catholic Church they must be ready to sacrifice personal whims, for nothing is of more value and importance. This should be their attitude, not only in doctrinal matters but also in matters of ecclesiastical and Christian discipline, to which all must submit.

121. The members of Catholic Action must marshal their ranks; they must align themselves beside their bishops and be ready to obey every command. They must advance to ever greater achievements. They must shirk no hardship, shun no inconvenience, that the cause of the Church may be triumphant.

122. But they will accomplish all this as they should only if each of them pays particular attention to his personal formation in Christian wisdom and virtue. They are certainly aware of this fact. For it is obvious that they can impart to others only what, with the help of God's grace, they have won for themselves.

123. These last remarks are meant particularly for the young. They are easily aroused to eager enthusiasm for the highest ideals, but it is most important that they learn prudence, self-restraint, and obedience to authority. We wish to express Our deep gratitude and love for these beloved children of Ours. In them the Church places her hope for the future. We have complete confidence in their industrious and effective service.

124. And now We hear voices that fill Us with sorrow. We hear those who are sick

in mind or body, afflicted by terrible suffering. We hear those who are so beset by economic hardship that they have no home fit for human habitation and cannot by any effort of their own obtain the necessities of life for themselves or their families. Their cries touch Our heart and move Us to the depths of Our being.

125. We wish first to give the sick, the infirm, and the aged that comfort which comes from heaven. They should remember that we have here no permanent city, but must seek for the city that is to come.[61] They should recall that the sufferings of this life serve to purify the soul; they elevate and ennoble us and can win us eternal joy in heaven. Our Divine Redeemer bore the yoke of the cross to wash away the stains of our sins; to this end He endured abuse, torture, and agonizing pain, all by His free choice. Like Christ, we are all called to light, by way of the cross, for He has told us: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me,"[62] and he shall have a treasure unfailing in heaven.[63]

126. We have another recommendation also, and We are sure that it will be warmly received. We wish these sufferings of mind and body not only to be steps in the sufferer's ascent to his eternal fatherland, but also to contribute greatly to the expiation of others, to the return to the Church of those who unfortunately are separated from her, and to the long-desired triumph of Christianity.

127. Those citizens of straitened fortune who are dissatisfied with their very difficult lot in life may be sure that We deeply regret their condition. With respect to social matters: it is Our paternal desire that relations among the various classes come under the guidance, control, and direction of the Christian virtue of justice. We are especially concerned here because the Church's enemies can easily take advantage of any unjust treatment of the lower classes to draw them to their side by false promises and deceptive lies.

128. We ask these dear children of Ours to realize that the Church is not hostile to them or their rights. On the contrary, she cares for them as would a loving mother. She preaches and inculcates a social doctrine and social norms which would eliminate every sort of injustice and produce a better and more equitable distribution of goods, if they were put into practice as they should be.[64] At the same time, she encourages friendly cooperation and mutual assistance among the various classes, so that all men may become in name and in fact not only free citizens of the same society but also brothers within the same family.

129. Anyone who considers without bias the opportunities and advantages which have recently come to the working classes must admit that they are in great part the result of persistent and effective social measures taken by Catholics in accord with the wise directives and repeated exhortations of Our predecessors. The social teachings of Christianity, then, contain sure and sound principles which will make very adequate provision for the rights of the lower classes if those who endeavor to defend these rights only put those principles into practice.

130. There is never any need, therefore, to turn to proponents of doctrines condemned by the Church; for they only draw men on with false promises and when they obtain control of the state, try boldly and unscrupulously to deprive men of their supreme spiritual goods -- the Christian commandments, Christian hope, and Christian faith. Those who adhere to the doctrines these men propose,

minimize or eliminate all that our present age and our modern civilization hold dearest: true liberty and the authentic dignity of the human person. Thus they attempt to destroy the bases of Christianity and civilization.

131. All, therefore, who wish to remain Christians must be aware of their serious obligation to avoid those false principles, which Our predecessors -- especially Popes Pius XI and Pius XII -- have condemned in the past, and which We condemn once again.

132. We know that many of Our children who live in want or great misfortune often protest that the social teachings of Christianity have not yet been fully put into practice. Private citizens, and more particularly public officials, must take steps to see that the Christian social doctrine which Our predecessors have often clearly and wisely taught and decreed, and which we have confirmed, is really given full effect.[65] Although this will have to be done gradually, no time should be wasted.

133. We are also and equally concerned for the lot of those who are forced to leave their native lands because they cannot earn a living there or because of intolerable conditions and religious persecution. They must undergo many inconveniences and hardships when they go from their native land into foreign countries. Oftentimes, in crowded cities and amid the noise of factories, they must lead a life very different from the one they once knew.

134. At times, and this is more serious, they find themselves in an environment that is hostile and hurtful to Christian virtue. In such surroundings many are led into serious danger, and step by step turn away from the wholesome way of life and the religious practices which they learned from their elders. Since husbands are often separated from their wives and parents from their children, the bonds and ties that hold them together are stretched thin and serious injury is done to the family.

135. We give Our paternal approval to the competent and effective work of those priests who have become voluntary emigrants out of love for Jesus Christ and in obedience to the instructions and wishes of this Apostolic See. These priests have spared no effort to ascertain and serve, so far as they can, the social and spiritual needs of their flocks. Thus, wherever the emigrant may journey, he sees the Church's love for him and discovers that this love is even more evident and more effective when his need for care and aid is greatest.

136. We have also observed with great pleasure the praiseworthy steps various nations have taken with regard to this important matter. A number of countries have recently adopted a common plan and program to bring this critical problem to a swift and happy conclusion. We trust that these measures will make it possible for emigrants to enter those lands in greater numbers and with greater ease, but we are even more concerned that they provide for the happy reunion of parents and children as a family unit. Once these sound steps are taken, it will certainly be possible to make adequate provision for the needs of the emigrants, in religion, in morals, and in economic matters; and this, in turn, will benefit the countries which receive them.

137. We have exhorted all Our children in Christ to avoid the deadly errors which threaten to destroy religion and even human society itself. In writing these words Our thoughts have turned to the bishops, priests, and laymen who have been

driven into exile or held under restraint or in prison because they have refused to abandon the work entrusted to them as bishops and priests and to forsake their Catholic faith.

138. We do not want to offend anyone. On the contrary, We are ready to forgive all freely and to beg this forgiveness of God.

139. But We are conscious of Our sacred duty to do all that We can to defend the rights of Our sons and brethren. Time and time again, therefore, We have asked that all be granted the lawful freedom to which all, including God's Church, are entitled. Those who support truth, justice, and the real interests of men and nations do not refuse liberty, do not extinguish it, do not suppress it. There is no need for them to act this way. The just prosperity of their citizens can be achieved without violence and without oppressing minds and hearts.

140. There is one truth especially which We think is self-evident: when the sacred rights of God and religion are ignored or infringed upon, the foundations of human society will sooner or later crumble and give way. Our predecessor of immortal memory, Leo XIII, expressed this truth well: "It follows . . . that law becomes ineffective and all authority is weakened once the sovereign and eternal rule of God, who commands and forbids, is rejected." [66] Cicero expressed the same idea when he wrote, "You, the priests, are protecting Rome with religion more effectively than she is protected with walls." [67]

141. As We reflect on these truths, We embrace with deep sorrow each and every one of the faithful who is impeded and restricted in the practice of his religion. They indeed often "suffer persecution for justice' sake," [68] and for the sake of the kingdom of God. We share their sorrows, their hardships, their anxieties. We pray and beseech heaven to grant at length the dawn of a happier day. We earnestly desire all Our brethren in Christ and Our children throughout the world to join Us in this prayer. For thus a chorus of holy entreaties will rise from every nation to our merciful God and win a richer shower of graces for these unfortunate members of the mystical Body of Christ.

142. But We ask Our beloved children for more than prayers; We wish to see a renewal of Christian life. This, far more than prayer, will win God's mercy for ourselves and our brethren.

143. We wish to repeat to you again the sublime and beautiful words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, "Whatever things are true, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if there be anything worthy of praise, think upon these things." [69] "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." [70] That is to say, "Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience. . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts; unto that peace, indeed, you were called in one body." [71]

144. If anyone is so unfortunate as to wander far from his divine Redeemer in sin and iniquity, let him return to Him who is "the way, and the truth, and the life." [72] If anyone is lukewarm, slothful, remiss, or neglectful in the practice of his religion, let him arouse his faith and, by the grace of God, nurture, rekindle, and strengthen his virtue. He who "is just, let him be just still, and he who is holy, let him be hallowed still." [73] This is Our earnest plea.

145. There are many today who need our counsel, good example, and assistance, for their lot in life is unhappy and miserable. Do you all, therefore, within the limits of your abilities and resources, perform the works of mercy, for they are most pleasing to God.

146. If each of you strives to accomplish all this that We have recommended, there will shine forth anew in the Church that which was expressed so wonderfully about Christians in the Epistle to Diognetus: "They are in the flesh, but do not live by the flesh. They dwell on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey valid laws and even go beyond the demands of law in the conduct of their lives.... They are not understood, and yet they are condemned; they are put to death, and yet their life is quickened. They are poor, and yet they make many wealthy. They lack all things, and yet they have all in abundance. They are dishonored, and yet in the midst of dishonor they find honor. Their good name is railed at, and yet is presented as evidence of their justice. They receive rebukes and give blessings in return. They suffer abuse and offer praise. When they conduct themselves like honest men, they are punished like criminals. While they are being punished, they rejoice as though they are being rewarded. . . To express the matter simply: what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world." [74]

147. Many of these sublime words apply in a special way to those who are members of the "Church of Silence," for whom we are all especially bound to pray to God, as We recently urged in Our addresses to the faithful in Saint Peter's Basilica on Pentecost Sunday [75] and on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. [76]

148. We anticipate that all of you will achieve this renewal of the Christian life, this holiness and virtue -- not only you who remain steadfastly in the unity of the Church, but all you who with love of truth and with a sincere good will are striving to attain it.

149. With all the love of a father, We impart the Apostolic Blessing to each and every one of you, Venerable Brethren and beloved sons. May it be the occasion and forerunner of heaven's blessings.

150. Written in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the 29th day of June, the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, in the year 1959, the first of Our Pontificate.

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41. 2 Cor. 7.2.
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