

Quae In Patriarchatu

On The Church In Chaldea

Encyclical Of Pope Pius IX

November 16, 1872

To Venerable Brothers, the Archbishops, Bishops, and Beloved Sons, the Monks, and all the Faithful of the Patriarchate of Babylonia of the Chaldeans who have Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brothers and Beloved Sons, Greetings and Apostolic Benediction.

Although we do not believe you to be unaware of those things which were done many years ago and are even still done in the patriarchate of the Chaldean rite, it helps to recall them so that You know how these things came about, what We did, and what remains to be done in order to drive away these dangers threatening Catholic faith and unity. We are afraid that the truth will be obscured by deceptive stories. Our deeds would then either be calumniated or totally distorted. For this reason, We shall follow the example of Our predecessors who, in similar circumstances did not neglect to teach the bishops, clergy, and people about the true situation; we want to do the same in your regard so that We may not seem to neglect any part of our apostolic duty.

The Nestorian Heresy

2 The damage brought to your regions by the Nestorian heresy is so great that like a wild beast from the forest it will destroy the Lord's vineyard which once flourished there and devour it. Because the canonical discipline slowly disappeared, the authority of the popes, perished, the ambition of men who were not God-fearing leapt into ecclesiastical dignities, and the disgrace of the hereditary succession of patriarchs was introduced Catholic doctrine was infected with both the old, nearly worn out errors so that the Christian name seemed to be destroyed. The Roman Pontiffs did not neglect to direct careful attention to these evils. It was yet barely permitted for missionaries to be sent to the East but through their labors and attentions some Nestorian bishops renounced the heresy and returned to the Catholic faith and unity. With what zeal and love these same people were welcomed when they gave letters to Our predecessors or when they

came to Rome after enduring the labors and hardships of a long journey apparent from the acts of the Apostolic See and the letters which We believe still exist in your archives.

Joseph Audo, Bishop of Amadiya

3. Nevertheless hoped for day dawned in which these obstacles were removed from your midst, especially the impediment of the hereditary Succession of the patriarchs and it could be hoped that the Church of the Chaldean rite, might revive and flourish. When the order of ecclesiastical discipline, which is the guardian of faith, had been restored, We hoped that this revival might come about through the work of Joseph Audo who was then the bishop of Amadiya. Moved by this hope, We named him as apostolic vicar of the patriarchate of Chaldea when it became vacant through the resignation of Isaide Yakob. We rejoiced when later We learned that this same man was requested for the patriarchal dignity by the votes of the bishops. We freely confirmed his selection in the consistory of September 11, 1848, and established him as patriarch of Babylonia of the Chaldeans. We strongly defended him from the many opponents already drawing near. Our hope was confirmed not only by the faith and obedience which he promised to us and to Our successors in a sacred oath, as is the custom of all Catholic patriarchs, but also by his respectful letters in which he showed the remarkable feelings of his will and spirit.

Discontent of the Malabars

4. It is true that not long after, he occasionally wrote to Our Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith that letters from the Malabars had been delivered to him. In these letters the Malabars requested the patriarch to give them a bishop of their own rite. They brought complaints and accusations against the Latin missionaries and the bishops carrying out their work in Our name. Even if their complaints were confirmed, that patriarch had no power of jurisdiction among the Malabars, whose complaints should be carefully considered so that We can minister effectively to their spiritual needs. For this reason We began a careful investigation so that We could safely determine what course of action would serve them best. When an explanatory response was delayed it became known (and was proven afterwards by his letter to a Malabar priest by the name of Emmanuel, signed and dated December 21, 1865) that that patriarch aroused the desires of the Malabars, fostered the hope, and suggested the manner by which they would finally be able to fulfill their wish. He advised them to vex the Apostolic See with complaints against the missionaries and with numerous requests. Meanwhile We desired to solve the matter gently. We took care to instruct Our pro-delegate in Mesopotamia to dissuade the patriarch from his undertakings. He was also advised that he should not dare to do anything in regard to the Malabars.

5. He was not obedient to our command and insisted that the region of the Malabars rightly came under his jurisdiction. While Henry Amanton, who was

bishop of Arcadiopolis and Our delegate in Mesopotamia, vainly opposed him and forbade his actions under threat of censures, he chose Thomas Rocos from his household, raised him to the rank of bishop, and sent him to Malabar. He went there and stated falsely that he was sent from the patriarch by Our command. He usurped the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and promoted many unworthy people to holy orders. Moved by his audacious works and aroused by the complaints of the Malabar priests, We commanded Bernardino, Archbishop of Pharsalia, who at that time presided over the church with Our vicarial power, to warn Bishop Thomas to leave that place or to excommunicate him if he refused, which is what happened. Meanwhile the patriarch was called to Rome and seriously censured for his deeds. We ordered him to recall Bishop Rocos whom he had heedlessly sent into Malabar. We graciously granted the patriarch the pardon and absolution from censures which he requested.

6. We then ordered the whole matter to be considered by the cardinals of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith Concerning the Affairs of the Oriental Rite in a meeting held on March 6, 1865. In this meeting, after everything had been considered, a unanimous decision was reached. It was decided not to allow the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Babylonia of the Chaldeans to be extended to the Malabars. Many things were settled upon at the same time both in order to bring about the safety of the Malabars and to quiet the discords which were aroused among the Chaldeans because of those things which the patriarch had done heedlessly. The patriarch sadly agreed, or at least seemed to agree, to these apostolic orders. His later deeds confirmed this opinion. And even if We were grieved that he had not acted rightly, he showed himself to be obedient to Us and respectful of Our authority. He even showed himself as a model of obedience both in Our published decree in which we abrogated the censures heedlessly brought by him as well as in the refusal of episcopal consecration to a certain Malabar which many proponents of new ideas in that region continually requested from him.

Restoration of Ecclesiastical Discipline

7. While these matters were occurring, which We Ourselves and the Apostolic See had desired for a long time, We led an examination of the Chaldean Church in order to restore the ecclesiastical discipline which was in a state of ruin. We maintained those rites which had been established by the holy fathers and had been approved by the Apostolic See. This project of Ours was made known to the patriarch by Our Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith on September 3, 1868; at the same time a copy of Our constitution published on July 12, 1861 was sent to him in which some chapters were devoted to discipline, especially in the selection of bishops. These principles ought to be maintained in the Armenian patriarchate. When he accepted these things, first through Bishop Elias Mellus who was then at Rome, then by his letter[1] to the aforementioned Congregation, he wanted it to be known to Us: that he fully agreed to what extent certain rules concerning the election of bishops should be followed; that he was optimistic about arranging episcopal elections (which had been omitted) if it seemed useful and

appropriate to Us; and that he wanted that which is pleasing to Us to be accomplished at all times. When two churches of the Chaldean rites, Amida and Mardin, lost their shepherds, he proposed to us the names of several priests so that We could judge which ones were more worthy and could place them at the head of those dioceses by Our authority. We did this in Our apostolic letter dated March 22, 1869. We were moved by these manifestations of devotion and obedience; when he humbly explained that he preferred that the man We had chosen for Amida be placed instead over Mardin as bishop, we consented.

8. Not long after this We decided that the arrangement of discipline in the patriarchate of the Chaldean rite ought to be spread. The starting point should be the proper selection of bishops. Unless well-respected men who do everything according to the will of God, are selected, serious injuries and almost incurable losses befall the Church. The history of all times and places is witness to this, and experience confirms it. To this end and in the same spirit, We published the apostolic constitution which begins with the words Cum ecclesiastica disciplina on August 31, 1869. Concerning the election of bishops what the patriarch, as We mentioned above, did freely for the dioceses of Amida and Mardin was established: namely that when an episcopal see is vacant, three respected men should be proposed to Us by the synod of bishops so that We might decide which one is most worthy and place him over the vacant diocese. Moreover, if anything should be attempted contrary to these instructions, it should be declared null and void.

Infidelity of Chaldean Patriarch

9. The ecumenical Vatican Council had been announced and bishops of every nation and rite had been summoned to it. Among them was the Chaldean patriarch with almost all the bishops of his rite. However We quickly noticed that he who had shown Us many signs of reverence and obedience had changed very much. Lately he had refused to consecrate as bishops of the aforementioned churches, Amida and Mardin, Peter Attar and Gabriel Farso whom We chose from those he had proposed, although We had even assigned a church to each of them as he preferred. Then when he was about to leave the city, We ordered him to make a declaration of support and submission to the Constitution on the Church of Christ which was published in the fourth session of the ecumenical Vatican Council, which he had not attended. Indeed, We exhorted him and called to witness the example of the other bishops who were not at the fourth session and did not hesitate to make the declaration. He first devised delays and sought evasion and then declared stubbornly that he would be more useful after he had returned to his See. He promised at the same time that he would omit nothing which might satisfy Us. This deed brought Us great sorrow and anxiety which increased when he went to Constantinople surrounded by the flatteries and deceptions of the neo-schismatic Armenians and aroused by their example. He did not hesitate to occasionally share the sacraments with them. And while he professed his fidelity to the civil laws, he insinuated that Our apostolic constitutions were opposed to them. It happened at the same time that he neglected to show the necessary courtesies to Our

extraordinary legate who was then living in Constantinople. He also totally ignored the letter of warning sent by Our Congregation. Moreover, once he returned to Mesopotamia, he consorted with promoters of novelties and said many things rashly which, as it is reported, could be reconciled neither with the office of a Catholic bishop nor with the orthodox faith.

10. We were greatly saddened when We heard these things. The precept the Lord gave to Peter to strengthen his brothers came to mind together with the duty to watch over the Lord's flock and to obtain the salvation of souls. The condition to which Timothy, the Archbishop of the Chaldeans of Amida, was reduced by the hostility and the deceptions of certain people who claimed to be supporters of the patriarch seemed very serious to Us. He felt the patriarch's hostility toward him. Time and again he presented his sorrowful complaints to Us and his entreaties that We allow him to leave the episcopal office. We accepted Timothy's resignation and commanded Zachary Bishop of Maronea to meet Patriarch Mauxilius so that Mauxilius could establish him as Apostolic Delegate of the diocese of Amida. The patriarch preferred Zachary to Timothy. Zachary was told to persuade the patriarch to take the required oath of loyalty and to submit himself finally to the decrees of the fourth session of the Vatican Council. This was entirely necessary for the patriarch not only because the decrees are opposed to those things which the Neoschismatic Armenians babble and because the patriarch's behavior after his return was astonishing to the faithful, but also so that he might consider his eternal salvation and remove this scandal or at least forestall what was already rising from his silence.

11. Mindful of these warnings, the patriarch gave his agreement and signed the declaration of support adding a statement declaring that he wanted all his patriarchal rights and privileges to be preserved. We could suspect that this was done insincerely. Nevertheless, considering his long standing faith (which he recalled in his declaration) and the power which the wicked exercised against him, and bearing in mind His example of whom it is written, "He does not break the crushed reed, nor put out the smoldering wick,"[2] We preferred to see in that statement a legitimate desire of the patriarch, rather than an adverse situation or a restriction of his profession of faith. For this reason, We decided that his act of loyalty should be accepted, so that We might declare in what spirit We intended to receive it and thus might communicate Catholic teaching concerning the primacy of the pope and the rights of patriarchs. Therefore, We gave this apostolic letter to him on November 16, 1872.

1. Letters dated 31 July 1868 and 24 May 1869.
2. Is 42.3; Mt 12.20.