



The Holy See

SUMMI PONTIFICATUS

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PIUS XII

ON THE UNITY OF HUMAN SOCIETY

TO OUR VENERABLE BRETHREN: THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES,

ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS, AND OTHER ORDINARIES

IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE

Venerable Brethren;

Health and Apostolic Benediction. In the very year which marks the fortieth anniversary of the consecration of mankind to our Redeemer's Most Sacred Heart, the inscrutable counsel of the Lord, for no merit of Ours, has laid upon Us the exalted dignity and grave care of the Supreme Pontificate; for that consecration was proclaimed by Our immortal predecessor, Leo XIII, at the beginning of the Holy Year which closed the last century.² And We, as a newly ordained priest, then just empowered to recite "I will go in to the altar of God" (*Psalms* xiii. 4), hailed the Encyclical *Annum Sacrum* with genuine approval, enthusiasm and delight as a message from heaven. We associated Ourselves in fervent admiration with the motives and aims which inspired and directed the truly providential action of a Pontiff so sure in his diagnosis of the open and hidden needs and sores of his day. It is only natural, then, that We should today feel profoundly grateful to Providence for having designed that the first year of Our Pontificate should be associated with a memory so precious and so dear of Our first year of priesthood, and that We should take the opportunity of paying homage to the King of kings and Lord of lords (*I Timothy* vi. 15; *Apocalypse* xix. 6) as a kind of Introit prayer to Our Pontificate, in the spirit of Our renowned predecessor and in the faithful accomplishment of his designs, and that, in fine, We should make of it the alpha and omega of Our aims, of Our hopes, of Our teaching, of Our activity, of Our patience and of Our sufferings, by consecrating them all to the spread of the Kingdom of Christ.³ As We review from the standpoint of eternity the past forty years in their exterior events and interior developments, balancing achievements against deficiencies, We see ever more clearly the sacred significance of that consecration of mankind to Christ the King; We see its inspiring symbolism We see its power to refine and to elevate, to strengthen and to fortify souls. We see, besides, in that consecration a penetrating wisdom which sets itself to restore and to ennoble all human society and to promote its true welfare. It unfolds itself to Us ever more clearly as a message of comfort and a grace from God not only to His Church, but also to a world in all too dire need of help and guidance: to a world which, preoccupied with the worship of the ephemeral, has lost its way and spent its forces in a vain search after earthly ideals. It is a message to

men who, in ever increasing numbers, have cut themselves off from faith in Christ and, even more, from the recognition and observance of His law; a message opposed to that philosophy of life for which the doctrine of love and renunciation preached in the Sermon on the Mount and the Divine act of love on the Cross seem to be a stumbling block and foolishness.⁴ Even as the precursor of the Lord proclaimed one day to those who sought and questioned him: "Behold the lamb of God" (*Saint John* i. 29), in order to warn them that the desired of the nations (cf. *Aggeus* ii. 8), dwelt, though as yet unrecognized, in their midst, so, too, the representative of Christ addressed his mighty cry of entreaty: "Behold your King" (*Saint John* xix. 14) to the renegades, to the doubters, to the wavering, to the hesitant, who either refused to follow the glorious Redeemer, living ever and working in His Church, or followed Him with carelessness and sloth.⁵ From the widening and deepening of devotion to the Divine Heart of the Redeemer, which had its splendid culmination in the consecration of humanity at the end of the last century, and further in the introduction, by Our immediate predecessor of happy memory, of the Feast of Christ the King, there have sprung up benefits beyond description for numberless souls - as the stream of the river which maketh the City of God joyful (*Psalms* xlv. 5). What age had greater need than ours of these benefits? What age has been, for all its technical and purely civic progress, more tormented than ours by spiritual emptiness and deep-felt interior poverty? May we not, perhaps, apply to it the prophetic words of the Apocalypse: "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Apocalypse iii. 17.)⁶ Can there be, Venerable Brethren, a greater or more urgent duty than to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (*Ephesians* iii. 8) to the men of our time? Can there be anything nobler than to unfurl the "Ensign of the King" before those who have followed and still follow a false standard, and to win back to the victorious banner of the Cross those who have abandoned it? What heart is not inflamed, is not swept forward to help at the sight of so many brothers and sisters who, misled by error, passion, temptation and prejudice, have strayed away from faith in the true God and have lost contact with the joyful and life-giving message of Christ?⁷ Who among "the Soldiers of Christ" - ecclesiastic or layman - does not feel himself incited and spurred on to a greater vigilance, to a more determined resistance, by the sight of the ever-increasing host of Christ's enemies; as he perceives the spokesmen of these tendencies deny or in practice neglect the vivifying truths and the values inherent in belief in God and in Christ; as he perceives them wantonly break the Tables of God's Commandments to substitute other tables and other standards stripped of the ethical content of the Revelation on Sinai, standards in which the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Cross has no place?⁸ Who could observe without profound grief the tragic harvest of such desertions among those who in days of calm and security were numbered among the followers of Christ, but who - Christians unfortunately more in name than in fact - in the hour that called for endurance, for effort, for suffering, for a stout heart in face of hidden or open persecution, fell victims of cowardice, weakness, uncertainty; who, terror-stricken before the sacrifices entailed by a profession of their Christian Faith, could not steel themselves to drink the bitter chalice awaiting those faithful to Christ?⁹ In such dispositions of time and temperament, Venerable Brethren, may the approaching Feast of Christ the King, on which this, Our first Encyclical, will reach you, be a day of grace and of thorough renewal and revival in the spirit of the Kingdom of Christ. May it be a day when the consecration of the human race to the Divine Heart, which should be celebrated in a particularly solemn manner, will gather the Faithful of all peoples and all nations around the throne of the Eternal King, in adoration and in reparation, to renew now and forever their oath of allegiance to Him and to His law of truth and of love.¹⁰ May it be for the Faithful a day of grace, on which the fire that Our Lord came to cast upon the earth will kindle with ever greater light and purity. May it be a day of grace for the lukewarm, for the weary, for the afflicted, that their heads, which have become faint, may give proofs of interior renewal and regeneration of spirit. May it be a day of grace also for those who have not known Christ or who have lost Him; a day when from millions of faithful hearts will rise to Heaven the prayer that "the Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" (*Saint John* i. 9) may make

clear to them the way of salvation, that His grace may stir in the "troubled heart" of the wanderers a homesickness for things eternal, a homesickness that impels them to return to Him, Who from His sorrowful throne of the Cross thirsts for their souls also and Who is consumed by a desire to become for them, too, "the Way, and the Truth and the Life" (*Saint John* xiv. 6).¹¹ As, with a heart full of confidence and hope, We place this first Encyclical of Our Pontificate under the Seal of Christ the King, We feel entirely assured of the unanimous and enthusiastic approval of the whole flock of Christ. The difficulties, anxieties and trials of the present hour arouse, intensify and refine, to a degree rarely attained, the sense of solidarity in the Catholic family. They make all believers in God and in Christ share the consciousness of a common threat from a common danger.¹² We witnessed a consoling and memorable display of this Catholic solidarity, greatly intensified in such difficult circumstances - the serried ranks, the assurance, the resolution, the will to win - in those days when, with faltering step but with confidence in God, We took possession of the chair left vacant by the death of Our great predecessor.¹³ We cherish the memory of the many testimonies of filial attachment to the Church and to the Vicar of Christ, and of the ovation so genuine, so enthusiastic, and so spontaneous accorded to Us on the occasion of Our election and coronation; and We gladly take this opportune occasion to address to you, Venerable Brethren, and to all who belong to the flock of the Lord, a word of sincere gratitude for that orderly manifestation of reverent love and of steadfast loyalty to the Papacy, in which one could see recognition of the God-given mission of the High Priest and of the Supreme Pastor.¹⁴ For, We well know it, all those manifestations were not and could not have been addressed to Our poor person but to the singular and exalted office to which the Lord had raised Us. And though from that first moment We felt all the great weight of responsible cares inseparable from the supreme power given to Us by Divine Providence, it was a consolation to see that magnificent and tangible demonstration of the indissoluble unity of the Catholic Church rallying all the closer to the impregnable Rock of Peter, to form around it a wall and a bulwark as the enemies of Christ become bolder.¹⁵ This same manifestation of world-wide Catholic solidarity and of supernatural brotherhood of peoples around their Common Father, seemed to Us all the richer in fair hopes in view of the tragic circumstances, both material and spiritual, of the moment. That memory has continued to comfort Us also in the first months of Our Pontificate in which We have already witnessed the toil, the anxiety, and the trials with which the path of the Spouse of Christ across the world is strewn.¹⁶ Nor can We pass over in silence the profound impression of heartfelt gratitude made on Us by the good wishes of those who, though not belonging to the visible body of the Catholic Church, have given noble and sincere expression to their appreciation of all that unites them to Us in love for the Person of Christ or in belief in God. We wish to express Our gratitude to them all. We entrust them one and all to the protection and to the guidance of the Lord and We assure them solemnly that one thought only fills Our mind: to imitate the example of the Good Shepherd in order to bring true happiness to all men: "that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (*Saint John* x. 10).¹⁷ But We must, in obedience to an inner prompting, make special mention of Our gratitude for the tokens of reverent homage which we have had from the Sovereigns, heads of States and Governments of those nations with which the Holy See is in friendly relations. Our heart is joyous especially at the thought that We can, in this first Encyclical directed to the whole Christian people scattered over the world, rank among such friendly powers Our dear Italy, fruitful garden of the Faith, which was planted by the Princes of the Apostles. For, as a result of the Lateran Pacts, her representative occupies a place of honor among those officially accredited to the Apostolic See. "The Peace of Christ restored to Italy," like a new dawn of brotherly union in religious and in civil intercourse, had its beginning in these Pacts. We pray God that, in the serene atmosphere of that peace, He may pervade, revivify, strengthen and fortify the hearts of the Italian people, so close to Us, in the midst of which We live, with which We share the very air We breathe. We hope and trust that people, so dear to Our predecessors and to Us, may be faithful to its glorious Catholic tradition, and experience through the Divine Protection ever more that truth of the Psalmist: "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (*Psalms* cxiii. 15).¹⁸

This happy new juridical and spiritual position which that achievement, destined to make an indelible mark in history, has secured and sealed for Italy and for the whole Catholic world, never appeared to Us so impressive in its unifying effects as when, from the lofty loggia of the Vatican Basilica, We opened and raised Our arms and Our hand for the first time in blessing over Rome - Rome, the Seat of the Papacy and Our own dear birthplace - over Italy reconciled with the Church, and over the peoples of the entire world.¹⁹ As Vicar of Him Who in a decisive hour pronounced before the highest earthly authority of that day, the great words: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, hearest My voice" (*Saint John* xviii. 37), We feel We owe no greater debt to Our office and to Our time than to testify to the truth with Apostolic firmness: "to give testimony to the truth." This duty necessarily entails the exposition and confutation of errors and human faults; for these must be made known before it is possible to tend and to heal them. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (*Saint John* viii. 32).²⁰ In the fulfillment of this, Our duty, we shall not let Ourselves be influenced by earthly considerations nor be held back by mistrust or opposition, by rebuffs or lack of appreciation of Our words, nor yet by fear of misconceptions and misinterpretations. We shall fulfill Our duty, animated ever with that paternal charity which, while it suffers from the evils which afflict Our children, at the same time points out to them the remedy; We shall strive to imitate the Divine Model of shepherds, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, Who is light as well as love: "Doing the truth in charity" (*Ephesians* iv. 15).²¹ At the head of the road which leads to the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of the present day stand the nefarious efforts of not a few to dethrone Christ; the abandonment of the law of truth which He proclaimed and of the law of love which is the life breath of His Kingdom.²² In the recognition of the royal prerogatives of Christ and in the return of individuals and of society to the law of His truth and of His love lies the only way to salvation.²³ Venerable Brethren, as We write these lines the terrible news comes to Us that the dread tempest of war is already raging despite all Our efforts to avert it. When We think of the wave of suffering that has come on countless people who but yesterday enjoyed in the environment of their homes some little degree of well-being, We are tempted to lay down Our pen. Our paternal heart is torn by anguish as We look ahead to all that will yet come forth from the baneful seed of violence and of hatred for which the sword today ploughs the blood-drenched furrow.²⁴ But precisely because of this apocalyptic foresight of disaster, imminent and remote, We feel We have a duty to raise with still greater insistence the eyes and hearts of those in whom there yet remains good will to the One from Whom alone comes the salvation of the world - to One Whose almighty and merciful Hand can alone calm this tempest - to the One Whose truth and Whose love can enlighten the intellects and inflame the hearts of so great a section of mankind plunged in error, selfishness, strife and struggle, so as to give it a new orientation in the spirit of the Kingship of Christ.²⁵ Perhaps - God grant it - one may hope that this hour of direct need may bring a change of outlook and sentiment to those many who, till now, have walked with blind faith along the path of popular modern errors unconscious of the treacherous and insecure ground on which they trod. Perhaps the many who have not grasped the importance of the educational and pastoral mission of the Church will now understand better her warnings, scouted in the false security of the past. No defense of Christianity could be more effective than the present straits. From the immense vortex of error and anti-Christian movements there has come forth a crop of such poignant disasters as to constitute a condemnation surpassing in its conclusiveness any merely theoretical refutation.²⁶ Hours of painful disillusionment are often hours of grace - "a passage of the Lord" (cf. *Exodus* xii. 11), when doors which in other circumstances would have remained shut, open at Our Savior's words: "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock" (*Apocalypse* iii. 20). God knows that Our heart goes out in affectionate sympathy and spiritual joy to those who, as a result of such painful trials, feel within them an effective and salutary thirst for the truth, justice and peace of Christ. But for those also for whom as yet the hour of light from on high has not come, Our heart knows only love, Our lips move only in prayer to the Father of Light that He may cause to shine in their hearts, indifferent as yet or hostile to Christ, a ray of

that Light which once transformed Saul into Paul; of that Light which has shown its mysterious power strongest in the times of greatest difficulty for the Church.²⁷ A full statement of the doctrinal stand to be taken in face of the errors of today, if necessary, can be put off to another time unless there is disturbance by calamitous external events; for the moment We limit Ourselves to some fundamental observations.²⁸ The present age, Venerable Brethren, by adding new errors to the doctrinal aberrations of the past, has pushed these to extremes which lead inevitably to a drift towards chaos. Before all else, it is certain that the radical and ultimate cause of the evils which We deplore in modern society is the denial and rejection of a universal norm of morality as well for individual and social life as for international relations; We mean the disregard, so common nowadays, and the forgetfulness of the natural law itself, which has its foundation in God, Almighty Creator and Father of all, supreme and absolute Lawgiver, all-wise and just Judge of human actions. When God is hated, every basis of morality is undermined; the voice of conscience is stilled or at any rate grows very faint, that voice which teaches even to the illiterate and to uncivilized tribes what is good and what is bad, what lawful, what forbidden, and makes men feel themselves responsible for their actions to a Supreme Judge.²⁹ The denial of the fundamentals of morality had its origin, in Europe, in the abandonment of that Christian teaching of which the Chair of Peter is the depository and exponent. That teaching had once given spiritual cohesion to a Europe which, educated, ennobled and civilized by the Cross, had reached such a degree of civil progress as to become the teacher of other peoples, of other continents. But, cut off from the infallible teaching authority of the Church, not a few separated brethren have gone so far as to overthrow the central dogma of Christianity, the Divinity of the Savior, and have hastened thereby the progress of spiritual decay.³⁰ The Holy Gospel narrates that when Jesus was crucified "there was darkness over the whole earth" (*Matthew xxvii. 45*); a terrifying symbol of what happened and what still happens spiritually wherever incredulity, blind and proud of itself, has succeeded in excluding Christ from modern life, especially from public life, and has undermined faith in God as well as faith in Christ. The consequence is that the moral values by which in other times public and private conduct was gauged have fallen into disuse; and the much vaunted civilization of society, which has made ever more rapid progress, withdrawing man, the family and the State from the beneficent and regenerating effects of the idea of God and the teaching of the Church, has caused to reappear, in regions in which for many centuries shone the splendors of Christian civilization, in a manner ever clearer, ever more distinct, ever more distressing, the signs of a corrupt and corrupting paganism: "There was darkness when they crucified Jesus" (Roman Breviary, Good Friday, Response Five).³¹ Many perhaps, while abandoning the teaching of Christ, were not fully conscious of being led astray by a mirage of glittering phrases, which proclaimed such estrangement as an escape from the slavery in which they were before held; nor did they then foresee the bitter consequences of bartering the truth that sets free, for error which enslaves. They did not realize that, in renouncing the infinitely wise and paternal laws of God, and the unifying and elevating doctrines of Christ's love, they were resigning themselves to the whim of a poor, fickle human wisdom; they spoke of progress, when they were going back; of being raised, when they groveled; of arriving at man's estate, when they stooped to servility. They did not perceive the inability of all human effort to replace the law of Christ by anything equal to it; "they became vain in their thoughts" (*Romans i. 21*).³² With the weakening of faith in God and in Jesus Christ, and the darkening in men's minds of the light of moral principles, there disappeared the indispensable foundation of the stability and quiet of that internal and external, private and public order, which alone can support and safeguard the prosperity of States.³³ It is true that even when Europe had a cohesion of brotherhood through identical ideals gathered from Christian preaching, she was not free from divisions, convulsions and wars which laid her waste; but perhaps they never felt the intense pessimism of today as to the possibility of settling them, for they had then an effective moral sense of the just and of the unjust, of the lawful and of the unlawful, which, by restraining outbreaks of passion, left the way open to an honorable settlement. In Our days, on the contrary, dissensions come not only from the surge of rebellious

passion, but also from a deep spiritual crisis which has overthrown the sound principles of private and public morality.³⁴ Among the many errors which derive from the poisoned source of religious and moral agnosticism, We would draw your attention, Venerable Brethren, to two in particular, as being those which more than others render almost impossible or at least precarious and uncertain, the peaceful intercourse of peoples.³⁵ The first of these pernicious errors, widespread today, is the forgetfulness of that law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men, to whatever people they belong, and by the redeeming Sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ on the Altar of the Cross to His Heavenly Father on behalf of sinful mankind.³⁶ In fact, the first page of the Scripture, with magnificent simplicity, tells us how God, as a culmination to His creative work, made man to His Own image and likeness (cf. *Genesis* i. 26, 27); and the same Scripture tells us that He enriched man with supernatural gifts and privileges, and destined him to an eternal and ineffable happiness. It shows us besides how other men took their origin from the first couple, and then goes on, in unsurpassed vividness of language, to recount their division into different groups and their dispersion to various parts of the world. Even when they abandoned their Creator, God did not cease to regard them as His children, who, according to His merciful plan, should one day be reunited once more in His friendship (cf. *Genesis* xii. 3).³⁷ The Apostle of the Gentiles later on makes himself the herald of this truth which associates men as brothers in one great family, when he proclaims to the Greek world that God "hath made of one, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times, and the limits of their habitation, that they should seek God" (*Acts* xvii. 26, 27).³⁸ A marvelous vision, which makes us see the human race in the unity of one common origin in God "one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all" (*Ephesians* iv. 6); in the unity of nature which in every man is equally composed of material body and spiritual, immortal soul; in the unity of the immediate end and mission in the world; in the unity of dwelling place, the earth, of whose resources all men can by natural right avail themselves, to sustain and develop life; in the unity of the supernatural end, God Himself, to Whom all should tend; in the unity of means to secure that end.³⁹ It is the same Apostle who portrays for us mankind in the unity of its relations with the Son of God, image of the invisible God, in Whom all things have been created: "In Him were all things created" (*Colossians* i. 16); in the unity of its ransom, effected for all by Christ, Who, through His Holy and most bitter passion, restored the original friendship with God which had been broken, making Himself the Mediator between God and men: "For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I *Timothy* ii. 5).⁴⁰ And to render such friendship between God and mankind more intimate, this same Divine and universal Mediator of salvation and of peace, in the sacred silence of the Supper Room, before He consummated the Supreme Sacrifice, let fall from His divine Lips the words which reverberate mightily down the centuries, inspiring heroic charity in a world devoid of love and torn by hate: "This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you" (*Saint John* xv. 12).⁴¹ These are supernatural truths which form a solid basis and the strongest possible bond of a union, that is reinforced by the love of God and of our Divine Redeemer, from Whom all receive salvation "for the edifying of the Body of Christ: until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ" (*Ephesians* iv. 12, 13).⁴² In the light of this unity of all mankind, which exists in law and in fact, individuals do not feel themselves isolated units, like grains of sand, but united by the very force of their nature and by their internal destiny, into an organic, harmonious mutual relationship which varies with the changing of times.⁴³ And the nations, despite a difference of development due to diverse conditions of life and of culture, are not destined to break the unity of the human race, but rather to enrich and embellish it by the sharing of their own peculiar gifts and by that reciprocal interchange of goods which can be possible and efficacious only when a mutual love and a lively sense of charity unite all the sons of the same Father and all those redeemed by the same Divine Blood.⁴⁴ The Church of Christ, the faithful depository of the teaching of Divine Wisdom, cannot and does not think of deprecating or disdaining the

particular characteristics which each people, with jealous and intelligible pride, cherishes and retains as a precious heritage. Her aim is a supernatural union in all-embracing love, deeply felt and practiced, and not the unity which is exclusively external and superficial and by that very fact weak.⁴⁵ The Church hails with joy and follows with her maternal blessing every method of guidance and care which aims at a wise and orderly evolution of particular forces and tendencies having their origin in the individual character of each race, provided that they are not opposed to the duties incumbent on men from their unity of origin and common destiny.⁴⁶ She has repeatedly shown in her missionary enterprises that such a principle of action is the guiding star of her universal apostolate. Pioneer research and investigation, involving sacrifice, devotedness and love on the part of her missionaries of every age, have been undertaken in order to facilitate the deeper appreciative insight into the most varied civilizations and to put their spiritual values to account for a living and vital preaching of the Gospel of Christ. All that in such usages and customs is not inseparably bound up with religious errors will always be subject to kindly consideration and, when it is found possible, will be sponsored and developed.⁴⁷ Our immediate predecessor, of holy and venerated memory, applying such norms to a particularly delicate question, took some generous decisions which are a monument to his insight and to the intensity of his apostolic spirit. Nor need We tell you, Venerable Brethren, that We intend to proceed without hesitation along this way. Those who enter the Church, whatever be their origin or their speech, must know that they have equal rights as children in the House of the Lord, where the law of Christ and the peace of Christ prevail.⁴⁸ In accordance with these principles of equality, the Church devotes her care to forming cultured native clergy and gradually increasing the number of native Bishops. And in order to give external expression to these, Our intentions, We have chosen the forthcoming Feast of Christ the King to raise to the Episcopal dignity at the Tomb of the Apostles twelve representatives of widely different peoples and races. In the midst of the disruptive contrasts which divide the human family, may this solemn act proclaim to all Our sons, scattered over the world, that the spirit, the teaching and the work of the Church can never be other than that which the Apostle of the Gentiles preached: "putting on the new, (man) him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of him that created him. Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all" (*Colossians* iii. 10, 11).⁴⁹ Nor is there any fear lest the consciousness of universal brotherhood aroused by the teaching of Christianity, and the spirit which it inspires, be in contrast with love of traditions or the glories of one's fatherland, or impede the progress of prosperity or legitimate interests. For that same Christianity teaches that in the exercise of charity we must follow a God-given order, yielding the place of honor in our affections and good works to those who are bound to us by special ties. Nay, the Divine Master Himself gave an example of this preference for His Own country and fatherland, as He wept over the coming destruction of the Holy City. But legitimate and well-ordered love of our native country should not make us close our eyes to the all-embracing nature of Christian Charity, which calls for consideration of others and of their interests in the pacifying light of love.⁵⁰ Such is the marvelous doctrine of love and peace which has been such an ennobling factor in the civil and religious progress of mankind. And the heralds who proclaimed it, moved by supernatural charity, not only tilled the land and cared for the sick, but above all they reclaimed, moulded and raised life to divine heights, directing it toward the summit of sanctity in which everything is seen in the light of God. They have raised mansions and temples which show to what lofty and kindly heights the Christian ideal urges man; but above all they have made of men, wise or ignorant, strong or weak, living temples of God and branches of the very vine which is Christ. They have handed on to future generations the treasures of ancient art and wisdom and have secured for them that inestimable gift of eternal wisdom which links men as brothers by the common recognition of a supernatural ownership.⁵¹ Venerable Brethren, forgetfulness of the law of universal charity - of that charity which alone can consolidate peace by extinguishing hatred and softening envies and dissensions - is the source of very grave evils for peaceful relations between nations.⁵² But

there is yet another error no less pernicious to the well-being of the nations and to the prosperity of that great human society which gathers together and embraces within its confines all races. It is the error contained in those ideas which do not hesitate to divorce civil authority from every kind of dependence upon the Supreme Being - First Source and absolute Master of man and of society - and from every restraint of a Higher Law derived from God as from its First Source. Thus they accord the civil authority an unrestricted field of action that is at the mercy of the changeful tide of human will, or of the dictates of casual historical claims, and of the interests of a few.⁵³ Once the authority of God and the sway of His law are denied in this way, the civil authority as an inevitable result tends to attribute to itself that absolute autonomy which belongs exclusively to the Supreme Maker. It puts itself in the place of the Almighty and elevates the State or group into the last end of life, the supreme criterion of the moral and juridical order, and therefore forbids every appeal to the principles of natural reason and of the Christian conscience. We do not, of course, fail to recognize that, fortunately, false principles do not always exercise their full influence, especially when age-old Christian traditions, on which the peoples have been nurtured, remain still deeply, even if unconsciously, rooted in their hearts.⁵⁴ None the less, one must not forget the essential insufficiency and weakness of every principle of social life which rests upon a purely human foundation, is inspired by merely earthly motives and relies for its force on the sanction of a purely external authority.⁵⁵ Where the dependence of human right upon the Divine is denied, where appeal is made only to some insecure idea of a merely human authority, and an autonomy is claimed which rests only upon a utilitarian morality, there human law itself justly forfeits in its more weighty application the moral force which is the essential condition for its acknowledgment and also for its demand of sacrifices.⁵⁶ It is quite true that power based on such weak and unsteady foundations can attain at times, under chance circumstances, material successes apt to arouse wonder in superficial observers.⁵⁷ But the moment comes when the inevitable law triumphs, which strikes down all that has been constructed upon a hidden or open disproportion between the greatness of the material and outward success, and the weakness of the inward value and of its moral foundation. Such disproportion exists whenever public authority disregards or denies the dominion of the Supreme Lawgiver, Who, as He has given rulers power, has also set and marked its bounds.⁵⁸ Indeed, as Our great predecessor, Leo XIII, wisely taught in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei*, it was the Creator's will that civil sovereignty should regulate social life after the dictates of an order changeless in its universal principles; should facilitate the attainment in the temporal order, by individuals, of physical, intellectual and moral perfection; and should aid them to reach their supernatural end.⁵⁹ Hence, it is the noble prerogative and function of the State to control, aid and direct the private and individual activities of national life that they converge harmoniously towards the common good. That good can neither be defined according to arbitrary ideas nor can it accept for its standard primarily the material prosperity of society, but rather it should be defined according to the harmonious development and the natural perfection of man. It is for this perfection that society is designed by the Creator as a means.⁶⁰ To consider the State as something ultimate to which everything else should be subordinated and directed, cannot fail to harm the true and lasting prosperity of nations. This can happen either when unrestricted dominion comes to be conferred on the State as having a mandate from the nation, people, or even a social order, or when the State arrogates such dominion to itself as absolute master, despotically, without any mandate whatsoever. If, in fact, the State lays claim to and directs private enterprises, these, ruled as they are by delicate and complicated internal principles which guarantee and assure the realization of their special aims, may be damaged to the detriment of the public good, by being wrenched from their natural surroundings, that is, from responsible private action.⁶¹ Further, there would be danger lest the primary and essential cell of society, the family, with its well-being and its growth, should come to be considered from the narrow standpoint of national power, and lest it be forgotten that man and the family are by nature anterior to the State, and that the Creator has given to both of them powers and rights and has assigned them a mission and a charge that correspond to undeniable natural

requirements.⁶² The education of the new generation in that case would not aim at the balanced and harmonious development of the physical powers and of all the intellectual and moral qualities, but at a one-sided formation of those civic virtues that are considered necessary for attaining political success, while the virtues which give society the fragrance of nobility, humanity and reverence would be inculcated less, for fear they should detract from the pride of the citizen.⁶³ Before Us stand out with painful clarity the dangers We fear will accrue to this and coming generations from the neglect or nonrecognition, the minimizing and the gradual abolition of the rights peculiar to the family. Therefore We stand up as determined defenders of those rights in the full consciousness of the duty imposed on Us by Our Apostolic office. The stress of our times, as well external as internal, material and spiritual alike, and the manifold errors with their countless repercussions are tasted by none so bitterly as by that noble little cell, the family.⁶⁴ True courage and a heroism worthy in its degree of admiration and respect, are often necessary to support the hardships of life, the daily weight of misery, growing want and restrictions on a scale never before experienced, whose reason and necessity are not always apparent. Whoever has the care of souls and can search hearts, knows the hidden tears of mothers, the resigned sorrow of so many fathers, the countless bitterness of which no statistics tell nor can tell He sees with sad eyes the mass of sufferings ever on the increase; he knows how the powers of disorder and destruction stand on the alert ready to make use of all these things for their dark designs.⁶⁵ No one of good-will and vision will think of refusing the State, in the exceptional conditions of the world of today, correspondingly wider and exceptional rights to meet the popular needs. But even in such emergencies, the moral law, established by God, demands that the lawfulness of each such measure and its real necessity be scrutinized with the greatest rigor according to the standards of the common good.⁶⁶ In any case, the more burdensome the material sacrifices demanded of the individual and the family by the State, the more must the rights of conscience be to it sacred and inviolable. Goods, blood it can demand; but the soul redeemed by God, never. The charge laid by God on parents to provide for the material and spiritual good of their offspring and to procure for them a suitable training saturated with the true spirit of religion, cannot be wrested from them without grave violation of their rights.⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, that formation should aim as well at the preparation of youth to fulfill with intelligent understanding and pride those offices of a noble patriotism which give to one's earthly fatherland all due measure of love, self-devotion and service. But, on the other hand, a formation which forgot or, worse still, deliberately neglected to direct the eyes and hearts of youth to the heavenly country would be an injustice to youth, an injustice against the inalienable duties and rights of the Christian family and an excess to which a check must be opposed, in the interests even of the people and of the State itself.⁶⁸ Such an education might seem perhaps to the rulers responsible for it, a source of increased strength and vigor; it would be, in fact, the opposite, as sad experience would prove. The crime of high treason against the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (I *Timothy* vi. 15; cf. *Apocalypse* xix. 6) perpetrated by an education that is either indifferent or opposed to Christianity, the reversal of "Suffer the little children to come unto me" (*Saint Matthew* xix, 14), would bear most bitter fruits. On the contrary, the State which lifts anxiety from the bleeding and torn hearts of fathers and mothers and restores their rights, only promotes its own internal peace and lays foundations of a happy future for the country. The souls of children given to their parents by God and consecrated in Baptism with the royal character of Christ, are a sacred charge over which watches the jealous love of God. The same Christ Who pronounced the words "Suffer little children to come unto me" has threatened, for all His mercy and goodness, with fearful evils, those who give scandal to those so dear to His heart.⁶⁹ Now what scandal is more permanently harmful to generation after generation, than a formation of youth which is misdirected towards a goal that alienates from Christ "the Way and the Truth and the Life" and leads to open or hidden apostasy from Christ? That Christ from Whom they want to alienate the youthful generations of the present day and of the future, is the same Christ Who has received from His Eternal Father all power in Heaven and on earth. He holds in His omnipotent Hand the destiny of

States, of peoples and of nations. His it is to shorten or prolong life: His to grant increase, prosperity and greatness.⁷⁰ Of all that exists on the face of the earth, the soul alone has deathless life. A system of education that should not respect the sacred precincts of the Christian family, protected by God's holy law, that should attack its foundations, bar to the young the way to Christ, to the Savior's fountains of life and joy (cf. *Isaias* xii. 3), that should consider apostasy from Christ and the Church as a proof of fidelity to the people or a particular class's word: "They that depart from thee, shall be written in the earth" (*Jeremiah* xvii. 13).⁷¹ The idea which credits the State with unlimited authority is not simply an error harmful to the internal life of nations, to their prosperity, and to the larger and well-ordered increase in their well-being, but likewise it injures the relations between peoples, for it breaks the unity of supra-national society, robs the law of nations of its foundation and vigor, leads to violation of others' rights and impedes agreement and peaceful intercourse.⁷² A disposition, in fact, of the divinely sanctioned natural order divides the human race into social groups, nations or States, which are mutually independent in organization and in the direction of their internal life. But for all that, the human race is bound together by reciprocal ties, moral and juridical, into a great commonwealth directed to the good of all nations and ruled by special laws which protect its unity and promote its prosperity.⁷³ Now no one can fail to see how the claim to absolute autonomy for the State stands in open opposition to this natural way that is inherent in man - nay, denies it utterly - and therefore leaves the stability of international relations at the mercy of the will of rulers, while it destroys the possibility of true union and fruitful collaboration directed to the general good.⁷⁴ So, Venerable Brethren, it is indispensable for the existence of harmonious and lasting contacts and of fruitful relations, that the peoples recognize and observe these principles of international natural law which regulate their normal development and activity. Such principles demand respect for corresponding rights to independence, to life and to the possibility of continuous development in the paths of civilization; they demand, further, fidelity to compacts agreed upon and sanctioned in conformity with the principles of the law of nations.⁷⁵ The indispensable presupposition, without doubt, of all peaceful intercourse between nations, and the very soul of the juridical relations in force among them, is mutual trust: the expectation and conviction that each party will respect its plighted word; the certainty that both sides are convinced that "better is wisdom, than weapons of war" (*Ecclesiastes* ix. 18), and are ready to enter into discussion and to avoid recourse to force or to threats of force in case of delays, hindrances, changes or disputes, because all these things can be the result not of bad will, but of changed circumstances and of genuine interests in conflict.⁷⁶ But on the other hand, to tear the law of nations from its anchor in Divine law, to base it on the autonomous will of States, is to dethrone that very law and deprive it of its noblest and strongest qualities. Thus it would stand abandoned to the fatal drive of private interest and collective selfishness exclusively intent on the assertion of its own rights and ignoring those of others.⁷⁷ Now, it is true that with the passage of time and the substantial change of circumstances, which were not and perhaps could not have been foreseen in the making of a treaty, such a treaty or some of its clauses can in fact become, or at least seem to become unjust, impracticable or too burdensome for one of the parties. It is obvious that should such be the case, recourse should be had in good time to a frank discussion with a view to modifying the treaty or making another in its stead. But to consider treaties on principle as ephemeral and tacitly to assume the authority of rescinding them unilaterally when they are no longer to one's advantage, would be to abolish all mutual trust among States. In this way, natural order would be destroyed and there would be seen dug between different peoples and nations trenches of division impossible to refill.⁷⁸ Today, Venerable Brethren, all men are looking with terror into the abyss to which they have been brought by the errors and principles which We have mentioned, and by their practical consequences. Gone are the proud illusions of limitless progress. Should any still fail to grasp this fact, the tragic situation of today would rouse them with the prophet's cry: "Hear, ye deaf and ye blind, behold" (*Isaias* xlii. 18). What used to appear on the outside as order, was nothing but an invasion of disorder: confusion in the principles of moral life. These principles, once divorced

from the majesty of the Divine law, have tainted every field of human activity.⁷⁹ But let us leave the past and turn our eyes towards that future which, according to the promises of the powerful ones of this world, is to consist, once the bloody conflicts of today have ceased, in a new order founded on justice and on prosperity. Will that future be really different; above all, will it be better? Will treaties of peace, will the new international order at the end of this war be animated by justice and by equity towards all, by that spirit which frees and pacifies? Or will there be a lamentable repetition of ancient and of recent errors?⁸⁰ To hope for a decisive change exclusively from the shock of war and its final issue is idle, as experience shows. The hour of victory is an hour of external triumph for the party to whom victory falls, but it is in equal measure the hour of temptation. In this hour the angel of justice strives with the demons of violence; the heart of the victor all too easily is hardened; moderation and farseeing wisdom appear to him weakness; the excited passions of the people, often inflamed by the sacrifices and sufferings they have borne, obscure the vision even of responsible persons and make them inattentive to the warning voice of humanity and equity, which is overwhelmed or drowned in the inhuman cry. "Vae victis, woe to the conquered." There is danger lest settlements and decision born in such conditions be nothing else than injustice under the cloak of justice.⁸¹ No, Venerable Brethren, safety does not come to peoples from external means, from the sword which can impose conditions of peace but does not create peace. Forces that are to renew the face of the earth should proceed from within, from the spirit.⁸² Once the bitterness and the cruel strifes of the present have ceased, the new order of the world, of national and international life, must rest no longer on the quicksands of changeable and ephemeral standards that depend only on the selfish interests of groups and individuals. No, they must rest on the unshakable foundation, on the solid rock of natural law and of Divine Revelation. There the human legislator must attain to that balance, that keen sense of moral responsibility, without which it is easy to mistake the boundary between the legitimate use and the abuse of power. Thus only will his decisions have internal consistency, noble dignity and religious sanction, and be immune from selfishness and passion.⁸³ For true though it is that the evils from which mankind suffers today come in part from economic instability and from the struggle of interests regarding a more equal distribution of the goods which God has given man as a means of sustenance and progress, it is not less true that their root is deeper and more intrinsic, belonging to the sphere of religious belief and moral convictions which have been perverted by the progressive alienation of the peoples from that unity of doctrine, faith, customs and morals which once was promoted by the tireless and beneficent work of the Church. If it is to have any effect, the reeducation of mankind must be, above all things, spiritual and religious. Hence, it must proceed from Christ as from its indispensable foundation; must be actuated by justice and crowned by charity.⁸⁴ The accomplishment of this task of regeneration, by adapting her means to the altered conditions of the times and to the new needs of the human race, is an essential and maternal office of the Church. Committed to her by her Divine Founder, the preaching of the Gospel, by which is inculcated to men truth, justice and charity and the endeavor to implant its precepts solidly in mind and conscience, is the most noble and most fruitful work for peace. That mission would seem as if it ought to discourage by its very grandeur the hearts of those who make up the Church Militant. But that cooperation in the spread of the Kingdom of God which in every century is effected in different ways, with varying instruments, with manifold hard struggles, is a command incumbent on everyone who has been snatched by Divine Grace from the slavery of Satan and called in Baptism to citizenship of the Kingdom of God.⁸⁵ And if belonging to it, living according to its spirit, laboring for its increase and placing its benefits at the disposition of that portion of mankind also which as yet has no part in them, means in our days having to face obstacles and oppositions as vast and deep and minutely organized as never before, that does not dispense a man from the frank, bold profession of our Faith. Rather, it spurs one to stand fast in the conflict even at the price of the greatest sacrifices. Whoever lives by the spirit of Christ refuses to let himself be beaten down by the difficulties which oppose him, but on the contrary feels himself impelled to work with all his strength and with the

fullest confidence in God. He does not draw back before the straits and the necessities of the moment but faces their severity ready to give aid with that love which flees no sacrifice, is stronger than death, and will not be quenched by the rushing waters of tribulation.⁸⁶ It gives Us, Venerable Brethren, an inward strength, a heavenly joy, for which We daily render to God Our deep and humble thanks, to see in every region of the Catholic world evident signs of a spirit which boldly faces the gigantic tasks of our age, which with generous decision is intent on uniting in fruitful harmony the first and essential duty of individual sanctification, and apostolic activity for the spread of the Kingdom of God. From the movement of the Eucharistic Congresses furthered with loving care by Our predecessors and from the collaboration of the laity formed in Catholic Action towards a deep realization of their noble mission, flow forth fountains of grace and reserves of strength, which could hardly be sufficiently prized in the present time, when threats are more numerous, needs multiply and the conflict between Christianity and anti-Christianism grows intense.⁸⁷ At a moment when one is forced to note with sorrow the disproportion between the number of priests and the calls upon them, when one sees that even today the words of Our Savior apply: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few" (*Saint Matthew ix. 37; Saint Luke x.2*), the collaboration of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy, a collaboration indeed given by many and animated with ardent zeal and generous self-devotion, stands out as a precious aid to the work of priests and shows possibilities of development which justify the brightest hopes. The prayer of the Church to the Lord of the Harvest that he send workers into his vineyard (cf. *Saint Matthew ix. 37; Saint Luke x.2*) has been granted to a degree proportionate to the present needs, and in a manner which supplements and completes the powers, often obstructed and inadequate, of the priestly apostolate. Numbers of fervent men and women of youth obedient to the voice of the Supreme Pastor and to the directions of their bishops, consecrate themselves with the full ardor of their souls to the works of the apostolate in order to bring back to Christ the masses of peoples who have been separated from Him.⁸⁸ To them in this moment so critical for the Church and for mankind go out Our paternal greeting, Our deepfelt gratitude, Our confident hope. These have truly placed their lives and their work beneath the standard of Christ the King; and they can say with the Psalmist: "I speak my words to the King" (*Psalms xliv. 1*). "Thy Kingdom come" is not simply the burning desire of their prayer; it is besides, the guide of their activity.⁸⁹ This collaboration of the laity with the priesthood in all classes, categories and groups reveals precious industry and to the laity is entrusted a mission than which noble and loyal hearts could desire none higher nor more consoling. This apostolic work, carried out according to the mind of the Church, consecrates the layman as a kind of "Minister to Christ" in the sense which Saint Augustine explains as follows: "When, Brethren, you hear Our Lord saying: where I am there too will My servant be, do not think solely of good bishops and clerics." You too in your way minister to Christ by a good life, by almsgiving, by preaching His Name and teaching to whom you can. Thus every father should recognize that it is under this title that he owes paternal affection to his family. Let it be for the sake of Christ and for life everlasting, that he admonishes all his household, teaches, exhorts, reproves, shows kindness, corrects; and thus in his own home he will fulfill an ecclesiastical and in a way an episcopal office ministering to Christ, that he may be for ever with Him" (on The Gospel according to Saint John, tract 51, n. 13).⁹⁰ In promoting this participation by the laity in the apostolate, which is so important in our times, the family has a special mission, for it is the spirit of the family that exercises the most powerful influence on that of the rising generation. As long as the sacred flame of the Faith burns on the domestic hearth, and the parents forge and fashion the lives of their children in accordance with this Faith, youth will be ever ready to acknowledge the royal prerogatives of the Redeemer, and to oppose those who wish to exclude Him from society or wrongly to usurp His rights.⁹¹ When churches are closed, when the Image of the Crucified is taken from the schools, the family remains the providential and, in a certain sense, impregnable refuge of Christian life. And We give thanks to God as We see that numberless families accomplish this, their mission, with a fidelity undismayed by combat or by sacrifice. A great host of young men and women, even in those regions where faith

in Christ means suffering and persecution, remain firm around the Throne of the Redeemer with a quiet, steady determination that recalls the most glorious days of the Church's struggles.⁹² What torrents of benefits would be showered on the world; what light, order, what peace would accrue to social life; what unique and precious energies would contribute towards the betterment of mankind, if men would everywhere concede to the Church, teacher of justice and love, that liberty of action to which, in virtue of the Divine Mandate, she has a sacred and indisputable right! What calamities could be averted, what happiness and tranquillity assured, if the social and international forces working to establish peace would let themselves be permeated by the deep lessons of the Gospel of Love in their struggle against individual or collective egoism!⁹³ There is no opposition between the laws that govern the life of faithful Christians and the postulates of a genuine humane humanitarianism, but rather unity and mutual support. In the interests of suffering mankind, shaken to the depths both materially and spiritually, We have no more ardent desire than this: that the present difficulties may open the eyes of many to see Our Lord Jesus Christ and the mission of His Church on this earth in their true light, and that all those who are in power may decide to allow the Church a free course to work for the formation of the rising generation according to the principles of justice and peace.⁹⁴ This work of pacification presupposes that obstacles are not put to the exercise of the mission which God has entrusted to His Church; that the field of this activity is not restricted, and that the masses, and especially youth, are not withdrawn from her beneficent influence.⁹⁵

Accordingly We, as representatives on earth of Him Who was proclaimed by the Prophet "Prince of Peace" (*Isaias* ix. 6) appeal to the rulers of the peoples, and to those who can in any way influence public life, to let the Church have full liberty to fulfill her role as educator by teaching men truth, by inculcating justice and inflaming hearts with the Divine Love of Christ.⁹⁶ While the Church cannot renounce the exercise of this, her mission, which has for its final end to realize here below the Divine plan and to "re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth" (*Ephesians* i. 10) her aid, nonetheless, is shown to be indispensable as never before, now that sad experience teaches that external means and human provisions and political expedients of themselves bring no efficacious healing to the ills which affect mankind.⁹⁷ Taught precisely by the sad failure of human expedients to stave off the tempest that threatens to sweep civilization away, many turn their gaze with renewed hope to the Church, the rock of truth and of charity, to that Chair of Peter from which, they feel, can be restored to mankind that unity of religious teaching and of the moral code which of old gave consistency to pacific international relations.⁹⁸ Unity, towards which, so many, answerable for the destiny of nations, look with regretful yearning as they experience from day to day the vanity of the very means in which once they had placed their trust! Unity, the desired of those many legions of Our sons who daily call upon "The God of Peace and of love" (*II Corinthians* xiii. 11). Unity, the hope of so many noble minds separated from Us, who yet in their hunger and thirst for justice and peace turn their eyes to the See of Peter and from it await guidance and counsel!⁹⁹ These last are recognizing in the Catholic Church principles of belief and life that have stood the test of 2,000 years; the strong cohesion of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, which in union with the Successor of Peter spends itself in enlightening minds with the teaching of the Gospel, in guiding and sanctifying men, and which is generous in its material condescension towards all, but firm when, even at the cost of torments or martyrdom, it has to say: "Non licet; it is not allowed!"¹⁰⁰ And yet, Venerable Brethren, the teaching of Christ, which alone can furnish man with such solid bases of belief as will greatly enlarge his vision, and divinely dilate his heart and supply an efficacious remedy to the very grave difficulties of today - this and the activity of the Church in teaching and spreading that Doctrine, and in forming and modeling men's minds by its precepts, are at times an object of suspicion, as if they shook the foundations of civil authority or usurped its rights.¹⁰¹ Against such suspicions We solemnly declare with Apostolic sincerity that - without prejudice to the declarations regarding the power of Christ and of His Church made by Our predecessor, Pius XI, of venerable memory, in his Encyclical *Quas Primas* of December 11, 1925 - any such aims are entirely alien to that same Church, which

spreads it maternal arms towards this world not to dominate but to serve. She does not claim to take the place of other legitimate authorities in their proper spheres, but offers them her help after the example and in the spirit of her Divine Founder Who "went about doing good" (*Acts* x. 38).¹⁰² The Church preaches and inculcates obedience and respect for earthly authority which derives from God its whole origin and holds to the teaching of her Divine Master Who said: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (*Saint Matthew* xxii. 21); she has no desire to usurp, and sings in the liturgy: "He takes away no earthly realms who gives us the celestial" (hymn for Feast of Epiphany). She does not suppress human energies but lifts them up to all that is noble and generous and forms characters which do not compromise with conscience. Nor has she who civilizes the nations ever retarded the civil progress of mankind, at which on the contrary she is pleased and glad with a mother's pride. The end of her activity was admirably expressed by the Angels over the cradle of the Word Incarnate, when they sang of glory to God and announced peace to men of good will: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will" (*Saint Luke* ii. 14).¹⁰³ This peace, which the world cannot give, has been left as a heritage to His disciples by the Divine Redeemer Himself: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (*Saint John* xiv. 27); and thus following the sublime teaching of Christ, summed up by Himself in the twofold precept of love of God and of the neighbor, millions of souls have reached, are reaching and shall reach peace. History, wisely called by a great Roman "The Teacher of Life," has proved for close on two thousand years how true is the word of Scripture that he will not have peace who resists God (cf. *Job* ix. 4). For Christ alone is the "Corner Stone" (*Ephesians* ii. 20) on which man and society can find stability and salvation.¹⁰⁴ On this Corner Stone the Church is built, and hence against her the adversary can never prevail: "The gates of hell shall not prevail" (*Saint Matthew* xvi. 18), nor can they ever weaken her! Nay, rather, internal and external struggles tend to augment the force and multiply the laurels of her glorious victories.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, any other building which has not been founded solidly on the teaching of Christ rests on shifting sands and is destined to perish miserably (cf. *Saint Matthew* vii. 26, 27).¹⁰⁶

Venerable Brethren, the hour when this Our first Encyclical reaches you is in many respects a real "Hour of Darkness" (cf. *Saint Luke* xxii. 53), in which the spirit of violence and of discord brings indescribable suffering on mankind. Do We need to give assurance that Our paternal heart is close to all Our children in compassionate love, and especially to the afflicted, the oppressed, the persecuted? The nations swept into the tragic whirlpool of war are perhaps as yet only at the "beginnings of sorrows" (*Saint Matthew* xxiv. 8), but even now there reigns in thousands of families death and desolation, lamentation and misery. The blood of countless human beings, even noncombatants, raises a piteous dirge over a nation such as Our dear Poland, which, for its fidelity to the Church, for its services in the defense of Christian civilization, written in indelible characters in the annals of history, has a right to the generous and brotherly sympathy of the whole world, while it awaits, relying on the powerful intercession of Mary, Help of Christians, the hour of a resurrection in harmony with the principles of justice and true peace.¹⁰⁷ What has already happened and is still happening, was presented, as it were, in a vision before Our eyes when, while still some hope was left, We left nothing undone in the form suggested to us by Our Apostolic office and by the means at Our disposal, to prevent recourse to arms and to keep open the way to an understanding honorable to both parties. Convinced that the use of force on one side would be answered by recourse to arms on the other, We considered it a duty inseparable from Our Apostolic office and of Christian Charity to try every means to spare mankind and Christianity the horrors of a world conflagration, even at the risk of having Our intentions and Our aims misunderstood. Our advice, if heard with respect, was not however followed and while Our pastoral heart looks on with sorrow and foreboding, the Image of the Good Shepherd comes up before Our gaze, and it seems as though We ought to repeat to the world in His name: "If thou . . . hadst known . . . the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes" (*Saint Luke* xix. 42).¹⁰⁸ In the midst of this world which today presents such a sharp contrast to "The Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ," the Church and her faithful are in times

and in years of trial such as have rarely been known in her history of struggle and suffering. But in such times especially, he who remains firm in his faith and strong at heart knows that Christ the King is never so near as in the hour of trial, which is the hour for fidelity. With a heart torn by the sufferings and afflictions of so many of her sons, but with the courage and the stability that come from the promises of Our Lord, the Spouse of Christ goes to meet the gathering storms. This she knows, that the truth which she preaches, the charity which she teaches and practices, will be the indispensable counselors and aids to men of good will in the reconstruction of a new world based on justice and love, when mankind, weary from its course along the way of error, has tasted the bitter fruits of hate and violence.¹⁰⁹ In the meantime however, Venerable Brethren, the world and all those who are stricken by the calamity of the war must know that the obligation of Christian love, the very foundation of the Kingdom of Christ, is not an empty word, but a living reality. A vast field opens up for Christian Charity in all its forms. We have full confidence that all Our sons, especially those who are not being tried by the scourge of war, will be mindful in imitation of the Divine Samaritan, of all these who, as victims of the war, have a right to compassion and help.¹¹⁰ The "Catholic Church, the City of God, whose King is Truth, whose law love and whose measure eternity" (*Saint Augustine*, Ep. CXXXVIII. Ad Marcellinum, C. 3, N. 17), preaching fearlessly the whole truth of Christ and toiling as the love of Christ demands with the zeal of a mother, stands as a blessed vision of peace above the storm of error and passion awaiting the moment when the all-powerful Hand of Christ the King shall quiet the tempest and banish the spirits of discord which have provoked it.¹¹¹ Whatever We can do to hasten the day when the dove of peace may find on this earth, submerged in a deluge of discord, somewhere to alight, We shall continue to do, trusting in those statesmen, who before the outbreak of war, nobly toiled to avert such a scourge from the peoples; trusting in the millions of souls of all countries and of every sphere, who call not for justice alone but for love and mercy; above all, trusting in God Almighty to Whom We daily address the prayer: "in the shadow of thy wings will I hope, until iniquity pass away" (*Psalms* lvi. 2).¹¹² God can do all things. As well as the happiness and the fortunes of nations, He holds in His hands human counsels and sweetly turns them in whatever direction He wills: even the obstacles are for His Omnipotence means to mould affairs and events and to direct minds and free wills to His all-high purposes.¹¹³ Pray then, Venerable Brethren, pray without ceasing; pray especially when you offer the Divine Sacrifice of Love. Do you, too, pray, you whose courageous profession of the Faith entails today hard, painful and not rarely, heroic sacrifices; pray you, suffering and agonizing members of the Church, when Jesus comes to console and to heal your pains, and do not forget with the aid of a true spirit of mortification and worthy practice of penance to make your prayers more acceptable in the eyes of Him Who "lifteth up all that fall: and setteth up all that are cast down" (*Psalms* cxiv. 14), that He in His mercy may shorten the days of trial and that thus the word of the Psalmist may be verified: "Then they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he delivered them out of their distresses" (*Psalms* cvi. 13).¹¹⁴ And you, white legions of children who are so loved and dear to Jesus, when you receive in Holy Communion the Bread of Life, raise up your simple and innocent prayers and unite them with those of the Universal Church. The heart of Jesus, Who loves you, does not resist your suppliant innocence. Pray every one, pray uninterruptedly: "Pray without ceasing" (*Thessalonians*, v. 10).¹¹⁵ In this way you will put into practice the sublime precept of the Divine Master, the most sacred testament of His Heart, "That they all may be one" (*Saint John* xvii. 21) that all may live in that unity of faith and of love, from which the world may know the power and efficacy of Christ's mission and of the work of His Church.¹¹⁶ The early Church understood and practiced this Divine Precept, and expressed it in a magnificent prayer; do you associate yourselves with those sentiments which answer so well to the necessities of the present hour: "Remember, O Lord, Thy Church, to free her from all evil and to perfect her in Thy love, and sanctify and collect her from the four winds into Thy Kingdom, which Thou has prepared for her, because Thine is the power, and the glory for ever" (*Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, C 10).¹¹⁷ In the confidence that God, the Author and Lover of Peace, will hear the supplications of the Church, We impart

to you all as a pledge of the abundance of Divine Grace, from the fullness of Our paternal heart, the Apostolic Benediction. *Given at Castel Gandolfo, near Rome, on the twentieth day of October, in the year of Our Lord, 1939, the first of Our Pontificate.* **PIUS XII**

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