

True Religious Unity

Encyclical Letter of Pope PIUS XI

By Pope PIUS XI.

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'Mortalium Animos.'

(The Minds of Mortals.) 1928

With An Introduction By HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL BOURNE

An INTRODUCTION.

THE Encyclical Letter *Mortalium Animos*, which follows, is a reaffirmation of the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church, rendered necessary by the many endeavours made in recent years to bring about a united Christendom. Those efforts have failed; as such efforts must always fail, because they leave out of account the very definite teaching and tradition of the Church founded by Jesus Christ.

There is indeed a fundamental difference between Unity as understood by the average Protestant mind and Unity in the Catholic's conception of that term. In the case of the Protestant, Unity is something which has probably never existed; which certainly does not exist to-day; which may, perhaps, be realized in some far-off future by a compromise between contending and even contradictory opinions. To a Catholic such a conception of Unity is not only repugnant but quite impossible. He believes that Unity has existed from the day when Christ established His Fold and set up His Church, comparing it to a kingdom and a house; that from that day the Church has had a visible organic unity, which, because it is divinely constituted and divinely protected, can never be broken. In the exercise of their free will, men may abandon it and be no longer within its range, but the Unity itself remains unbroken and unimpaired. Their abandonment cannot break or impair it. Like every healthy organism, that one Church possesses the vital faculty of rejecting and ejecting every element that menaces its vitality or organic unity.

Thus, the company in the Upper Chamber on the day of Pentecost constituted the Unity of the one Church. A few days later the Church numbered some hundreds, and they were the whole Church, and the entire world without was outside the Unity of that one Church. Gradually the numbers grew to thousands, and to-day they are many tens of millions. [1.2 billion, in 2012.] But it is not a question of numbers or extent. The Church has, indeed, both the mission and the power of existing at all times and in every nation. In all probability, her growth has been continuous from the beginning. Loss in one direction has been more than compensated by gain in some other. But the existence of the one Church and her Unity are independent of time and place and numbers.

The Catholic holds that this conception of the Unity of the Church is the necessary logical consequence of the Divine Founder's words. She accepts them in their natural literal sense. 'As the Father has sent Me, so do I send you.' 'Going, therefore, all of you, teach all nations; baptizing

them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’ ‘He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believes not, shall be condemned.’

‘You are Peter: and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.’ When, too, the Founder spoke of the sheep outside the Fold, He showed clearly that the Fold existed actually and was no mere dream of the future. Into that Fold, all were gradually to be gathered; and then, eventually, all mankind would be one Fold under the Shepherd: but, until they are gathered in, they are outside the Unity of the one Fold, outside the visible organic Unity of the Catholic Church.

It is clear that the Unity of the Catholic Church was thus understood from the earliest days of Christianity. Those were within the Unity who, being baptized, accepted the teaching and submitted to the authority of the Church. All others were regarded as outside the Unity. Baptism was the gate of entry. To reject the teaching once accepted was to become a heretic and to be treated as such. To throw off the authority of the Church was an act of schism incurring the punishment thereof. And the Church claimed then, as she claims today, to have power to declare and set forth the revelation of truth entrusted to her by her Founder, and to be divinely protected against error in such authoritative declaration or setting forth.

This is the conception of Unity held by every Catholic, a Unity which has existed from its constitution by Christ Himself, and is to exist in virtue of His promise until the end of time. All those who accept this idea of Unity are within the visible unity of the one Church; those who reject that idea are outside the Unity, and can enter within only by accepting the teaching and authority of that Church founded by Christ our Lord. Any other conception of Unity is tantamount to admitting that the promises of Christ have failed, so far as His Church is concerned; and is a virtual denial of the divine origin of that Church.

Another point stands out clearly from this Catholic conception of Unity. If Christ has actually given a clear, definite revelation of truth about God and His relation to His creatures, and has promised that that revelation shall continue to the end of the world, and be safeguarded against error, it follows that every creature who becomes convinced of the reality of that revelation is bound to accept it, and commits sin if he refuses to accept it. If God the Creator speaks, the creature is bound to listen and to believe what He utters. Hence the axiom ‘outside the Church there is no salvation’. But, as it is equally true that without the deliberate act of the will there can be neither fault nor sin, so evidently this axiom applies only to those who are outside the Church knowingly, deliberately, and wilfully.

And this is the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this often misunderstood and misrepresented aphorism. There are the covenanted and the uncovenanted dealings of God with His creatures, and no creature is outside His fatherly care. There are millions — even at this day the vast majority of mankind — who are still unreached or unaffected by the message of Christianity in any shape or form. There are large numbers who are persuaded that the old covenant still prevails and are perfectly sincere and conscientious in their observance of the Jewish Law. And there are millions who accept some fashion of Christian teaching who have never adverted to the idea of Unity as I

have described it, and have no thought that they are obliged in conscience to accept the teaching and to submit to the authority of the Catholic Church. All such, whether separated wholly from acceptance of Christ and His teaching, or accepting that teaching only to the extent in which they have perceived it, will be judged on their own merits. They are bound to accept and follow God's teaching so far as their reason rightly used shall lead them. They must obey the dictates of the moral law, which their conscience imposes upon them. They must regret before God, and endeavour to undo, the faults and sins that they commit against their reason and their conscience. And they are bound at all cost to enter within the Unity of the Church so soon as they realize that that obligation is incumbent upon them.

When or how such realization may come to them no one can say. To what extent they may attain it, is the secret of God. But this is certain, that no man of really good will is ever rejected by his Maker, and that to every soul is offered real opportunity of salvation. None can be lost, whether within or without the visible Unity of the Church, except by his own deliberate fault.

A conscious neglect of prayer, which is Christ's own appointed means of finding truth, evidently involves fault on the part of him who in doubt does not seek from God in prayer the removal of his perplexity. 'Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find.'

Meanwhile the external work of the Church must always continue, for Christ the Founder has so willed and ordained it: 'Go, and teach all nations.' He Himself used human means and instruments to accomplish His divine purpose, and He uses them still. The Gospel will spread slowly and gradually, dependent for its extension on frail, changeable, and mortal men, on human means of transport, and on the concurrence of various human factors. It is often hampered, checked, and thwarted by the resistance of human wills. But just as our Master did not hesitate to say, 'I have finished the work which You gave me to do,' when the Passion was yet to come, and to human eyes the work of redemption seemed hardly yet begun, so may we in all reverence and humility claim that our work is accomplished when we have done our best to carry out that Master's will in our regard, and have striven to obtain His pardon for all that we have left undone or done amiss. And all men must surely labour and hope and pray that in God's own time every human creature may be gathered into that Unity which is undoubtedly according to His will. And it is their duty, whether they be already within or still outside that Unity, by brotherly love and mutual helpfulness and the uprightness of their lives, but without compromise of truth, to hasten the coming of that day.

It is this conception of Unity which also explains why the Catholic Church, in accordance with the tradition of Christianity from the beginning, declines to participate in the worship of those who do not accept her teaching and authority, and refuses to admit them to her Sacraments. To act otherwise would, in her judgment, be disloyalty to her Founder and to the truth which He has given into her care. Worship, to be acceptable, must be sincere and based on truth. Convinced that she possesses divinely revealed truth, she would be acting disloyally and insincerely were she, by participation in their worship, to seem to admit that those who think that this divinely revealed truth is uncertain and still awaiting discovery and proof are, perhaps, after all in the right, while she has been deceived. She is fully persuaded that in her worship of God she is dealing with truth, reality, and fact. She is essentially unable to regard Divine worship as a matter of opinion, sentiment, or uncertainty. Thus Catholics, while respecting the religious convictions of others and acknowledging their sincerity and good faith, are precluded from any action that would appear to call in question the objective truth of the revelation delivered to her by Jesus Christ our Lord. She must ever be, as she has been from the beginning, an exclusive Church both in her teaching and in her worship.

This, then, is the unchanging and unchangeable teaching of the Catholic Church on Unity, which the actual occupant of the Papal Chair authoritatively proclaims once more in terms that are quite clear. They are inspired solely by apostolic zeal for the accomplishment of the Master's purpose, and by most earnest desire that all men may be brought to His Sacred Feet in loving acceptance of the truth which He has taught.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER,

Of Our Most Holy Lord PIUS XI,

By Divine Providence,

POPE.

ON FOSTERING TRUE RELIGIOUS UNITY.

POPE Pius XI to his VENERABLE BRETHREN gives Greeting and the Apostolic Benediction.

Never perhaps in the past have the minds of mortals (men) been so engrossed as they are today with the desire to strengthen and extend for the common good of mankind that tie of brotherhood — the result of our common origin and nature — which binds us all so closely together. The world does not yet fully enjoy the fruits of peace; on the contrary, dissensions old and new in various lands still issue in rebellions and conflict. Such disputes, affecting the tranquil prosperity of nations, can never be settled without the combined and active goodwill of those who are responsible for their government, and hence it is easy to understand — especially now that the unity of mankind is no longer called into question — the widespread desire that all nations, in view of this universal kinship, should daily find closer union with one another.

It is with a similar motive that efforts are being made by some, in connection with the New Law promulgated by Christ our Lord. Assured that there exist few men who are entirely devoid of the religious sense, they seem to ground on this belief a hope that all nations, while differing indeed in religious matters, may yet without great difficulty be brought to fraternal agreement on certain points of doctrine which will form a common basis of the spiritual life. With this object, congresses, meetings, and addresses are arranged, attended by a large concourse of hearers, where all without distinction, unbelievers of every kind as well as Christians, even those who unhappily have rejected Christ and denied His divine nature or mission, are invited, to join in the discussion. Now, such efforts can meet with no kind of approval among Catholics. They presuppose the erroneous view that all religions are more or less good and praiseworthy, inasmuch as all give expression, under various forms, to that innate sense which leads men to God and to the obedient acknowledgment of His rule. Those who hold such a view are not only in error; they distort the true idea of religion, and thus reject it, falling gradually into naturalism and atheism. To favour this opinion, therefore, and to encourage such undertakings is tantamount to abandoning the religion revealed by God.

Nevertheless, when there is a question of fostering unity among Christians, it is easy for many to be misled by the apparent excellence of the object to be achieved. Is it not right, they ask, is it not the obvious duty of all who invoke the name of Christ to refrain from mutual reproaches and at last to be united in charity? Dare anyone say that he love Christ, and yet not strive with all his might to accomplish the desire of Him who asked His Father that His disciples might be "one" (John 17:21)? Did not Christ will that mutual charity should be the distinguishing characteristic of His disciples?

‘By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another ’ (John 13:35). If only all Christians were "one", it is contended, then they might do so much more to drive out the pest of irreligion which with its insidious and far-reaching advance is threatening to sap the strength of the Gospel. These and similar arguments, with amplifications, are constantly on the lips of the "pan-Christians" who, so far from being a few isolated individuals, have formed an entire class and grouped themselves into societies of extensive membership, usually under the direction of non-Catholics, who also disagree in matters of faith. The energy with which this scheme is being promoted has won for it many adherents, and even many Catholics are attracted to it, since it holds out the hope of a union apparently consonant with the wishes of Holy Mother Church, whose chief desire it is to recall her erring children and to bring them back to her bosom. In reality, however, these fair and alluring words cloak a most grave error, subversive of the foundations of the Catholic faith.

Conscious, therefore, of Our Apostolic office, which warns Us not to allow the flock of Christ to be led astray by harmful fallacies, We invoke your zeal, Venerable Brethren, to avert this evil. We feel confident that each of you, by written and spoken word, will explain clearly to the people the principles and arguments that We are about to set forth, so that Catholics may know what view and what course of action they should adopt regarding schemes for the promiscuous union into one body of all who call themselves Christians.

God, the Creator of all things, made us that we might know Him and serve Him; to our service, therefore, He has a full right. He might indeed have been contented to prescribe for man's government the natural law alone, that is, the law which in creation He has written upon man's heart, and have regulated the progress of that law by His ordinary Providence. He willed, however, to make positive laws which we should obey, and progressively, from the beginnings of the human race until the coming and preaching of Jesus Christ, He Himself taught mankind the duties which a rational creature owes to his Creator. ‘God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by His Son’ (Hebrews, 1:1 and following.). Evidently, therefore, no religion can be true save that which rests upon the revelation of God, a revelation begun from the very first, continued under the Old Law, and brought to completion by Jesus Christ Himself under the New. Now, if God has spoken — and it is historically certain that He has in fact spoken — then it is clearly man's duty implicitly to believe His revelation and to obey His commands. That we might rightly do both, for the glory of God and for our own salvation, the only-begotten Son of God founded His Church on earth. None, we think, of those who claim to be Christians will deny that a Church, and one sole Church, was founded by Christ.

On the further question, however, as to what in the intention of its Founder was to be the precise nature of that Church, there is not the same agreement. Many of them, for example, deny that the Church of Christ was intended to be visible and manifest, at any rate in the sense that it was to be visibly the one body of the faithful, agreeing in one and the same doctrine under one teaching and governing authority. They conceive the visible Church as nothing more than a federation of the various Christian communities, even though these may hold different and mutually exclusive doctrines. The truth is that Christ founded His Church as a perfect society, of its nature external and perceptible to the senses, which in the future should carry on the work of the salvation of mankind under one head, with a living teaching authority, administering the sacraments which are the sources of heavenly grace. (John 3:5; 6:48-59; 20:22 and following. And see: Matthew 18:18, et cetera.).

Wherefore He compared His Church to a kingdom (Matthew 13), to a house (see Matthew 16:18), to a sheepfold (John 10:16), and to a flock (John 21:11-17). The Church thus wondrously instituted could not cease to exist with the death of its Founder and of the Apostles, the pioneers of its propagation; for its mission was to lead all men to salvation, without distinction of time or place: 'Going therefore, teach ye all nations' (Matthew 28:19). Nor could the Church ever lack the effective strength necessary for the continued accomplishment of its task, since Christ Himself is perpetually present with it, according to His promise: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world' (Matthew 28:20). Hence, not only must the Church still exist today, and continue always to exist, but it must ever be exactly the same as it was in the days of the Apostles. Otherwise we must say — which God forbid — that Christ failed in His purpose, or that He erred when He asserted of His Church that the gates of hell should never prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

And here it will be opportune to expound and to reject a certain false opinion which lies at the root of this question and of that complex movement by which non-Catholics seek to bring about the union of Christian Churches. Those who favour this view constantly quote the words of Christ, 'That they may be one. . . . And there shall, be one fold, and one shepherd' (John 17:21; 10:16), in the sense that Christ thereby merely expressed a desire or a prayer which as yet has not been granted. For they hold that the unity of faith and government which is a note of the one true Church of Christ has up to the present time hardly ever existed, and does not exist today. They consider that this unity is indeed to be desired and may even, by cooperation and good will, be actually attained, but that meanwhile it must be regarded as a mere ideal. The Church, they say, is of its nature divided into sections, composed of several churches or distinct communities which still remain separate, and although holding in common some articles of doctrine, nevertheless differ concerning the remainder; that all these enjoy the same rights; and that the Church remained one and undivided at the most only from the Apostolic age until the first ecumenical Councils. Hence, they say, controversies and long-standing differences, which today still keep asunder the members of the Christian family, must be entirely set aside, and from the residue of doctrines a common form of faith drawn up and proposed for belief, in the profession of which all may not only know but also feel themselves to be brethren. If the various Churches or communities were united in some kind or universal federation, they would then be in a position to oppose resolutely and successfully the progress of irreligion.

Such, Venerable Brethren, is the common contention. There are indeed some who recognize and affirm that Protestantism has with inconsiderate zeal rejected certain articles of faith and external ceremonies which are in fact useful and attractive, and which the Roman Church still retains. But they immediately go on to say that the Roman Church, too, has erred, and corrupted the primitive religion by adding to it and proposing for belief doctrines not only alien to the Gospel but contrary to its spirit. Chief among these they count that of the primacy of jurisdiction granted to Peter and to his successors in the See of Rome. There are actually some, though few, who grant to the Roman Pontiff a primacy of honour and even a certain power or jurisdiction; this, however, they consider to arise not from the divine law but merely from the consent of the faithful. Others, again, even go so far as to desire the Pontiff himself to preside over their mixed assemblies. For the rest, while you may hear many non-Catholics loudly preaching brotherly communion in Jesus Christ, yet not one will you find to whom it ever occurs with devout submission to obey the Vicar of Jesus Christ in his capacity of teacher or ruler. Meanwhile they assert their readiness to treat with the Church of Rome, but on equal terms, as equals with an equal. But even if they could so treat, there seems little doubt

that they would do so only on condition that no pact into which they might enter should compel them to retract those opinions which still keep them outside the one fold of Christ.

This being so, it is clear that the Apostolic See can by no means take part in these assemblies, nor is it in any way lawful for Catholics to give to such enterprises their encouragement or support. If they did so, they would be giving countenance to a false Christianity quite alien to the one Church of Christ.

Shall we commit the iniquity of suffering the truth, the truth revealed by God, to be made a subject for compromise? For it is indeed a question of defending revealed truth. Jesus Christ sent His Apostles into the whole world to declare the faith of the Gospel to every nation, and, to save them from error, He willed that the Holy Ghost should first teach them all truth. Has this doctrine, then, disappeared, or at any time been obscured, in the Church of which God Himself is the ruler and guardian? Our Redeemer plainly said that His Gospel was intended not only for the apostolic age, but for all time. Can the object of faith, then, have become in the process of time so dim and uncertain that today we must tolerate contradictory opinions? If this were so, then we should have to admit that the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the perpetual indwelling of the same Spirit in the Church, nay, the very preaching of Jesus Christ, have centuries ago lost their efficacy and value. To affirm this would be blasphemy. The only begotten Son of God not only bade His representatives to teach all nations; He also obliged all men to give credence to whatever was taught them by 'witnesses preordained by God' (Acts 10:41).

Moreover, He enforced His command with this sanction: 'He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be condemned' (Mark 16:16). These two commands, the one to teach, the other to believe for salvation, must be obeyed. But they cannot even be understood unless the Church proposes an inviolate and clear teaching, and in proposing, it is immune from all danger of error. It is also false to say that, although the deposit of truth does indeed exist, yet it is to be found only with such laborious effort and after such lengthy study and discussion, that a man's life is hardly long enough for its discovery and attainment. This would be equivalent to saying that the most merciful God spoke through the prophets and through His only-begotten Son merely in order that some few men, and those advanced in years, might learn what He had revealed, and not in order to inculcate a doctrine of faith and morals by which man should be guided throughout the whole of his life.

These pan-Christians who strive for the union of the Churches would appear to pursue the noblest of ideals in promoting charity among all Christians.

But how should charity tend to the detriment of faith? Everyone, knows that John, himself, the Apostle of love, who seems in his Gospel to have revealed the secrets of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and who never ceased to impress upon the memory of his disciples the new commandment 'to love one another', nevertheless strictly forbade any intercourse with those who profess a mutilated and corrupt form of Christ's teaching: 'If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you' (2 John 10).

Therefore, since the foundation of charity is faith pure and inviolate, it is chiefly by the bond of one faith that the disciples of Christ are to be united. A federation of Christians, then, is inconceivable in which each member retains his own opinions and, private judgment in matters of faith, even though they differ from the opinions of all the rest. How can men with opposite convictions belong to one and the same federation of the faithful: those who accept sacred Tradition as a source of revelation

and those who reject it; those who recognize as divinely constituted the hierarchy of bishops, priests, and ministers (deacons) in the Church, and those who regard it as gradually introduced to suit the conditions of the time; those who adore Christ, really present in the Most Holy Eucharist through that wonderful conversion of the bread and wine, transubstantiation, and those who assert that the body of Christ is there only by faith or by the signification and virtue of the sacrament; those who in the Eucharist recognize both sacrament and sacrifice, and those who say that it is nothing more than the memorial of the Lord's supper; those who think it right and useful to pray to the Saints reigning with Christ, especially to Mary the Mother of God, and to venerate their images, and those who refuse such veneration as derogatory to the honour due to Jesus Christ, 'the one mediator of God and men'? (See 1 Tim 2:5)

How so great a variety of opinions can clear the way for the unity of the Church, We know not. That unity can arise only from one teaching authority, one law of belief, and one faith of Christians. But We do know that from such a state of affairs it is but an easy step to the neglect of religion or "indifferentism", and to the error of the modernists, who hold that dogmatic truth is not absolute but relative, that is, that it changes according to the varying necessities of time and place and the varying tendencies of the mind; that it is not contained in an immutable tradition, but can be altered to suit the needs of human life.

Furthermore, it is never lawful to employ in connection with articles of faith the distinction invented by some between "fundamental" and "non-fundamental" articles, the former to be accepted by all, the latter being left to the free acceptance of the faithful. The supernatural virtue of faith has as its formal motive the authority of God revealing, and this allows of no such distinction. All true followers of Christ, therefore, will believe the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God with the same faith as they believe the mystery of the august Trinity, the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff in the sense defined by the Ecumenical Vatican Council (of 1870) with the same faith as they believe the Incarnation of Our Lord. That these truths have been solemnly sanctioned and defined by the Church at various times, some of them even quite recently, makes no difference to their certainty, nor to our obligation of believing them. Has not God revealed them all?

The teaching authority of the Church in the divine wisdom was constituted on earth in order that the revealed doctrines might remain for ever intact and might be brought with ease and security to the knowledge of men. This authority is indeed daily exercised through the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops, who are in communion with him; but it has the further office of defining some truth with solemn decree whenever it is opportune, and whenever this is necessary either to oppose the errors or the attacks of heretics, or again to impress the minds of the faithful with a clearer and more detailed explanation of the articles of sacred doctrine. But in the use of this extraordinary teaching authority no fresh invention is introduced, nothing new is ever added to the number of those truths which are at least implicitly contained within the deposit of Revelation divinely committed to the Church; but truths which to some perhaps may still seem obscure are rendered clear, or a truth which some may have called into question is declared to be of faith.

Thus, Venerable Brethren, it is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics. There is, but one way in which the unity of Christians may be fostered, and that is by furthering the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it; for from that one true Church they have in the past fallen away. The one Church of Christ is visible to all, and will remain, according to the will of its Author, exactly the same as He instituted it. The mystical Spouse of Christ has never in the course of centuries been contaminated,

nor in the future can she ever be, as Cyprian bears witness: 'The Bride of Christ cannot become false to her Spouse, she is inviolate and pure. She knows but one dwelling, and chastely and modestly she guards the sanctity of the nuptial chamber' (De Catholicae Ecclesiae unitate, 6). (On the Unity of the Catholic Church.)

The same holy martyr marvelled that anyone could believe that 'this unity of the Church built upon a divine foundation, knit together by heavenly sacraments, could ever be rent asunder by the conflict of wills' (De Catholicae Ecclesiae unitate, 6). For since the mystical body of Christ, like His physical body, is one (1 Cor. 12:12), compactly and fitly joined together (Ephesians, 4:15), it were foolish to say that the mystical body is composed of disjointed and scattered members. Whosoever therefore is not united with the body is no member thereof, neither is he in communion with Christ its head.

Furthermore, in this one Church of Christ no man can be or remain who does not accept, recognize, and obey the authority and supremacy of Peter and his legitimate successors. Did not the ancestors of those who are now entangled in the errors of Photius and of the Reformers obey the Bishop of Rome, the chief shepherd of souls? Their children, alas! have left the home of their fathers; but that house did not therefore fall to the ground and perish for ever, for it was supported by God. Let them, then, return to their Father, who, forgetting the insults in the past heaped upon the Apostolic See, will accord them a most loving welcome. If, as they constantly say, they long to be united with Us and Ours, why do they not hasten to enter the Church, 'the mother and mistress of all Christ's faithful'? (Council of the Lateran, 4, chapter 5). Let them heed the words of Lactantius: 'The Catholic Church is alone in keeping the true worship. This is the fount of truth, this the house of faith, this the temple of God: if any man enter not here, or if any man go forth from it, he is a stranger to the hope of life and salvation. Let none delude himself with obstinate wrangling. For life and salvation are here concerned, and these will be lost for ever unless their interests be carefully and assiduously kept in mind' (Divinae Institutiones ("Divine Institutes") IV. 30, 11-12).

Let our separated children, therefore, draw nigh to the Apostolic See, set up in the City which Peter and Paul, Princes of the Apostles, consecrated by their blood; to the See which is 'the root and womb whence issues the Church of God' (Cyprian, Epistle 48 ad Cornelium, 3); and let them come, not with any intention or hope that 'the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Timothy 3:5), will cast aside the integrity of the faith and tolerate their errors, but to submit themselves to its teaching and government. Would that the happy lot, denied to so many of Our predecessors, might at last be Ours, to embrace with fatherly affection those children whose unhappy separation from Us We now deplore.

Would that God our Saviour, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Timothy 2:4), might hear our humble prayer and vouchsafe to recall to the unity of the Church all that are gone astray. To this all-important end We implore, and We desire that others should implore, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of divine grace, Help of Christians, victorious over all heresies, that she may entreat for Us the speedy coming of that longed-for day, when all men shall hear the voice of her divine Son, and shall be 'careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3).

You, Venerable Brethren, know how dear to Our heart is this desire, and We wish that Our children also should know, not only those belonging to the Catholic fold, but also those separated from Us. If these will humbly beg light from heaven, there is no doubt but that they will recognize the one true

Church of Jesus Christ, and entering therein, will at last be united with Us in perfect charity. In the hope of this fulfillment, and as a pledge of Our fatherly goodwill, We impart most lovingly to you, Venerable Brethren, and to your clergy and people, the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at St Peter's, Rome, on the 6th day of January, the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the year 1928, the sixth of Our Pontificate.

Pius Pope XI.
