

Editae Saepe

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE ST. PIUS X

ON ST. CHARLES BORROMEO

MAY 26, 1910 A.D.

TO THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS,
BISHOPS, AND OTHER ORDINARIES
IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE.

Venerable Brethren, Health and the Apostolic Blessing.

1. Sacred Scripture records the divine word saying that men will remember the just man forever, for even though he is dead, he yet speaks. [1] Both in word and deed the Church has for a long time verified the truth of that saying. She is the mother and the nurse of holiness, ever renewed and enlivened by the breath of the Spirit Who dwells in us. [2] She alone conceives, nourishes, and educates the noble family of the just. Like a loving mother, she carefully preserves the memory of and affection for the saints. This remembrance is, as it were, a divine comfort which lifts her eyes above the miseries of this earthly pilgrimage so that she finds in the saints "her joy and her crown." Thus she sees in them the sublime image of her heavenly Spouse. Thus she shows her children in each age the timeliness of the old truth: "For those who love God all things work together unto good, for those who, according to his purpose, are saints through his call." [3] The glorious deeds of the saints, however, do more than afford us comfort. In order that we may imitate and be encouraged by them, one and all the saints echo in their own lives the saying of Saint Paul, "I beg you, be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." [4]

2. For that reason, Venerable Brethren, immediately after Our elevation to the Supreme Pontificate We stated in Our first encyclical that We would labor without ceasing "to restore all things in Christ." [5] We begged everyone to turn their eyes with Us to Jesus, "the apostle and high priest of our confession...the author and finisher of faith." [6] Since the majesty of that Model may be too much for fallen human nature, God mercifully gave Us another model to propose for your imitation, the glorious Virgin Mother of God. While being as close to Christ as human

nature permits, she is better suited to the needs of our weak nature. [7] Over and above that, We made use of several other occasions to recall the memory of the saints. We emulated these faithful servants and ministers of God's household (each in his own way enjoying the friendship of God), "who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises." [8] Thus encouraged by their example, we would be "now no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, according to the wiles of error. Rather are we to practice the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ." [9]

3. We have already pointed to how Divine Providence was perfectly realized in the lives of those three great doctors and pastors of the Church, Gregory the Great, John Chrysostom and Anselm of Aosta. Although they were separated by centuries, the Church was beset by many serious dangers in each of their respective ages. In recent years We celebrated all of their solemn centenaries. In a very special way, however, we commemorated Saint Gregory the Great in the encyclical of March 12, 1904, and Saint Anselm in the encyclical of April 21, 1909. In these documents We treated those points of Christian doctrine and morals found in the example and teaching of these saints which We thought were best suited to our times.

4. As We have already mentioned, [10] We are of the opinion that the shining example of Christ's soldiers has far greater value in the winning and sanctifying of souls than the words of profound treatises. We therefore gladly take this present opportunity to teach some very useful lessons from the consideration of the life of another holy pastor whom God raised up in more recent times and in the midst of trials very similar to those We are experiencing today. We refer to Saint Charles Borromeo, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and Archbishop of Milan, whom Paul V, of holy memory, raised to the altar of the saints less than thirty years after his death. The words of Our Predecessor are to the point: "The Lord alone performs great wonders and in recent times He has accomplished marvelous things among Us. In His wonderful dispensation He has set a great light on the Apostolic rock when He singled Charles out of the heart of the Roman Church as the faithful priest and good servant to be a model for the pastors and their flock. He enlightened the whole Church from the light diffused by his holy works. He shone forth before priests and people as innocent as Abel, pure as Enoch, tireless as Jacob, meek as Moses, and zealous as Elias. Surrounded by luxury, he exhibited the austerity of Jerome, the humility of Martin, the pastoral zeal of Gregory, the liberty of Ambrose, and the charity of Paulinus. In a word, he was a man we could see with our eyes and touch with our hands. He trampled earthly things underfoot and lived the life of the spirit. Although the world tried to entice him he lived

crucified to the world. He constantly sought after heavenly things, not only because he held the office of an angel but all because even on earth he tried to think and act as an angel." [11]

5. Such are the words of praise Our Predecessor wrote after Charles' death. Now, three centuries after his canonization, "we can rightly rejoice on this day when We solemnly confer, in the name of the Lord, the sacred honors on Charles, Cardinal Priest, thereby crowning his own Spouse with a diadem of every precious stone." We agree with Our Predecessor that the contemplation of the glory (and even more, the example and teaching of the saints) will humiliate the enemy and throw into confusion all those who "glory in their specious errors." [12] Saint Charles is a model for both clergy and people in these days. He was the unwearied advocate and defender of the true Catholic reformation, opposing those innovators whose purpose was not the restoration, but the effacement and destruction of faith and morals. This celebration of the third centenary of his canonization should prove to be not only a consolation and lesson for every Catholic but also a noble incentive for everyone to cooperate wholeheartedly in that work so dear to Our heart of restoring all things in Christ.

6. You know very well, Venerable Brethren, that even when surrounded by tribulation the Church still enjoys some consolation from God. "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for her, that he might sanctify her...in order that he might present to himself the Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish." [13] When vice runs wild, when persecution hangs heavy, when error is so cunning that it threatens her destruction by snatching many children from her bosom (and plunges them into the whirlpool of sin and impiety) - then, more than ever, the Church is strengthened from above. Whether the wicked will it or not, God makes even error aid in the triumph of Truth whose guardian and defender is the Church. He puts corruption in the service of sanctity, whose mother and nurse is the Church. Out of persecution He brings a more wondrous "freedom from our enemies." For these reasons, when worldly men think they see the Church buffeted and almost capsized in the raging storm, then she really comes forth fairer, stronger, purer, and brighter with the lustre of distinguished virtues.

7. In such a way God's goodness bears witness to the divinity of the Church. He makes her victorious in that painful battle against the errors and sins that creep into her ranks. Through this victory He verifies the words of Christ: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." [14] In her day-to-day living He fulfills the promise, "Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." [15] Finally, He is the witness of that mysterious power of the other Paraclete (Who Christ

promised would come immediately after His ascension into heaven), who continually lavishes His gifts upon her and serves as her defender and consoler in all her sorrows. This is the Spirit Who will "dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him...he will dwell with you and be in you." [16] The life and strength of the Church flows forth from this font. As the ecumenical Vatican Council teaches, this divine power sets the Church above every other society by those obvious notes which mark her "as a banner raised up among the nations." [17]

8. In fact, only a miracle of that divine power could preserve the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, from blemish in the holiness of Her doctrine, law, and end in the midst of the flood of corruption and lapses of her members. Her doctrine, law and end have produced an abundant harvest. The faith and holiness of her children have brought forth the most salutary fruits. Here is another proof of her divine life: in spite of a great number of pernicious opinions and great variety of errors (as well as the vast army of rebels) the Church remains immutable and constant, "as the pillar and foundation of truth," in professing one identical doctrine, in receiving the same Sacraments, in her divine constitution, government, and morality. This is all the more marvelous when one considers that the Church not only resists evil but even "conquers evil by doing good." She is constantly blessing friends and enemies alike. She is continually striving and ardently desiring to bring about the social and individual Christian restoration which is her particular mission in the world. Moreover, even her enemies benefit from it.

9. This wonderful working of Divine Providence in the Church's program of restoration was seen with the greatest clarity and was given as a consolation for the good especially in the century of Saint Charles Borromeo. In those days passions ran riot and knowledge of the truth was almost completely twisted and confused. A continual battle was being waged against errors. Human society, going from bad to worse, was rushing headlong into the abyss. Then those proud and rebellious men came on the scene who are "enemies of the cross of Christ . . . Their god is the belly...they mind the things of earth." [18] These men were not concerned with correcting morals, but only with denying dogmas. Thus they increased the chaos. They dropped the reins of law, and unbridled licentiousness ran wild. They despised the authoritative guidance of the church and pandered to the whims of the dissolute princes and people. They tried to destroy the Church's doctrine, constitution and discipline. they were similar to those sinners who were warned long ago: "Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil." [19] They called this rebellious riot and perversion of faith and morals a reformation, and themselves reformers. In reality, they were corrupters. In undermining the strength of Europe through wars and dissensions, they paved the way for those

modern rebellions and apostasy. This modern warfare has united and renewed in one attack the three kinds of attack which have up until now been separated; namely, the bloody conflicts of the first ages, the internal pests of heresies, and finally, in the name of evangelical liberty, the vicious corruption and perversion of discipline such as was unknown, perhaps, even in medieval times. Yet in each of these combats the Church has always emerged victorious.

10. God, however, brought forth real reformers and holy men to arrest the onrushing current, to extinguish the conflagration, and to repair the harm caused by this crowd of seducers. Their many-sided zealous work of reforming discipline was especially consoling to the Church since the tribulation afflicting her was so great. Their work also proves the truth that "God is faithful and . . . with the temptation will also give you a way out" [20] In these circumstances God provided a pleasing consolation for the Church in the outstanding zeal and sanctity of Charles Borromeo.

11. God ordained that his ministry would be the effective and special means of checking the rebels' boldness and teaching and inspiring the Church's children. He restrained the former's mad extravagances by the example of his life and labor, and met their empty charges with the most powerful eloquence. He fanned the latter's hopes and kindled their zeal. Even from his youth he cultivated in a remarkable manner all the virtues of the true reformer which others possessed only in varying degrees. These virtues are fortitude, counsel, doctrine, authority, ability, and alacrity. He put them all in the service of Catholic truth against the attacks of error (which is precisely the mission of the Church). He revived the faith that had either become dormant or almost extinct in many by strengthening it with many wise laws and practices. He restored that discipline which had been overthrown by bringing the morals of clergy and people alike back to the ideals of Christian living. In executing all the duties of a reformer he also fulfilled the functions of the "good and faithful servant." Later he performed the works of the high priest who "pleased God in his days and was found just." He is, therefore, a worthy example for both clergy and laity, rich and poor. He can be numbered among those whose excellence as a bishop and prelate is eulogized by the Apostle Peter when he says that he became "from the heart a pattern to the flock." [21] Even before the age of twenty- three and although elevated to the highest honors and entrusted with very important and difficult ecclesiastical matters, Charles made truly wonderful daily progress in the practice of virtue through the contemplation of divine things. This sacred retirement perfected him, prepared him for later days, and caused him to shine forth as "a spectacle to the world, and angels, and men."

12. Then (again borrowing the words of Our Predecessor, Paul V), the

Lord began to work His wonders in Charles. He filled him with a wisdom, justice, and burning zeal for promoting His glory and the Catholic cause. Above all, the Lord filled him with a great concern for restoring the faith in the Church universal according to the decrees of the renowned Council of Trent. That Pontiff himself, as well as all future generations, attributed the success of the Council to Charles, since even before carrying its decrees into action he was its most ardent promoter. In fact, his many vigils, trials, and labors brought its work to its ultimate completion.

13. All these things, however, were only a preparation or sort of novitiate where he trained his heart in piety, his mind in study, and his body in work (always remaining a modest and humble youth) for that life in which he would be as clay in the hands of God and His Vicar on earth. The innovators of that time despised just that kind of life of preparation. The same folly leads the modern innovators also to spurn it. They fail to see that God's wondrous works are matured in the obscurity and silence of a soul dedicated to obedience and contemplation. They cannot see that just as the hope of the harvest lies in the sowing, so this preparation is the germ of future progress.

14. As We have already hinted, this sanctity and industry prepared under such conditions in due time came to produce a truly marvelous fruit. When Charles, "good laborer that he was left the convenience and splendor of the city for the field (Milan) he was to cultivate, he discharged his duties better and better from day to day. Although the wickedness of the time had caused that field to become overrun with weeds and rank growths, he restored it to its pristine beauty. In time the Milanese Church became an example of ecclesiastical discipline." [22] He effected all these outstanding results in his work of reformation by adopting the rules the Council of Trent had only recently promulgated.

15. The Church knows very well that "the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil." [23] Therefore she wages continual battle against vice and error "in order that the body of sin may be destroyed, that we may no longer be slaves to sin." [24] Since she is her own mistress and is guided by the grace which "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit," she is directed in this conflict in thought and action by the Doctor of the Gentiles, who says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind...And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed in the newness of your mind, that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." [25] The true son of the Church and reformer never thinks he has attained his goal. Rather, with the Apostle, he acknowledges that he is only striving for it: "Forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before, I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus." [26]

16. Through our union with Christ in the Church we grow up "in all things in him who is the head, Christ. For from him the whole body...derives its increase to the building up for itself in love..." [27] For that reason Mother Church daily fulfills the mystery of the Divine Will which is "to be dispensed in the fullness of the times: to re-establish all things in Christ." [28]

17. The reformers that Borromeo opposed did not even think of this. They tried to reform faith and discipline according to their own whims. Venerable Brethren, it is no better understood by those whom We must withstand today. These moderns, forever prattling about culture and civilization, are undermining the Church's doctrine, laws, and practices. They are not concerned very much about culture and civilization. By using such high-sounding words they think they can conceal the wickedness of their schemes.

18. All of you know their purpose, subterfuges, and methods. On Our part We have denounced and condemned their scheming. They are proposing a universal apostasy even worse than the one that threatened the age of Charles. It is worse, We say, because it stealthily creeps into the very veins of the Church, hides there, and cunningly pushes erroneous principles to their ultimate conclusions.

19. Both these heresies are fathered by the "enemy" who "sowed weeds among the wheat" [29] in order to bring about the downfall of mankind. Both revolts go about in the hidden ways of darkness, develop along the same line, and come to an end in the same fatal way. In the past the first apostasy turned where fortune seemed to smile. It set rulers against people or people against rulers only to lead both classes to destruction. Today this modern apostasy stirs up hatred between the poor and the rich until, dissatisfied with their station, they gradually fall into such wretched ways that they must pay the fine imposed on those who, absorbed in worldly, temporal things, forget "the kingdom of God and His justice." As a matter of fact, this present conflict is even more serious than the others. Although the wild innovators of former times generally preserved some fragments of the treasury of revealed doctrine, these moderns act as if they will not rest until they completely destroy it. When the foundations of religion are overthrown, the restraints of civil society are also necessarily shattered. Behold the sad spectacle of our times! Behold the impending danger of the future! However, it is no danger to the Church, for the divine promise leaves no room for doubt. Rather, this revolution threatens the family and nations, especially those who actively stir up or indifferently tolerate this unhealthy atmosphere of irreligion.

20. This impious and foolish war is waged and sometimes supported by

those who should be the first to come to Our aid. The errors appear in many forms and the enticements of vice wear different dresses. Both cause many even among our own ranks to be ensnared, seducing them by the appearance of novelty and doctrine, or the illusion that the Church will accept the maxims of the age. Venerable Brethren, you are well aware that we must vigorously resist and repel the enemy's attacks with the very weapons Borrromeo used in his day.

21. Since they attack the very root of faith either by openly denying, hypocritically undermining, or misrepresenting revealed doctrine, we should above all recall the truth Charles often taught. "The primary and most important duty of pastors is to guard everything pertaining to the integral and inviolate maintenance of the Catholic Faith, the faith which the Holy Roman Church professes and teaches, without which it is impossible to please God." [30] Again: "In this matter no diligence can be too great to fulfill the certain demands of our office." [31] We must therefore use sound doctrine to withstand "the leaven of heretical depravity," which if not repressed, will corrupt the whole. That is to say, we must oppose these erroneous opinions now deceitfully being scattered abroad, which, when taken all together, are called *Modernism*. With Charles we must be mindful "of the supreme zeal and excelling diligence which the bishop must exercise in combating the crime of heresy." [32]

22. We need not mention the Saint's other words (echoing the sanctions and penalties decreed by the Roman Pontiffs) against those prelates who are negligent or remiss in purging the evil heresy out of their dioceses. It is fitting, however, to meditate on the conclusions he draws from these papal decrees. "Above everything else," he says, "the Bishop must be eternally on guard and continually vigilant in preventing the contagious disease of heresy from entering among his flock and removing even the faintest suspicion of it from the fold. If it should happen to enter (the Lord forbid!), he must use every means at his command to expel it immediately. Moreover, he must see to it that those infected or suspected be treated according to the pontifical canons and sanctions." [33]

23. Liberation or immunity from this disease of heresy is possible only when the clergy are properly instructed, since "faith. . . depends on hearing, and hearing on the word of Christ." [34] Today we must heed the words of truth. We see this poison penetrating through all the veins of the State (from sources where it would be the least expected) to such an extent that the causes are the same as those Charles records in the following words: "If those who associate with heretics are not firmly rooted in the Faith there is reason to fear that they will easily be seduced by the heretics into the trap of impiety and false doctrine." [35] Nowadays facility in travel and communication has proven just as

advantageous for error as for other things. We are living in a perverse society of unbridled license of passions in which "there is no truth...and there is no knowledge of God," [36] in "all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart." [37] For that reason, borrowing the words of Charles, "we have already emphasized the importance of having all the faithful of Christ well instructed in the rudiments of Christian doctrine" [38] and have written a special encyclical letter on that extremely important subject. [39] However, We do not wish to repeat the lamentation Borromeo was moved to utter because of his burning zeal, namely, that "up until now We have received very little success in a matter of such importance." Rather, moved like him "by the enormity and danger of the task," We would once again urge everyone to make Charles his model of zeal so that he will contribute in this work of Christian restoration according to his position and ability. Fathers and employers should recall how the holy Bishop frequently and fervently taught that they should not only afford the opportunity but even consider it their duty to see that their children, servants, and employees study Christian doctrine. Clerics should remember that they must assist the parish priests in the teaching of Christian doctrine. Parish priests should erect as many schools for this same purpose as the number and needs of the people demand. They should further take care that they have upright teachers, who will be assisted by men and women of good morals according to the manner the holy Archbishop Milan prescribed. [40]

24. Obviously the need of this Christian instruction is accentuated by the decline of our times and morals. It is even more demanded by the existence of those public schools, lacking all religion, where everything holy is ridiculed and scorned. There both teachers' lips and students' ears are inclined to godlessness. We are referring to those schools which are unjustly called neutral or lay. In reality, they are nothing more than the stronghold of the powers of darkness. You have already, Venerable Brethren, fearlessly condemned this new trick of mocking liberty especially in those countries where the rights of religion and the family have been disgracefully ignored and the voice of nature (which demands respect for the faith and innocence of youth) has been stifled. Firmly resolved to spare no effort in remedying this evil caused by those who expect others to obey them (although they refuse to obey the Supreme Master of all things themselves), We have recommended that schools of Christian doctrine be erected in those cities where it is possible. Thanks to your efforts, this work has already made good progress. It is, however, very much to be desired that this work spread even more widely, with many such religious schools established everywhere and teachers of sound doctrine and good morals provided.

25. The preacher (whose duty is closely allied to the teacher of the

fundamentals of religion) should also have the same qualities of sound doctrine and good morals. For that reason, when drawing up the statutes of the provincial and diocesan synods, Charles was most careful to provide preachers full of zeal and holiness to exercise "the ministry of the word." We are convinced that this care is even more urgent in our times when so many men are wavering in the Faith and some vain-glorious men, filled with the spirit of the age, "adulterate the word of God" and deprive the faithful of the food of life.

26. We must spare no pains, Venerable Brethren, in seeing that the flock does not feed on this air of foolish empty-headed men. Rather, it should be nourished with the life-giving food of "the ministers of the word." These can truly say, "On behalf of Christ...we are acting as ambassadors, God, as it were, appealing through us...be reconciled to God...we avoid unscrupulous conduct, we do not corrupt the word of God; but making known the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God..." We are workmen "that cannot be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." [41] Those very holy and fruitful rules the Bishop of Milan frequently laid down for his people have a similar value for us. They can best be summarized in these words of Saint Paul: "When you heard and received from us the word of God, you welcomed it not as the word of man, but, as it truly is, the word of God, who works in you who have believed." [42]

27. "The word of God is living and efficient and keener than any two-edged sword." [43] It will not only preserve and defend the faith but also effectively motivate us to do good works since "faith...without works is dead." [44] "For it is not they who hear the Law that are just in the sight of God; but it is they who follow the Law that will be justified." [45]

28. Now in this also we see the immense difference between true and false reform. The advocates of false reform, imitating the fickleness of the foolish, generally rush into extremes. They either emphasize faith to such an extent that they neglect good works or they canonize nature with the excellence of virtue while overlooking the assistance of faith and divine grace. As a matter of fact, however, merely naturally good acts are only a counterfeit of virtue since they are neither permanent nor sufficient for salvation. The work of this kind of a reformer cannot restore discipline. On the contrary, it ruins faith and morals.

29. On the other hand, the sincere and zealous reformer will; like Charles, avoid extremes and never overstep the bounds of true reform. He will always be united in the closest bonds with the Church and Christ, her Head. There he will find not only strength for his interior life but also the directives he needs in order to carry out his work of healing human society. The function of this divine mission, which has from time

immemorial been handed down to the ambassadors of Christ, is to "make disciples of all nations" both the things they are to believe as well as the things they are to do since Christ Himself said, "Observe all that I have commanded you." [46] He is "the way, and the truth, and the life," [47] coming into the world that man "may have life, and have it more abundantly." [48] The fulfillment of these duties, however, far surpasses man's natural powers. The Church alone possesses together with her magisterium the power of governing and sanctifying human society. Through her ministers and servants (each in his own station and office), she confers on mankind suitable and necessary means of salvation.

True reformers understand this very clearly. They do not kill the blossom in saving the root. That is to say, they do not divorce faith from holiness. They rather cultivate both of them, enkindling them with the fire of charity, "which is the bond of perfection." [49] In obedience to the Apostle, they "keep the deposit." [50] They neither obscure nor dim its light before the nations, but spread far and wide the most saving waters of truth and life welling up from that spring. They combine theory and practice. By the former they are prepared to withstand the "masquerading of error" and by the latter they apply the commandments to moral activity. In such a way they employ all the suitable and necessary means for attaining the end, namely, the wiping out of sin and the perfecting "the saints for a work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." [51] This is the purpose of every kind of instruction, government, and munificence. In a word, this is the ultimate purpose of every discipline and action of the Church. When the true son of the church sets out to reform himself and others, he fixes his eyes and heart on matters of faith and morals. On just such matters Borromeo based his reformation of ecclesiastical discipline. Thus he often referred to them in his writings, as, for example, when he says, "Following the ancient custom of the holy Fathers and sacred Councils, especially the ecumenical Synod of Trent, we have decreed many regulations on these very matters in our preceding provincial Councils." [52] In the same way, when providing for the suppression of public scandals, he declares that he is following "both the law and sacred sanctions of the sacred canons, and especially the decrees of the Council of Trent." [53]

30. However, he did not stop at that. In order to assure as much as possible that he would never depart from this rule, he customarily concluded the statutes of his provincial Synods with the following words: "We are always prepared to submit everything we have done and decreed in this provincial Synod to the authority and judgment of the Roman Church, the Mother and Mistress of all the churches." [54] The more quickly he advanced in the perfection of the active ministry the more firmly was he rooted in this resolve, not only when the Chair of Peter was occupied by his uncle, but also during the Pontificates of his

successors, Pius V and Gregory XIII. He wielded his influence in having these latter elected; he was tireless in supporting their great endeavors; and he fulfilled in a perfect manner whatever they expected of him.

31. Moreover, he seconded every one of their acts with the practical means needed to realize the end in view, namely, the real reform of sacred discipline. In this respect also he proved that in no wise he resembled those false reformers who concealed their obstinate disobedience under the cloak of zeal. He began "the judgment...with the household of God." [55] He first of all restored discipline among the clergy by making them conform to certain definite laws. With this same end in view he built seminaries, founded a congregation of priests known as the Oblates, unified both the ancient and modern religious families, and convoked Councils. By these and other provisions he assured and developed the work of reform. Then he immediately set a vigorous hand to the work of reforming the morals of the people. He considered the words spoken to the Prophet as addressed to himself; "Lo, I have set thee this day...to root up and to pull down, and to waste and to destroy, and to build and to plant." [56] Good shepherd that he was, he personally set out on wearisome visitation of the churches of the province. Like the Divine Master "he went about doing good and healing." He spared no efforts in suppressing and uprooting the abuses he met everywhere either because of ignorance or neglect of the laws. He checked the rampant perversion of ideas and corruption of morals by founding schools for the children and colleges for youth. After seeing their early beginnings in Rome, he promoted the Marian societies. He founded orphanages for the fatherless, shelters for girls in danger, widows, mendicants, and men and women made destitute by sickness or old age. He opened institutions to protect the poor against tyrannical masters, usurers, and the enslavement of children. He accomplished all these things by completely ignoring the methods of those who think human society can be restored only by utter destruction, revolution, and noisy slogans. Such persons have forgotten the divine words: "The Lord is not in the earthquake." [57]

32. Here is another difference between true and false reformers which you, Venerable Brethren, have often encountered. The latter "seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ." [58] They listen to the deceitful invitation once addressed to the Divine Master, "Manifest thyself to the world." [59] They repeat the ambitious words, "Let us also get us a name" and in their rashness (which We unfortunately have to deplore in these days) "some priests fell in battle, while desiring to do manfully, they went out unadvisedly to fight." [60]

33. On the other hand, the true reformer "seeks not his own glory, but the glory of the one who sent him." [61] Like Christ, his Model, "he will not wrangle, nor cry aloud, neither will anyone hear his voice in the

streets...He shall not be sad nor troublesome" [62] but he shall be "meek and humble of heart." [63] For that reason he will please the Lord and bring forth abundant fruit for salvation.

34. They are distinguished one from the other in yet another way. The false reformer "trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." [64] The true reformer places his trust in God and seeks His supernatural aid for all his strength and virtue, making his own the Apostle's words: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." [65]

35. Christ lavishly communicates these aids, among which are especially prayer, sacrifice and the Sacraments, which "become...a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting." [66] Since the Church has been endowed with them for the salvation of all men, the faithful man will look for them in her. False reformers, however, despise these means. They make the road crooked and, so wrapped up in reforming that they forget God, they are always trying to make these crystal springs so cloudy or arid that the flock of Christ will be deprived of their waters. In this respect the false reformers of former days are even surpassed by their modern followers. These latter, wearing the mask of religiosity, discredit and despise these means of salvation, especially the two Sacraments which cleanse the penitent soul from sin and feed it with celestial food. Let every faithful pastor, therefore, employ the utmost zeal in seeing that the benefits of such great value be held in the highest esteem. Let them never permit these two works of divine love to grow cold in the hearts of men.

36. Borromeo conducted himself in precisely that way. Thus we read in his writings: "Since the fruit of the Sacraments is so abundantly effective, its value can be explained with no little difficulty. They should, therefore, be treated and received with the greatest preparation, deepest reverence, and external pomp and ceremony." [67] His exhortations (which We have also made in Our decree, *Tridentina Synodus* [68]) to pastors and preachers concerning the ancient practice of frequent Holy Communion is most worthy of notice. "Pastors and preachers," the holy Bishop writes, "should take every possible opportunity to urge the people to cultivate the practice of frequently receiving Holy Communion. In this they are following the example of the early Church, the recommendations of the most authoritative Fathers, the doctrine of the Roman Catechism (which treats this matter in detail), and, finally the teaching of the Council of Trent. The last mentioned would have the faithful receive Communion in every Mass, not only spiritually but sacramentally." [69] He describes the intention and affection one should have in approaching the Sacred Banquet in the following words: "The people should not only be urged to receive Holy Communion frequently, but also how dangerous and fatal it would be to approach the Sacred

Table of Divine Food unworthily." [70] It would seem that our days of wavering faith and coldness need this same fervor in a special way so that frequent reception of Holy Communion will not be accompanied by a decrease in reverence toward this great mystery. On the contrary, by this frequency a man should "prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the cup." [71]

37. An abundant stream of grace will flow from these fonts, strengthening and nourishing even natural and human means. By no means will a Christian neglect those useful and comforting things of this life, for these also come from the hands of God, the Author of grace and nature. In seeking and enjoying these material and physical things, however, he will be careful not to make them the end and quasi-beatitude of this life. He will use them rightly and temperately when he subordinates them to the salvation of souls, according to Christ's words: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be given you besides." [72]

38. This wise evaluation and use of means is not in the least opposed to the happiness of that inferior ordering of means in civil society. On the contrary, the former promotes the latter's welfare - not, of course, by the foolish prattle of quarrelsome reformers, but by acts and heroic efforts, even to the extent of sacrificing property, power, and life itself. We have many examples of this fortitude during the Church's worst days in the lives of many bishops who, equaling Charles' zeal, put into practice the Divine Master's words: "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." [73] Neither vainglory, party spirit, nor private interest is their motive. They are moved to spend themselves for the common good by that charity "which never fails." This flame of love cannot be seen by the eyes of the world. It so enkindled Borromeo, however, that, after endangering his own life in caring for the victims of the plague, he did not rest with merely warding off present evils but began to provide for the dangers the future might have in store. "It is no more than right that a good and loving father will provide for his children's future as well as their present by setting aside the necessities of life for them. In virtue of our duty of paternal love, we are also prudently providing for the faithful of our province by setting aside those aids for the future which the experience of the plague has taught us are most effective." [74]

39. These same loving plans and considerations can be put into practice, Venerable Brethren, in that Catholic Action We have so often recommended. The leaders of the people are called to engage in this very noble apostolate which includes all the works of mercy [75] which will be prepared and ready to sacrifice all they have and are for the cause. They must bear envy, contradiction, and even the hatred of many who will repay their labors with ingratitude. They must conduct themselves

as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ." [76] They must "run with patience to the fight set before us; looking towards the author and finisher of faith, Jesus Christ." [77] Without a doubt, this is a very difficult contest. Nevertheless, even though a total victory will be slow in coming, it is a contest that serves the welfare of civil society in a most worthy manner.

40. In this work we have the splendid example of Saint Charles. From his example each one of us can find much for imitation and consolation. Even though his outstanding virtue, his marvelous activity, his never failing charity commanded much respect, he was nonetheless subject to that law which reads, "All who want to live piously in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." [78] His austere life, his defense of righteousness and honesty, his protection of law and justice only led to his being hated by rulers and tricked by diplomats and, later, distrusted by the nobility, clergy and people until he was eventually so hated by wicked men that they sought his very life. In spite of his mild and gentle disposition he withstood all these attacks with unflinching courage.

41. He yielded no ground on any matter that would endanger faith and morals. He admitted no claim (even if it was made by a powerful monarch who was always a Catholic) that was either contrary to discipline or burdensome to the faithful. He was always mindful of Christ's words: "Render...to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." [79] He never forgot the Apostles' declaration: "We must obey God rather than men." [80] Thus he was religion's and society's chief benefactor. In his time civil society was paying the price of almost certain destruction because of its worldly prudence. It was practically shipwrecked in the seditious storms it had stirred up.

42. The Catholics of our days, together with their leaders, the Bishops, will deserve the same praise and gratitude as Charles as long as they are faithful to their duties of good citizenship. They must be as faithful in their loyalty and respect to "wicked rulers" when their commands are just, as they are adamant in resisting their commands when unjust. They must remain as far from the impious rebellion of those who advocate sedition and revolt as they are from the subservience of those who accept as sacred the obviously wicked laws of perverse men. These last mentioned wicked men uproot everything in the name of a deceitful liberty, and then oppress their subjects with the most abject tyranny.

43. This is precisely what is happening today in the sight of the whole world and in the broad light of modern civilization. Especially is this the case in some countries where "the powers of darkness" seem to have made their headquarters. This domineering tyranny has suppressed all the rights of the Church's children. These rulers' hearts have been closed

to all feelings of generosity, courtesy, and faith which their ancestors, who gloried in the name of Christians, manifested for so long a time. It is obvious that everything quickly lapses back into the ancient barbarism of license whenever God and the Church are hated. It would be more correct to say that everything falls under that most cruel yoke from which only the family of Christ and the education it introduced has freed us. Borromeo expressed the same thought in the following words: "It is a certain, well- established fact that no other crime so seriously offends God and provokes His greatest wrath as the vice of heresy. Nothing contributes more to the down fall of provinces and kingdoms than this frightful pest." [81] Although the enemies of the Church completely disagree among themselves in thought and action (which is a sure indication of error), they are nevertheless united in their obstinate attacks against truth and justice. Since the Church is the guardian and defender of both these virtues, they close their ranks in a unified attack against her. Of course, they loudly proclaim (as is the custom) their impartiality and firmly maintain they are only promoting the cause of peace. In reality, however, their soft words and avowed intentions are only the traps they are laying, thus adding insult to injury, treason to violence. From this it should be evident that a new kind of warfare is now being waged against Christianity. Without a doubt it is far more dangerous than those former conflicts which crowned Borromeo with such glory.

44. His example and teaching will do much to help us wage a valiant battle on behalf of the noble cause which will save the individual and society, faith, religion, and the inviolability of public order. Our combat, it is true, will be spurred on by bitter necessity. At the same time, however, we will be encouraged by the hope that the omnipotent God will hasten the victory for the sake of those who wage so glorious a contest. This hope increases through the fruitfulness of the work of Saint Charles even down to our own times. His work humbles the proud and strengthens us in the holy resolve to restore all things in Christ.

45. We can now conclude, Venerable Brethren, with the same words with which Our Predecessor, Paul V (whom We already mentioned several times), concluded the letter conferring the highest honors on Charles. "In the meantime," he wrote, "it is only right that we return honor, glory, and benediction to Him Who lives for all ages, for He blessed Our fellow servant with every spiritual gift in order to make him holy and spotless in His sight. The Lord gave him to us as a star shining in the darkness of these sins which are Our affliction. Let us beseech the Divine Goodness both in word and deed to let Charles now assist by his patronage the Church he loved so ardently and aided so greatly by his merits and example, thus making peace for us in the day of wrath, through Christ Our Lord." [82]

46. May the fulfillment of our mutual hope be granted through this prayer. As a token of that fulfillment, Venerable Brethren, from the depth of Our heart We impart to you and the clergy and people committed to your care, the Apostolic Blessing.

Given at Saint Peter's, Rome, on May 26, 1910, in the seventh year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS X

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. Ps. 111:7; Prov. 10:7, Heb. 11:4.
2. Rom. 8: 11.
3. Rom. 8:28.
4. I Cor. 4:16.
5. Cf. *E Supremi*.
6. Heb. 3:1; 12:2.
7. Cf. *Ad diem illum*.
8. Heb. 11:33.
9. Eph. 4:11 ff
10. Cf. encyclical *E Supremi Apostolatus*.
11. Paul V, Papal bull of November 15, 1610, *Unigenitus*.
12. *Ibid*.
13. Eph. 5:25 ff.
14. Matt. 16:18.
15. Matt. 28:20.

16. John 14:16 ff., 26, 59; 16:7 ff.
17. *Sessio III, c. 3.*
18. Phil. 3:18-19.
19. Is. 5:20.
20. I Cor. 10:13.
21. I Pet. 5:3.
22. Paul V, Papal bull *Unigenitus*.
23. Gen. 8:21.
24. Rom. 6:6.
25. Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2.
26. Phil. 3:13-14.
27. Eph. 4:15-16.
28. Eph. 1:10.
29. Matt. 13:25.
30. *Conc. Prov. I, sub initium.*
31. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I.*
34. Rom. 10:17.
35. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I.*
36. Osee 4:1.
37. Jer. 12:11.
38. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I.*

39. Cf. *Acerbo nimis*.
40. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I*.
41. II Cor. 5:20; 4:2; II Tim. 2:15.
42. I Thess. 2:13.
43. Heb. 4:12.
44. James 2:26.
45. Rom. 2:13.
46. Matt. 28:18, 20.
47. John 14:6.
48. John 10:10.
49. Col. 3:14.
50. I Tim. 4:20.
51. Eph. 4:12.
52. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I*.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Conc. Prov. VI, sub finem*.
55. I Pet. 4:17.
56. Jer. 1:10.
57. III Kings 19:11.
58. Phil. 2:21.
59. John 7:4.
60. I Mac. 5:57, 67.
61. Cf. John 7:18.

62. Matt. 12:19; Is. 42:2 ff.
63. Matt. 11:29.
64. Jer. 17:5.
65. Phil. 4:13.
66. John 4:14.
67. *Conc. Prov. I, Pars II.*
68. December 20, 1905.
69. *Conc. Prov. III, Pars I.*
70. *Conc. Prov. IV, Pars II.*
- 71 . I Cor. 11:28.
72. Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31.
73. John 10:11.
74. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars II.*
75. Cf. Matt. 25:34 ff.
76. II Tim. 2:3.
77. Heb. 12:1-2.
78. II Tim . 3:12.
79. Matt. 22:21.
80. Acts 5:29.
81. *Conc. Prov. V, Pars I.*
82. Paul V, Papal bull *Unigenitus*.

