

UBI ARCANO DEI CONSILIO
ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PIUS XI
ON THE PEACE OF CHRIST IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST
TO OUR VENERABLE BRETHREN THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES,
ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS, AND OTHER ORDINARIES
IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE.

December 23, 1922

From the very hour when in the inscrutable designs of God, We though unworthy, were elevated to this Chair of Truth and Love, We earnestly desired to address a heartfelt message to you, Venerable Brothers, and to all Our beloved children who are under your immediate direction and care. This Our desire found its inspiration in the solemn benediction - *Urbi et Orbi* - which We gave to an immense multitude from the balcony of the Vatican Basilica following Our election to the Supreme Pontificate. This blessing of Ours was received with every manifestation of joy and gratitude by you, by people from every part of the world, and by the Sacred College of Cardinals. This fact was for Us a most comforting assurance, added to that other which comes from Our trust in the divine assistance, in preparing Us to take up the tremendous office which quite unexpectedly We have been called upon to assume.

2. We, therefore, write to you now, "our mouth is open to you" (II *Cor.* vi, 11) as the birthday of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the New Year approach, and wish this letter to be not only a message of glad greetings but a Christmas gift as well from a father to his loving children.

3. Many reasons prevented Us up to this time from fulfilling Our wish to write. In the first place, there was what one might call a contest of filial devotion by reason of which there came to us in letters without number the good wishes of Our brothers and children from every quarter of the globe, messages which bespoke a welcome to the newly elected Successor of St. Peter and offered him the well-wishes born of a devoted homage.

4. Following close upon these messages We were called upon to experience personally and for the first time what St. Paul has called "my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches." (II *Cor.* xi, 28) To Our everyday duties there were added many extraordinary ones, as for example, those most important affairs already well advanced towards a solution before Our election and which We had to rush to completion, which had to do with the Holy Places, which affected the welfare of Christianity itself, or the status of dioceses numbered among the most important of the Catholic world. Then there were to be considered international meetings and treaties which deeply influenced the future of whole peoples and of nations. Faithful to the ministry of peace and reconciliation which has been confided to Our care by God, We strove to make known far and wide the law of justice, tempered always by charity, and to obtain merited consideration for those values and interests which, because they are spiritual, are none the less grave and important. As a matter of fact, they are much more serious and important than any merely material thing whatsoever. We were occupied, too, with the almost unbelievable sufferings of those peoples, living in districts far remote from Us, who had been stricken with famine and

every kind of calamity. We hastened to send them all the help which Our own straitened circumstances permitted, and did not fail to call upon the whole world to assist Us in this task. Finally, there did not escape Us those uprisings accompanied by acts of violence which had broken out in the very midst of Our own beloved people, here where We were born, here where the hand of Divine Providence has set down the Chair of St. Peter. For a time these troubles seemed to threaten the very future of Our country, nor could We rest until We had done everything within Our power to quiet such serious disorders.

There were, on the other hand, certain extraordinary events which filled Our soul with joy. Such were, for example, the Twenty-Sixth International Eucharistic Congress and the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the establishment of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith. These celebrations brought to Us such inexpressible consolation and such great spiritual joy that We never imagined such a thing possible at the very outset of Our Pontificate. We also saw at that time practically all the members of the hundreds of bishops who had come to Rome from every part of the world. Under normal circumstances it would have taken several years to interview a like number of bishops. We gave audience also to many thousands of the faithful and blessed with Our fatherly blessing large and dignified representations of that immense family "from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation" as we read in the Book of the Apocalypse, (v, 9) which God has confided to Us. Together with them We were privileged to assist at spectacles which were little short of divine, for We witnessed Our Blessed Redeemer reassume His rightful place as King of all men, of all states, and of all nations when, though hidden behind the veils of the Eucharistic species, He was carried in a magnificent and truly royal triumph of faith through the streets of Our own city, Rome, accompanied by an immense concourse of people representing every nation on earth. We beheld, too, the Holy Spirit, as it were, descend into the hearts of both priests and faithful as He did on the first Pentecost Sunday, to rekindle in them the spirit of prayer and of the apostolate. We were overjoyed to behold the fervent faith of the inhabitants of Rome proclaimed once again to the world, to the great glory of God and to the edification of souls.

5. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Our own dear Mother, who had most lovingly looked down on us at the Sanctuaries of Czestochowa and of Ostrabrama as well as at the miraculous grotto of Lourdes and from the lofty spires of Our own city of Milan, to say nothing of that most holy Sanctuary of the Rho, deigned to accept the homage of Our love on the occasion when We gave back to the Venerable Basilica of Loreto, which had been restored after the serious damage caused to it by fire, her beautiful statue which had been not only done over at Our behest but had been blessed and crowned as well by Our own hands. That occasion was without question a veritable triumph for Mary. During the passage of her statue from Rome to Loreto, the faithful of each town rivaled one another in acclaiming her by a spontaneous and continuous outburst of profoundly religious sentiment, which showed forth a most tender affection for Our Blessed Lady, as well as a devoted attachment to the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

6. These different events, some sad and some joyful, the history of which We wish to record for the edification of posterity, spoke most eloquently to Us, making more and more clear to Our mind those objectives which seem to claim the foremost place in Our Apostolic Ministry and of which it behooves Us to speak now in as solemn a manner as possible in this, Our very first message to you.

7. One thing is certain today. Since the close of the Great War individuals, the different classes of society, the nations of the earth have not as yet found true peace. They do not enjoy, therefore, that active and fruitful tranquillity which is the aspiration and the need of mankind. This is a sad truth which forces itself upon us from every side. For anyone who, as We do, desires profoundly to study and successfully to apply the means necessary to overcome such evils, it is all-important that he recognize both the fact and the gravity of this state of affairs and attempt beforehand to discover its causes. This duty is imposed upon Us in commanding fashion by the very consciousness which We have of Our Apostolic Office. We cannot but resolve to fulfill that which is so clearly Our duty. This We shall do now by this Our first encyclical, and afterward with all solicitude in the course of Our sacred ministry.

8. Since the selfsame sad conditions continue to exist in the world today which were the object of constant and almost heartbreaking preoccupation on the part of Our respected Predecessor, Benedict XV, during the whole period of his pontificate, naturally We have come to make his thoughts and his solutions of these problems Our own. May they become, too, the thoughts and ideals of everyone, as they are Our thoughts, and if this should happen we would certainly see, with the help of God and the co-operation of all men of good will, the most wonderful effects come to pass by a true and lasting reconciliation of men one with another.

9. The inspired words of the Prophets seem to have been written expressly for our own times: "We looked for peace and no good came: for a time of healing, and behold fear," (*Jer. viii, 15*) "for the time of healing, and behold trouble." (*Jer. xiv, 19*) "We looked for light, and behold darkness . . . we have looked for judgment, and there is none: for salvation, and it is far from us." (*Isaias lix, 9, 11*)

10. The belligerents of yesterday have laid down their arms but on the heels of this act we encounter new horrors and new threats of war in the Near East. The conditions in many sections of these devastated regions have been greatly aggravated by famine, epidemics, and the laying waste of the land, all of which have not failed to take their toll of victims without number, especially among the aged, women and innocent children. In what has been so justly called the immense theater of the World War, the old rivalries between nations have not ceased to exert their influence, rivalries at times hidden under the manipulations of politics or concealed beneath the fluctuations of finance, but openly appearing in the press, in reviews and magazines of every type, and even penetrating into institutions devoted to the cultivation of the arts and sciences, spots where otherwise the atmosphere of quiet and peace would reign supreme.

11. Public life is so enveloped, even at the present hour, by the dense fog of mutual hatreds and grievances that it is almost impossible for the common people so much as freely to breathe therein. If the defeated nations continue to suffer most terribly, no less serious are the evils which afflict their conquerors. Small nations complain that they are being oppressed and exploited by great nations. The great powers, on their side, contend that they are being judged wrongly and circumvented by the smaller. All nations, great and small, suffer acutely from the sad effects of the late War. Neither can those nations which were neutral contend that they have escaped altogether the tremendous sufferings of the War or failed to experience its evil results almost equally with the actual belligerents. These evil results grow in volume from day to day because

of the utter impossibility of finding anything like a safe remedy to cure the ills of society, and this in spite of all the efforts of politicians and statesmen whose work has come to naught if it has not unfortunately tended to aggravate the very evils they tried to overcome. Conditions have become increasingly worse because the fears of the people are being constantly played upon by the ever-present menace of new wars, likely to be more frightful and destructive than any which have preceded them. Whence it is that the nations of today live in a state of armed peace which is scarcely better than war itself, a condition which tends to exhaust national finances, to waste the flower of youth, to muddy and poison the very fountainheads of life, physical, intellectual, religious, and moral.

12. A much more serious and lamentable evil than these threats of external aggression is the internal discord which menaces the welfare not only of nations but of human society itself. In the first place, we must take cognizance of the war between the classes, a chronic and mortal disease of present-day society, which like a cancer is eating away the vital forces of the social fabric, labor, industry, the arts, commerce, agriculture - everything in fact which contributes to public and private welfare and to national prosperity. This conflict seems to resist every solution and grows worse because those who are never satisfied with the amount of their wealth contend with those who hold on most tenaciously to the riches which they have already acquired, while to both classes there is common the desire to rule the other and to assume control of the other's possessions. From this class war there result frequent interruptions of work, the causes for which most often can be laid to mutual provocations. There result, too, revolutions, riots, and forcible repression of one side or other by the government, all of which cannot but end in general discontent and in grave damage to the common welfare.

To these evils we must add the contests between political parties, many of which struggles do not originate in a real difference of opinion concerning the public good or in a laudable and disinterested search for what would best promote the common welfare, but in the desire for power and for the protection of some private interest which inevitably result in injury to the citizens as a whole. From this course there often arise robberies of what belongs rightly to the people, and even conspiracies against and attacks on the supreme authority of the state, as well as on its representatives. These political struggles also beget threats of popular action and, at times, eventuate in open rebellion and other disorders which are all the more deplorable and harmful since they come from a public to whom it has been given, in our modern democratic states, to participate in very large measure in public life and in the affairs of government. Now, these different forms of government are not of themselves contrary to the principles of the Catholic Faith, which can easily be reconciled with any reasonable and just system of government. Such governments, however, are the most exposed to the danger of being overthrown by one faction or another.

13. It is most sad to see how this revolutionary spirit has penetrated into that sanctuary of peace and love, the family, the original nucleus of human society. In the family these evil seeds of dissension, which were sown long ago, have recently been spread about more and more by the fact of the absence of fathers and sons from the family fireside during the War and by the greatly increased freedom in matters of morality which followed on it as one of its effects. Frequently we behold sons alienated from their fathers, brothers quarreling with brothers, masters with servants, servants with masters. Too often likewise have we seen both the sanctity of the

marriage tie and the duties to God and to humankind, which this tie imposes upon men, forgotten.

14. Just as the smallest part of the body feels the effect of an illness which is ravaging the whole body or one of its vital organs, so the evils now besetting society and the family afflict even individuals. In particular, We cannot but lament the morbid restlessness which has spread among people of every age and condition in life, the general spirit of insubordination and the refusal to live up to one's obligations which has become so widespread as almost to appear the customary mode of living. We lament, too, the destruction of purity among women and young girls as is evidenced by the increasing immodesty of their dress and conversation and by their participation in shameful dances, which sins are made the more heinous by the vaunting in the faces of people less fortunate than themselves their luxurious mode of life. Finally, We cannot but grieve over the great increase in the number of what might be called social misfits who almost inevitably end by joining the ranks of those malcontents who continually agitate against all order, be it public or private.

15. It is surprising, then, that we should no longer possess that security of life in which we can place our trust and that there remains only the most terrible uncertainty, and from hour to hour added fears for the future? Instead of regular daily work there is idleness and unemployment. That blessed tranquillity which is the effect of an orderly existence and in which the essence of peace is to be found no longer exists, and, in its place, the restless spirit of revolt reigns. As a consequence industry suffers, commerce is crippled, the cultivation of literature and the arts becomes more and more difficult, and what is worse than all, Christian civilization itself is irreparably damaged thereby. In the face of our much praised progress, we behold with sorrow society lapsing back slowly but surely into a state of barbarism.

16. We wish to record, in addition to the evils already mentioned, other evils which beset society and which occupy a place of prime importance but whose very existence escapes the ordinary observer, the sensual man - he who, as the Apostle says, does not perceive "the things that are of the Spirit of God" (I *Cor.* ii, 14), yet which cannot but be judged the greatest and most destructive scourges of the social order of today. We refer specifically to those evils which transcend the material or natural sphere and lie within the supernatural and religious order properly so-called; in other words, those evils which affect the spiritual life of souls. These evils are all the more to be deplored since they injure souls whose value is infinitely greater than that of any merely material object.

17. Over and above the laxity in the performance of Christian duties which is so widespread, We cannot but sorrow with you, Venerable Brothers, over the fact that very many churches, which during the War had been turned to profane uses, have not yet been restored to their original purpose as temples of prayer and of divine worship; moreover, that many seminaries whose existence is vital for the preparation and formation of worthy leaders and teachers of the religious life have not yet been reopened; that the ranks of the clergy in almost every country have been decimated, either because so many priests have died on the battlefield in the exercise of their sacred ministry or have been lost to the Church because they proved faithless to their holy vocation, due to the unfavorable conditions under which they were compelled to live for so

long; and, finally, that in many places even the preaching of the Word of God, so necessary and so fruitful for "the edifying of the body of Christ" (*Ephesians* iv, 12) has been silenced.

18. The evil results of the Great War, as they affect the spiritual life, have been felt all over the world, even in out-of-the-way and lonely sections of far-off continents. Missionaries have been forced to abandon the field of their apostolic labors, and many have been unable to return to their work, thus causing interruptions to and even abandonment of those glorious conquests of the Faith which have done so much to raise the level of civilization, moral, material, and religious. It is quite true that there have been some worthwhile compensations for these great spiritual misfortunes. Among these compensations is one which stands out in bold relief and gives the lie to many ancient calumnies, namely, that a pure love of country and a generous devotion to duty burn brightly in the souls of those consecrated to God, and that through their sacred ministry the consolations of religion were brought to thousands dying on the fields of battle wet with human blood. Thus, many, in spite of their prejudices, were led to honor again the priesthood and the Church by reason of the wonderful examples of sacrifice of self, with which they had become acquainted. For these happy results we are indebted solely to the infinite goodness and wisdom of God, Who draws good from evil.

19. Our letter so far has been devoted to a recital of the evils which afflict present-day society. We must now search out, with all possible care, the causes of these disorders, some of which have already been referred to. At this point, Venerable Brothers, there seems to come to Us the voice of the Divine Consoler and Physician Who, speaking of these human infirmities says: "All these evil things come from within." (*Mark* vii, 23.)

20. Peace indeed was signed in solemn conclave between the belligerents of the late War. This peace, however, was only written into treaties. It was not received into the hearts of men, who still cherish the desire to fight one another and to continue to menace in a most serious manner the quiet and stability of civil society. Unfortunately the law of violence held sway so long that it has weakened and almost obliterated all traces of those natural feelings of love and mercy which the law of Christian charity has done so much to encourage. Nor has this illusory peace, written only on paper, served as yet to reawaken similar noble sentiments in the souls of men. On the contrary, there has been born a spirit of violence and of hatred which, because it has been indulged in for so long, has become almost second nature in many men. There has followed the blind rule of the inferior parts of the soul over the superior, that rule of the lower elements "fighting against the law of the mind," which St. Paul grieved over. (*Rom.* vii, 23)

21. Men today do not act as Christians, as brothers, but as strangers, and even enemies. The sense of man's personal dignity and of the value of human life has been lost in the brutal domination begotten of might and mere superiority in numbers. Many are intent on exploiting their neighbors solely for the purpose of enjoying more fully and on a larger scale the goods of this world. But they err grievously who have turned to the acquisition of material and temporal possessions and are forgetful of eternal and spiritual things, to the possession of which Jesus, Our Redeemer, by means of the Church, His living interpreter, calls mankind.

22. It is in the very nature of material objects that an inordinate desire for them becomes the root of every evil, of every discord, and in particular, of a lowering of the moral sense. On the one hand, things which are naturally base and vile can never give rise to noble aspirations in the human heart which was created by and for God alone and is restless until it finds repose in Him. On the other hand, material goods (and in this they differ greatly from those of the spirit which the more of them we possess the more remain to be acquired) the more they are divided among men the less each one has and, by consequence, what one man has another cannot possibly possess unless it be forcibly taken away from the first. Such being the case, worldly possessions can never satisfy all in equal manner nor give rise to a spirit of universal contentment, but must become perforce a source of division among men and of vexation of spirit, as even the Wise Man Solomon experienced: "Vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit." (*Ecclesiastes* i, 2, 14)

23. The same effects which result from these evils among individuals may likewise be expected among nations. "From whence are wars and contentions among you?" asks the Apostle St. James. "Are they not hence from your concupiscences, which war in your members?" (*James* iv, 1, 2)

24. The inordinate desire for pleasure, *concupiscence of the flesh*, sows the fatal seeds of division not only among families but likewise among states; the inordinate desire for possessions, *concupiscence of the eyes*, inevitably turns into class warfare and into social egotism; the inordinate desire to rule or to domineer over others, *pride of life*, soon becomes mere party or factional rivalries, manifesting itself in constant displays of conflicting ambitions and ending in open rebellion, in the crime of lese majeste, and even in national parricide.

25. These unsuppressed desires, this inordinate love of the things of the world, are precisely the source of all international misunderstandings and rivalries, despite the fact that oftentimes men dare to maintain that acts prompted by such motives are excusable and even justifiable because, forsooth, they were performed for reasons of state or of the public good, or out of love for country. Patriotism - the stimulus of so many virtues and of so many noble acts of heroism when kept within the bounds of the law of Christ - becomes merely an occasion, an added incentive to grave injustice when true love of country is debased to the condition of an extreme nationalism, when we forget that all men are our brothers and members of the same great human family, that other nations have an equal right with us both to life and to prosperity, that it is never lawful nor even wise, to dissociate morality from the affairs of practical life, that, in the last analysis, it is "justice which exalteth a nation: but sin maketh nations miserable." (*Proverbs* xiv, 34)

26. Perhaps the advantages to one's family, city, or nation obtained in some such way as this may well appear to be a wonderful and great victory (this thought has been already expressed by St. Augustine), but in the end it turns out to be a very shallow thing, something rather to inspire us with the most fearful apprehensions of approaching ruin. "It is a happiness which appears beautiful but is brittle as glass. We must ever be on guard lest with horror we see it broken into a thousand pieces at the first touch." (St. Augustine *de Civitate Dei*, Book iv, Chap. 3)

27. There is over and above the absence of peace and the evils attendant on this absence, another deeper and more profound cause for present-day conditions. This cause was even beginning to

show its head before the War and the terrible calamities consequent on that cataclysm should have proven a remedy for them if mankind had only taken the trouble to understand the real meaning of those terrible events. In the Holy Scriptures we read: "They that have forsaken the Lord, shall be consumed." (*Isaias* i, 28) No less well known are the words of the Divine Teacher, Jesus Christ, Who said: "Without me you can do nothing" (*John* xv, 5) and again, "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth." (*Luke* xi, 23)

28. These words of the Holy Bible have been fulfilled and are now at this very moment being fulfilled before our very eyes. Because men have forsaken God and Jesus Christ, they have sunk to the depths of evil. They waste their energies and consume their time and efforts in vain sterile attempts to find a remedy for these ills, but without even being successful in saving what little remains from the existing ruin. It was a quite general desire that both our laws and our governments should exist *without recognizing* God or Jesus Christ, on the theory that all authority comes from men, not from God. Because of such an assumption, these theorists fell very short of being able to bestow upon law not only those sanctions which it must possess but also that secure basis for the supreme criterion of justice which even a pagan philosopher like Cicero saw clearly could not be derived except from the divine law. Authority itself lost its hold upon mankind, for it had lost that sound and unquestionable justification for its right to command on the one hand and to be obeyed on the other. Society, quite logically and inevitably, was shaken to its very depths and even threatened with destruction, since there was left to it no longer a stable foundation, everything having been reduced to a series of conflicts, to the domination of the majority, or to the supremacy of special interests.

29. Again, legislation was passed which did not recognize that either God or Jesus Christ had any rights over marriage - an erroneous view which debased matrimony to the level of a mere civil contract, despite the fact that Jesus Himself had called it a "great sacrament" (*Ephesians* v, 32) and had made it the holy and sanctifying symbol of that indissoluble union which binds Him to His Church. The high ideals and pure sentiments with which the Church has always surrounded the idea of the family, the germ of all social life, these were lowered, were unappreciated, or became confused in the minds of many. As a consequence, the correct ideals of family government, and with them those of family peace, were destroyed; the stability and unity of the family itself were menaced and undermined, and, worst of all, the very sanctuary of the home was more and more frequently profaned by acts of sinful lust and soul-destroying egotism - all of which could not but result in poisoning and drying up the very sources of domestic and social life.

30. Added to all this, God and Jesus Christ, as well as His doctrines, were banished from the school. As a sad but inevitable consequence, the school became not only secular and non-religious but openly atheistical and anti-religious. In such circumstances it was easy to persuade poor ignorant children that neither God nor religion are of any importance as far as their daily lives are concerned. God's name, moreover, was scarcely ever mentioned in such schools unless it were perchance to blaspheme Him or to ridicule His Church. Thus, the school forcibly deprived of the right to teach anything about God or His law could not but fail in its efforts to really educate, that is, to lead children to the practice of virtue, for the school lacked the fundamental principles which underlie the possession of a knowledge of God and the means

necessary to strengthen the will in its efforts toward good and in its avoidance of sin. Gone, too, was all possibility of ever laying a solid groundwork for peace, order, and prosperity, either in the family or in social relations. Thus the principles based on the spiritualistic philosophy of Christianity having been obscured or destroyed in the minds of many, a triumphant materialism served to prepare mankind for the propaganda of anarchy and of social hatred which was let loose on such a great scale.

31. Is it to be wondered at then that, with the widespread refusal to accept the principles of true Christian wisdom, the seeds of discord sown everywhere should find a kindly soil in which to grow and should come to fruit in that most tremendous struggle, the Great War, which unfortunately did not serve to lessen but increased, by its acts of violence and of bloodshed, the international and social animosities which already existed?

32. Up to this We have analyzed briefly the causes of the ills which afflict present-day society, the recital of which however, Venerable Brothers, should not cause us to lose hope of finding their appropriate remedy, since the evils themselves seem to suggest a way out of these difficulties.

33. First, and most important of all, for mankind is the need of spiritual peace. We do not need a peace that will consist merely in acts of external or formal courtesy, but a peace which will penetrate the souls of men and which will unite, heal, and reopen their hearts to that mutual affection which is born of brotherly love. The peace of Christ is the only peace answering this description: "let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts." (*Colossians* iii, 15) Nor is there any other peace possible than that which Christ gave to His disciples (*John* xiv, 27) for since He is God, He "beholdeth the heart" (*I Kings* xvi, 7) and in our hearts His kingdom is set up. Again, Jesus Christ is perfectly justified when He calls this peace of soul His own for He was the first Who said to men, "all you are brethren." (*Matt.* xxiii, 8) He gave likewise to us, sealing it with His own life's blood, the law of brotherly love, of mutual forbearance - "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." (*John* xv, 12) "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ." (*Galatians* vi, 2)

34. From this it follows, as an immediate consequence, that the peace of Christ can only be a peace of justice according to the words of the prophet "the work of justice shall be peace" (*Isaias* xxxii, 17) for he is God "who judgest justice." (*Psalms* ix, 5) But peace does not consist merely in a hard inflexible justice. It must be made acceptable and easy by being compounded almost equally of charity and a sincere desire for reconciliation. Such peace was acquired for us and the whole world by Jesus Christ, a peace which the Apostle in a most expressive manner incarnates in the very person of Christ Himself when he addresses Him, "He is our peace," for it was He Who satisfied completely divine justice by his death on the cross, destroying thus in His own flesh all enmities toward others and making peace and reconciliation with God possible for mankind. (*Ephesians* ii, 14) Therefore, the Apostle beholds in the work of Redemption, which is a work of justice at one and the same time, a divine work of reconciliation and of love. "God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." (*II Corinthians* v, 19) "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son." (*John* iii, 16)

35. Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, also discovered in this fact the very formula and essence of our belief, for he writes that a true and lasting peace is more a matter of love than of justice. The reason for his statement is that it is the function of justice merely to do away with obstacles to peace, as for example, the injury done or the damage caused. Peace itself, however, is an act and results only from love. (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 29 Art. 3, Ad. III)

36. Of this peace of Christ, which dwells in our hearts and is, in effect, the love of God, We can repeat what the Apostle has said of the kingdom of God which also rules by love - "the kingdom of Christ is not meat and drink." (*Romans* xiv, 17) In other words, the peace of Christ is not nourished on the things of earth, but on those of heaven. Nor could it well be otherwise, since it is Jesus Christ Who has revealed to the world the existence of spiritual values and has obtained for them their due appreciation. He has said, "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (*Matt.* xvi, 26) He also taught us a divine lesson of courage and constancy when He said, "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." (*Matt.* x, 28; *Luke* xii, 14)

37. This does not mean that the peace of Christ, which is the only true peace, exacts of us that we give up all worldly possessions. On the contrary, every earthly good is promised in so many words by Christ to those who seek His peace: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (*Matt.* vi, 33; *Luke* xii, 31)

38. This peace of Christ, however, surpasses all human understanding - "the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding" (*Philippians* iv, 7), and for this very reason dominates our sinful passions and renders such evils as division, strife, and discord, which result solely from the unrestrained desire for earthly possessions, impossible. If the desire for worldly possessions were kept within bounds and the place of honor in our affections given to the things of the spirit, which place undoubtedly they deserve, the peace of Christ would follow immediately, to which would be joined in a natural and happy union, as it were, a higher regard for the value and dignity of human life. Human personality, too, would be raised to a higher level, for man has been ennobled by the Blood of Christ and made kin to God Himself by means of holiness and the bond of brotherly love which unites us closely with Christ, by prayer and by the reception of the Sacraments, means infallibly certain to produce this elevation to and participation in the life of God, by the desire to attain everlasting possession of the glory and happiness of heaven which is held out to all by God as our goal and final reward.

39. We have already seen and come to the conclusion that the principal cause of the confusion, restlessness, and dangers which are so prominent a characteristic of false peace is the weakening of the binding force of law and lack of respect for authority, effects which logically follow upon denial of the truth that authority comes from God, the Creator and Universal Law-giver.

40. The only remedy for such state of affairs is the peace of Christ since the peace of Christ is the peace of God, which could not exist if it did not enjoin respect for law, order, and the rights of authority. In the Holy Scriptures We read: "My children, keep discipline in peace." (*Ecclesiasticus* xli, 17) "Much peace have they that love the law, O Lord." (*Psalms* cxviii, 165)

"He that feareth the commandment, shall dwell in peace." (*Proverbs* xiii, 13) Jesus Christ very expressly states: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." (*Matt.* xxii, 21) He even recognized that Pilate possessed authority from on High (*John* xiv, 11) as he acknowledged that the scribes and Pharisees who though unworthy sat in the chair of Moses (*Matt.* xxiii, 2) were not without a like authority. In Joseph and Mary, Jesus respected the natural authority of parents and was subject to them for the greater part of His life. (*Luke* ii, 51) He also taught, by the voice of His Apostle, the same important doctrine: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God." (*Romans* xiii, 1; cf. also 1 *Peter* ii, 13, 18)

41. If we stop to reflect for a moment that these ideals and doctrines of Jesus Christ, for example, his teachings on the necessity and value of the spiritual life, on the dignity and sanctity of human life, on the duty of obedience, on the divine basis of human government, on the sacramental character of matrimony and by consequence the sanctity of family life - if we stop to reflect, let Us repeat, that these ideals and doctrines of Christ (which are in fact but a portion of the treasury of truth which He left to mankind) were confided by Him to His Church and to her alone for safekeeping, and that He has promised that His aid will never fail her at any time for she is the infallible teacher of His doctrines in every century and before all nations, there is no one who cannot clearly see what a singularly important role the Catholic Church is able to play, and is even called upon to assume, in providing a remedy for the ills which afflict the world today and in leading mankind toward a universal peace.

42. Because the Church is by divine institution the sole depository and interpreter of the ideals and teachings of Christ, she alone possesses in any complete and true sense the power effectively to combat that materialistic philosophy which has already done and, still threatens, such tremendous harm to the home and to the state. The Church alone can introduce into society and maintain therein the prestige of a true, sound spiritualism, the spiritualism of Christianity which both from the point of view of truth and of its practical value is quite superior to any exclusively philosophical theory. The Church is the teacher and an example of world good-will, for she is able to inculcate and develop in mankind the "true spirit of brotherly love" (St. Augustine, *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, i, 30) and by raising the public estimation of the value and dignity of the individual's soul help thereby to lift us even unto God.

43. Finally, the Church is able to set both public and private life on the road to righteousness by demanding that everything and all men become obedient to God "Who beholdeth the heart," to His commands, to His laws, to His sanctions. If the teachings of the Church could only penetrate in some such manner as We have described the inner recesses of the consciences of mankind, be they rulers or be they subjects, all eventually would be so apprised of their personal and civic duties and their mutual responsibilities that in a short time "Christ would be all, and in all." (*Colossians* iii, 11)

44. Since the Church is the safe and sure guide to conscience, for to her safe-keeping alone there has been confided the doctrines and the promise of the assistance of Christ, she is able not only to bring about at the present hour a peace that is truly the peace of Christ, but can, better than any other agency which We know of, contribute greatly to the securing of the same peace for the future, to the making impossible of war in the future. For the Church teaches (she alone has been

given by God the mandate and the right to teach with authority) that not only our acts as individuals but also as groups and as nations must conform to the eternal law of God. In fact, it is much more important that the acts of a nation follow God's law, since on the nation rests a much greater responsibility for the consequences of its acts than on the individual.

45. When, therefore, governments and nations follow in all their activities, whether they be national or international, the dictates of conscience grounded in the teachings, precepts, and example of Jesus Christ, and which are binding on each and every individual, then only can we have faith in one another's word and trust in the peaceful solution of the difficulties and controversies which may grow out of differences in point of view or from clash of interests. An attempt in this direction has already and is now being made; its results, however, are almost negligible and, especially so, as far as they can be said to affect those major questions which divide seriously and serve to arouse nations one against the other. No merely human institution of today can be as successful in devising a set of international laws which will be in harmony with world conditions as the Middle Ages were in the possession of that true League of Nations, Christianity. It cannot be denied that in the Middle Ages this law was often violated; still it always existed as an ideal, according to which one might judge the acts of nations, and a beacon light calling those who had lost their way back to the safe road.

46. There exists an institution able to safeguard the sanctity of the law of nations. This institution is a part of every nation; at the same time it is above all nations. She enjoys, too, the highest authority, the fullness of the teaching power of the Apostles. Such an institution is the Church of Christ. She alone is adapted to do this great work, for she is not only divinely commissioned to lead mankind, but moreover, because of her very make-up and the constitution which she possesses, by reason of her age-old traditions and her great prestige, which has not been lessened but has been greatly increased since the close of the War, cannot but succeed in such a venture where others assuredly will fail.

47. It is apparent from these considerations that true peace, the peace of Christ, is impossible unless we are willing and ready to accept the fundamental principles of Christianity, unless we are willing to observe the teachings and obey the law of Christ, both in public and private life. If this were done, then society being placed at last on a sound foundation, the Church would be able, in the exercise of its divinely given ministry and by means of the teaching authority which results therefrom, to protect all the rights of God over men and nations.

48. It is possible to sum up all We have said in one word, "the Kingdom of Christ." For Jesus Christ reigns over the *minds of individuals* by His teachings, in their hearts by His love, in each one's life by the living according to His law and the imitating of His example. Jesus reigns over the family when it, modeled after the holy ideals of the sacrament of matrimony instituted by Christ, maintains unspotted its true character of sanctuary. In such a sanctuary of love, parental authority is fashioned after the authority of God, the Father, from Whom, as a matter of fact, it originates and after which even it is named. (*Ephesians* iii, 15) The obedience of the children imitates that of the Divine Child of Nazareth, and the whole family life is inspired by the sacred ideals of the Holy Family. Finally, Jesus Christ reigns over society when men recognize and reverence the sovereignty of Christ, when they accept the divine origin and control over all social

forces, a recognition which is the basis of the right to command for those in authority and of the duty to obey for those who are subjects, a duty which cannot but ennoble all who live up to its demands. Christ reigns where the position in society which He Himself has assigned to His Church is recognized, for He bestowed on the Church the status and the constitution of a society which, by reason of the perfect ends which it is called upon to attain, must be held to be supreme in its own sphere; He also made her the depository and interpreter of His divine teachings, and, by consequence, the teacher and guide of every other society whatsoever, not of course in the sense that she should abstract in the least from their authority, each in its own sphere supreme, but that she should really perfect their authority, just as divine grace perfects human nature, and should give to them the assistance necessary for men to attain their true final end, eternal happiness, and by that very fact make them the more deserving and certain promoters of their happiness here below.

49. It is, therefore, a fact which cannot be questioned that the true peace of Christ can only exist in the Kingdom of Christ - "the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ." It is no less unquestionable that, in doing all we can to bring about the re-establishment of Christ's kingdom, we will be working most effectively toward a lasting world peace.

Pius X in taking as his motto "To restore all things in Christ" was inspired from on High to lay the foundations of that "work of peace" which became the program and principal task of Benedict XV. These two programs of Our Predecessors We desire to unite in one - the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Christ by peace in Christ - "the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ." With might and main We shall ever strive to bring about this peace, putting Our trust in God, Who when He called Us to the Chair of Peter, promised that the divine assistance would never fail Us. We ask that all assist and co-operate with Us in this Our mission. Particularly We ask you to aid us, Venerable Brothers, you, His sheep, whom Our leader and Lord, Jesus Christ, has called to feed and to watch over as the most precious portion of His flock, which comprises all mankind. For, it is you whom the "Holy Ghost hath placed to rule the Church of God" (*Acts* xx, 28), you to whom above all, and principally, God "hath given the ministry of reconciliation, and who for Christ therefore are ambassadors." (*II Cor.* v, 18, 20) You participate in His teaching power and are "the dispensers of the mysteries of God." (*I Cor.* iv, 1) You have been called by Him "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world" (*Matt.* v, 13, 14), fathers and teachers of Christian peoples, "a pattern of the flock from the heart" (*I Peter* v, 3), and "you shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt.* v, 19) In fine, you are the links of gold, as it were, by which "the whole body of Christ, which is the Church, is held compacted and fitly joined together" (*Ephesians* iv, 15, 16), built as it is on the solid rock of Peter.

50. Of your praiseworthy industry, We have had a quite recent proof on the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress held in Rome and of the celebration of the Centenary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, when several hundred bishops from all sections of the globe were reunited with Us before the tomb of the Holy Apostles. That brotherly reunion, so solemn, because of the great number and high dignity of the bishops who were present, carried our thoughts to the possibility of another similar meeting of the whole episcopate here in the center of Catholic unity, and of the many effective results which might follow such a meeting toward the re-establishment of the social order after the terrible disorders through which

we have just passed. The very proximity of the Holy Year fills Us with the solemn hope that this Our desire may be fully realized.

51. We scarcely dare to include, in so many words, in the program of Our Pontificate the reassembling of the Ecumenical Council which Pius IX, the Pontiff of Our youth, had called but had failed to see through except to the completion of a part, albeit most important, of its work. We as the leader of the chosen people must wait and pray for an unmistakable sign from the God of mercy and of love of His holy will in this regard. (*Judges vi, 17*)

52. In the meantime, though We are quite conscious that it is not necessary for Us to exhort you to greater and more zealous efforts but rather to bestow on you the praise which you so richly deserve, yet the very consciousness of Our Apostolic Office, of the fact that We are the Common Father of all, constrains Us to beseech you to exhibit at all times a very special and tender love toward that large family of spiritual children which is, in a very special way, committed to your immediate supervision. From the reports received from you by Us and by public fame, which is amply confirmed in the press and in many other ways, We know only too well what thanks we should, in union with you, render to the Good God for the great work which, as the occasion permitted, He has done through you and through your predecessors, both for your clergy and for your faithful people, a work which has come to maturity in our own times and which We see being multiplied on all sides in a most fruitful manner.

53. In particular, We refer to the numberless and diverse activities initiated for the education and development, as well as for the sanctification of both the clergy and laity, the organizations of clergy and laity formed to aid the missions in their manifold activities, both physical and moral, of the natural and the supernatural order, by the spreading far and wide of the Kingdom of Christ. We refer to the various organizations of young people which have helped to develop such ardent and true love for the Holy Eucharist and such tender devotion for the Blessed Virgin, virtues which have made certain their faith, their purity, and their union one with another: to the solemn celebrations in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, at which the Divine Prince of Peace is honored by truly royal triumphal processions, for about the Sacred Host, center of peace and love, gather multitudes from every country and the representatives of all peoples and nations, joined together in a union most wonderful by one and the same faith, in adoration, in prayer, and in the enjoyment of all heavenly graces.

54. The fruits of such piety are manifest, the widespread diffusion and great activity of the apostolate which, by prayer, word of mouth, by the religious press, by personal example, by works of charity seeks in every way possible to lead souls to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to restore to the same Sacred Heart His sovereign rule over the family and over society. We refer also to the *holy battle* waged on so many fronts to vindicate for the family and the Church the natural and divinely given rights which they possess over education and the school. Finally, We include among these fruits of piety that whole group of movements, organizations, and works so dear to Our fatherly heart which passes under the name of "Catholic Action," and in which We have been so intensely interested.

55. All these organizations and movements ought not only to continue in existence, but ought to be developed more and more, always of course as the conditions of time and place seem to demand. There can be no question of the fact that these conditions are at times very difficult and exact of both pastors and the faithful a great and increasing amount of sacrifice and labor. But since such work is vitally necessary, it is without question an essential part of our Christian life and of the sacred ministry and is therefore indissolubly bound up with the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ and the re-establishment of that true peace which can be found only in His Kingdom - "the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ."

56. Tell, therefore, your clergy, Venerable Brothers, whom We know have labored so devotedly in these different fields of activity for the Church of Christ, and whose work We have seen at close range and have even participated in and which We appreciate so highly, tell them that when they co-operate with you, they are united with Christ and guided by Him through you; that at the same time they also co-operate with Us, and that We bless them with Our fatherly blessing.

57. It is scarcely necessary to add, Venerable Brothers, how much We depend on the regular clergy to aid in the successful execution of the different parts of Our program. You know as well as We what a magnificent contribution they have made to the interior life of the Church and to the spread of the Kingdom of Christ. They are actuated not only by the precepts but by the counsels of Christ. Both in the holy silence of the cloister and in pious works outside convent walls they exhibit the high ideals of Christian perfection by their works of true piety, by their keeping uppermost in the minds of Christian people the pure ideals of Christ, by the example which they give due to their self-sacrificing renunciation of all worldly comforts and material goods, by their acquisition of spiritual treasures. Because of the consecration of their whole being to the common good, they undertake truly miraculous activities which succor every ill spiritual and bodily, and help all in finding a sure remedy or assistance from the evils which we must encounter. As the history of the Church bears witness, members of the religious orders under the inspiration of God's love, have often gone to such lengths in their work of preaching the Gospel that they have given up their lives for the salvation of souls, thus by their death spreading the unity of the faith and the doctrine of Christian brotherhood and at the same time extending farther and farther the boundaries of the Kingdom of Christ.

58. Tell your faithful children of the laity that when, united with their pastors and their bishops, they participate in the works of the apostolate, both individual and social, the end purpose of which is to make Jesus Christ better known and better loved, then they are more than ever "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people," of whom St. Peter spoke in such laudatory terms. (I *Peter* ii, 9) Then, too, they are more than ever united with Us and with Christ, and become great factors in bringing about world peace because they work for the restoration and spread of the Kingdom of Christ. Only in this Kingdom of Christ can we find that true human equality by which all men are ennobled and made great by the selfsame nobility and greatness, for each is ennobled by the precious blood of Christ. As for those who are in authority, they are, according to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, but ministers of the good, servants of the servants of God, particularly of the sick and of those in need.

59. However, these very social changes, which have created and increased the need of cooperation between the clergy and laity to which We have just referred, have themselves brought along in their wake new and most serious problems and dangers. As an after-effect of the upheaval caused by the Great War and of its political and social consequences, false ideas and unhealthy sentiments have, like a contagious disease, so taken possession of the popular mind that We have grave fears that even some among the best of our laity and of the clergy, seduced by the false appearance of truth which some of these doctrines possess, have not been altogether immune from error.

60. Many believe in or claim that they believe in and hold fast to Catholic doctrine on such questions as social authority, the right of owning private property, on the relations between capital and labor, on the rights of the laboring man, on the relations between Church and State, religion and country, on the relations between the different social classes, on international relations, on the rights of the Holy See and the prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff and the Episcopate, on the social rights of Jesus Christ, Who is the Creator, Redeemer, and Lord not only of individuals but of nations. In spite of these protestations, they speak, write, and, what is more, act as if it were not necessary any longer to follow, or that they did not remain still in full force, the teachings and solemn pronouncements which may be found in so many documents of the Holy See, and particularly in those written by Leo XIII, Pius X, and Benedict XV.

61. There is a species of moral, legal, and social modernism which We condemn, no less decidedly than We condemn theological modernism.

62. It is necessary ever to keep in mind these teachings and pronouncements which We have made; it is no less necessary to reawaken that spirit of faith, of supernatural love, and of Christian discipline which alone can bring to these principles correct understanding, and can lead to their observance. This is particularly important in the case of youth, and especially those who aspire to the priesthood, so that in the almost universal confusion in which we live they at least, as the Apostle writes, will not be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive." (*Ephesians* iv, 14)

63. From this Apostolic Center of the Church of Christ, We turn Our eyes toward those who, unfortunately in great numbers, are either ignorant of Christ and His Redemption or do not follow in their entirety His teachings, or who are separated from the unity of His Church and thus are without His Fold, although they too have been called by Christ to membership in His Church. The Vicar of the Good Shepherd, seeing so many of his sheep gone astray, cannot but recall and make his own the simple but expressive words of Christ, words which are permeated through and through by the longings born of divine desire: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring." (*John* x, 16) He cannot but rejoice in the wonderful prophecy which filled even the Sacred Heart of Jesus with joy. "And they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." May God, and We join with you and with all the faithful in this prayer, shortly bring to fulfillment His prophecy by transforming this consoling vision of the future into a present reality.

64. One of the outstanding manifestations of this religious unity, and a happy augury for the future, is that altogether unexpected, but well-known fact of which you have knowledge, Venerable Brothers, a fact not pleasing to some perhaps, but certainly very consoling both to us and to you, namely, that recently the representatives and rulers of practically every nation, motivated by a common and instinctive desire for union and peace, have turned to this Apostolic See in order to bind themselves closer to Us or to renew in some cases the bonds of amity and friendship which had joined us together previously. We rejoice at this fact, not merely because it increases the prestige of Holy Church, but because it is becoming increasingly evident on all sides, and especially from actual experience, what great possibilities for peace and happiness, even here below, such a union with Us possesses for human society. Although the Church is committed by God, first of all, to the attainment of spiritual and imperishable purposes, because of the very intimate and necessary connection of things one with another, such a mission serves likewise to advance the temporal prosperity of nations and individuals, even more so than if she were instituted primarily to promote such ends.

65. The Church does not desire, neither ought she to desire, to mix up without a just cause in the direction of purely civil affairs. On the other hand, she cannot permit or tolerate that the state use the pretext of certain laws of unjust regulations to do injury to the rights of an order superior to that of the state, to interfere with the constitution given the Church by Christ, or to violate the rights of God Himself over civil society.

66. We make Our very own, Venerable Brothers, the words which Benedict XV, of happy memory, used in the last allocution which he pronounced at the Consistory of November twenty-first of last year, when he spoke of the treaties asked for or proposed to Us by various states: "We cannot possibly permit that anything harmful to the dignity or liberty of the Church creep into these treaties, for it is all-important that the safety and freedom of the Church be guarded at all times, and especially in our own days, and this in the lasting interests of human society itself."

67. It is scarcely necessary to say here how painful it is to Us to note that from this galaxy of friendly powers which surround Us one is missing, Italy, Our own dear native land, the country where the hand of God, who guides the course of history, has set down the Chair of His Vicar on earth, in this city of Rome which, from being the capital of the wonderful Roman Empire, was made by Him the capital of the whole world, because He made it the seat of a sovereignty which, since it extends beyond the confines of nations and states, embraces within itself all the peoples of the whole world. The very origin and divine nature of this sovereignty demands, the inviolable rights of conscience of millions of the faithful of the whole world demand that this sacred sovereignty must not be, neither must it ever appear to be, subject to any human authority or law whatsoever, even though that law be one which proclaims certain guaranties for the liberty of the Roman Pontiff.

68. The true guaranties of liberty, in no way injurious, but on the contrary of incalculable benefit to Italy, which Divine Providence, the ruler and arbiter of mankind, has conferred upon the sovereignty of the Vicar of Christ here below, these guaranties which for centuries have fitted in so marvelously with the divine designs in order to protect the liberty of the Roman Pontiff, neither Divine Providence itself has manifested nor human ingenuity has as yet discovered any

substitute which would compensate for the loss of these rights; these guaranties We declare have been and are still being violated. Whence it is that there has been created a certain abnormal condition of affairs which has grievously troubled and, up to the present hour, continues to trouble the consciences of the Catholics of Italy and of the entire world.

69. We, therefore, who are now the heirs and depositories of the ideals and sacred duties of Our Venerated Predecessors, and like them alone invested with competent authority in such a weighty matter and responsible to no one but God for Our decisions, We protest, as they have protested before Us, against such a condition of affairs in defense of the rights and of the dignity of the Apostolic See, not because We are moved by any vain earthly ambition of which We should be ashamed, but out of a sense of Our duty to the dictates of conscience itself, mindful always of the fact that We too must one day die and of the awful account which We must render to the Divine Judge of the ministry which He has confided to Our care.

70. At all events, Italy has not nor will she have in the future anything to fear from the Holy See. The Pope, no matter who he shall be, will always repeat the words: "I think thoughts of peace not of affliction" (*Jeremias* xxix, 11), thoughts of a true peace which is founded on justice and which permit him truthfully to say: "Justice and Peace have kissed." (*Psalms* lxxxiv, 11) It is God's task to bring about this happy hour and to make it known to all; men of wisdom and of good-will surely will not permit it to strike in vain. When it does arrive, it will turn out to be a solemn hour, one big with consequences not only for the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ, but for the pacification of Italy and the world as well.

71. We pray most fervently, and ask others likewise to pray for this much-desired pacification of society, especially at this moment when after twenty centuries the day and hour approach when all over the world men will celebrate the humble and meek coming among us of the Sweet Prince of Peace, at whose birth the heavenly hosts sang: "Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." (*Luke* ii, 14)

72. As an augury of this peace for mankind, may the Apostolic Blessing, which We invoke upon you and your flock, on your clergy, your people, on their families and homes bring happiness to the living, peace and eternal rest to the dead. From the depths of Our heart as a sign of Our fatherly love, We impart to you, to your clergy, and to your people, the Apostolic Blessing.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the twenty-third day of December, in the year 1922, the first of Our Pontificate.

PIUS XI

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