

PRINCEPS PASTORUM

ENCYCLICAL OF POPE JOHN XXIII ON THE MISSIONS, NATIVE CLERGY, AND LAY PARTICIPATION

NOVEMBER 28, 1959

To Our Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brethren, Health and Apostolic Benediction.

On the day when "the Prince of the Shepherds" (1) entrusted to Us His lambs and sheep, (2) God's flock, which dwells all over the earth, We responded to the sweet invitation of His love with a sense of Our unworthiness but with trust in His all-powerful assistance. And the magnitude, the beauty, and the importance of the Catholic Missions have been constantly on Our mind. (3) For this reason, We have never ceased to devote to them Our greatest solicitude and attention. And at the close of the first year marking the anniversary of Our reception of the triple Tiara, in the sermon which We delivered on that solemn occasion We mentioned as among the happiest events of Our Pontificate the day, October 10th, on which over four hundred missionaries gathered in the most holy Vatican Basilica to receive from Our hands the crucifix, image of Jesus Christ Crucified, before leaving for distant parts of the world to illumine them with the light of Christianity.

Early Interest

2. The Most Provident Lord, in His secret and loving designs, willed that, in its very first years, Our priestly mission should be oriented toward the furthering of this cause; in fact, immediately after the conclusion of the First World War, Our predecessor Benedict XV called Us to Rome from Our diocese, so that We could devote Our zeal to the Pontifical Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, a function which We most willingly performed during four years of Our priestly life. We happily recall Whitsunday in 1922, the third centenary of the foundation of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which is especially entrusted with the task of carrying the beneficial light of the Gospel, and heavenly grace, to the farthest reaches of the earth. It was with great joy that We participated in the Congregation's centennial festivities on that day.

3. Also at the time Our predecessor Pius XII by word and example incited Us to give Our warmest support to missionary activities and projects. Just before the College of Cardinals was convened for the Conclave during which, by divine inspiration, he was chosen as the successor of St. Peter, he spoke the following words in Our presence: "We cannot expect anything greater or more beneficial from the new Vicar of Christ than these two most important things: that he will strive with all his might to propagate the doctrine of the Gospel among all men, and that he will bring peoples together in a spirit of true peace and strengthen them therein." (4)

Subject of This Letter

4. With these and many other sweet memories in Our mind, and aware of the grave duties imposed upon the Supreme Shepherd of the flock of God, We would like, Venerable Brethren—seizing an occasion offered by that memorable Apostolic Letter, *Maximum illud*, (5) with which, forty years ago, Our predecessor Benedict XV furthered the cause of the Catholic missions by establishing new rules and enkindling the faithful with new zeal—We would like, We repeat, to speak to you with a fatherly heart, by means of this letter, on the necessity and hopes of extending God's kingdom to the many parts of the world where missionaries labor zealously, sparing no effort in order that new branches of the Church may grow and produce wholesome fruits.

5. Our predecessors Pius XI and Pius XII also issued decrees and exhortations to the furtherance of this cause, (6) which We confirmed with like authority and like charity when We issued Our first Encyclical Letter, *Ad Petri Cathedram*. (7) We think, however, and We feel sure that We will never do enough to carry out the wishes of the Divine Redeemer in this matter until all sheep are happily gathered in one fold under the leadership of one Shepherd. (8)

A Cry for Help

6. When We turn Our mind and Our heart to the supernatural blessings of the Church that are to be shared with those people whose souls have not yet been suffused with the light of the Gospel, there appear before Our eyes either regions of the world where bountiful crops grow, thrive, and ripen, or regions where the labors of the toilers in God's vineyard are very arduous, or regions where the enemies of God and Jesus Christ are harassing and threatening to destroy Christian communities by violence and persecutions, and are striving to smother and crush the seed of God's word. (9) We are everywhere confronted by appeals to Us to ensure the eternal salvation of souls in the best way We can, and a cry seems to reach Our ears: "Help us!" (10) Innumerable regions have already been made fruitful by the sweat and blood of messengers of the Gospel "from every nation under heaven," (11) and native apostles, with the help of divine grace, are blossoming like new buds and are bringing forth saving fruits. We desire to reach those regions with Our words of praise and encouragement, and with Our affection. We also wish to give them Our instructions and admonitions, which are prompted by firm hope based on the infallible promise of Our Divine Master, that is contained in these words: "Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." (17) "Take courage, I have overcome the world." (13)

I

7. The First World War involved many countries all over the world and caused grievous losses to many individuals and nations. When it finally ended, Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter (14) (which We mentioned above), like the exalted invitation of a fatherly voice, enflamed the souls of all Catholics to expand peacefully the Kingdom of God, the only one, We say, which can give and secure permanent peace and prosperity to all men, children of their Heavenly Father. From that time, during forty very active years, the works and undertakings of the heralds of the Gospel have been flourishing and producing increasingly abundant fruits every day; and the most

noteworthy result is the fact that a local hierarchy and clergy have been increasingly developed in the mission areas.

A Local Hierarchy

8. It is necessary that missionaries obey the words of Our immediate predecessor, Pius XII, to the effect that they "must constantly keep before their mind's eyes their ultimate goal, which is to establish the Church firmly in other countries, and subsequently to entrust it to a local hierarchy, chosen from their own people." (15) Therefore, this Apostolic See, abundantly and at the opportune time, has taken measures especially in recent times, to establish or re-establish a hierarchy in those areas in which local conditions favored the foundation of Episcopal Sees, and if possible, to place locally born prelates at their head. At any rate, it is well known that this has always been the principal and constant goal of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. It was an Apostolic Letter, however, which highlighted the importance and immediacy of the matter as never before. In this letter Our predecessor, Benedict XV, urgently reminded the authorities in charge of the missions to nurture carefully the vocations of those who felt the divine call to the priesthood in mission territories and to contribute to the quantitative and qualitative growth of that clergy which was called native. (Neither slight nor discrimination was intended by the word "native," or was ever expressed or implied by the language of the Roman Pontiffs and ecclesiastical documents.)

Growth of Native Clergy

9. This exhortation of Benedict XV, which was repeated by Our predecessors Pius XI and Pius XII, with the help of God's divine Providence has had visible and copious results. We want you to join Us in rendering thanks to God for the fact that a numerous and elect legion of bishops and priests has arisen in the Mission territories, Our brethren and beloved sons, who fill Our heart with great expectations. If We cast even a cursory glance on the ecclesiastical situation in the areas which are entrusted to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, with the exception of those at present under persecution, We note that the first bishop of east Asian origins was consecrated in 1923, and the first vicars apostolic of African Negro descent were named in 1939. By 1959, We count 68 Asian and 25 African bishops. The remaining native clergy grew in number from 919 in 1918 to 5553 in 1957 in Asia, and during the same period in Africa from 90 in 1918 to 1811 in 1957. With such an admirable increase in the numbers of the clergy did the Lord of the harvest (16) desire to reward adequately the labors and merits of those who zealously did mission work, either individually or in cooperation with many others, responding with a generous heart to the repeated exhortations of this Apostolic See.

Mutual Exchange

10. It was, therefore, with good reason that Our predecessor Pius XII was able to affirm with satisfaction: "Once upon a time it seemed as though the life of the Church used to prosper and blossom chiefly in the regions of ancient Europe, whence it would flow, like a majestic river, through the remaining areas which, to use the Greek term, were considered almost the periphery of the world; today, however, the life of the Church is shared, as though by a mutual irradiation

of energies, among all individual members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Not a few countries on other continents have long since outgrown the missionary stage, and are now governed by an ecclesiastical hierarchy of their own, have their own ecclesiastical organization, and are liberally offering to other Church communities those very gifts, spiritual and material, which they formerly used to receive." (17)

Encouraging Vocations

11. We wish especially to exhort the bishops and clergy of the new Christian communities to pray to God, and to conduct themselves in such a way that the priestly gift they are enjoying may grow in spiritual fruitfulness; in their talks with the people, as often as feasible they should praise the dignity, the beauty, and the merits of the priesthood, and, by so doing, they will induce all those whom God has chosen for this exalted honor to respond to the call with an open and generous heart. They should also cause the faithful entrusted to their care to pray to God for this cause, in unity of spirit with the whole Church, which, in response to the Divine Redeemer's exhortations, prays "the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest," (18) especially at the present time, when "the harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few."(19)

Place of Foreign Missionaries

12. However, Christian communities to which missionaries still devote their zeal, although already governed by their own hierarchy, are still in need of the work of missionaries from other countries, either because of the vastness of the territory, or the increasing number of converts, or the multitude of those who have not yet benefited from the doctrine of the Gospel. To such missionaries, no doubt, apply these words of Our immediate predecessor: "These cannot be considered foreigners, for all Catholic priests who truly answer their vocation feel themselves native sons wherever they work, in order that the Kingdom of God may flourish and develop." (20) Let them therefore work united by the bond of that loving, brotherly, and sincere charity which mirrors the love they must feel toward the Divine Redeemer and His Church; and, in prompt and filial obedience to their Bishops, whom "the Holy Spirit placed . . . to rule the Church of God," (21) they must be "of one heart and one soul," (22) grateful to each other for the mutual cooperation and help; indeed, if they act in this manner, it should be apparent to everyone's eyes that they are the disciples of Him Who, in His own and most distinctive "new" commandments, exhorted all to a mutual and always increasing love. (23)

II

13. Our predecessor Benedict XV, in his Apostolic Letter *Maximum illud*, especially exhorted Catholic mission authorities to mold and shape the minds and souls of the clergy selected from the local population, and to do so in such a way that their formation and education would turn out "perfect and complete in every respect." (24) "In fact," he wrote, "a native priest, having a place of birth, character, mentality, and emotional make-up in common with his countrymen, is in a privileged position for sowing the seeds of the Faith in their hearts: indeed, he knows much better than a stranger the ways of persuasion with them." (25)

Personal Sanctification

14. Regarding the requirements of a perfect priestly formation and education, it is necessary that seminarians be induced, tactfully but firmly, to espouse those virtues which are the prime qualification of the priestly calling, "that is, the duty to achieve personal sanctification." (26) The newly-ordained native clergy of those countries must enter into pious competition with the clergy of those old dioceses which have long been producing priests in their midst who were such mirrors of virtue that they are proposed as examples to the clergy of the whole Church. In fact, it is through sanctity that priests can and must be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. (27) In other words, they can, especially by their sanctity, show their own countrymen and the whole world the beauty and the supernatural power of the Gospel; they can teach all men that a perfect Christian life is a goal toward which all of God's children must strive, struggling and persevering with all their strength, regardless of their place of birth, their walk of life, or the degree of civilization they enjoy.

Native Teachers in Seminaries

15. Furthermore, Our fatherly soul harbors the happy hope that everywhere the local clergy will be able to select from among its ranks just and holy men capable of governing, forming, and educating their own seminarians. That is the reason why We are already instructing the bishops and the mission authorities to choose without hesitation from among the local clergy those priests who, for their exceptional virtue and wise actions, qualify as teachers in the local seminaries and are able to lead their students to sanctity.

Adaptation to Locality

16. Furthermore, Venerable Brethren, as you well know, the Church has prescribed at all times that priests must prepare for their calling by means of a solid intellectual and spiritual education. Indeed, no one will doubt, especially in our time, that young people of all races and from all parts of the world are capable of absorbing such an education; this fact has already been clearly demonstrated. Without doubt, the formation to be given to this clergy must take into account the circumstances which obtain in different areas and nations. This extremely wise norm applies to all students for the priesthood; it is advisable that young seminarians never be "educated in places too far removed from human society," (28) because "once they step out into the world, they will have problems in dealing both with simple people and with intellectuals; this will often cause them to assume the wrong attitude toward the Christian population, or to regard the formation they received as a bad one." (29) Indeed, it is necessary that youths not only conform to the ideal of priestly spiritual perfection in everything, but also that they "gradually and prudently penetrate the mentality and feelings of the people" (30)-of the people, We repeat, whom they must enlighten with the truth of the Gospel and lead to perfection of life, with the help of God's grace. Therefore, it is necessary that seminary superiors conform to this plan of training and education while yet welcoming those material and technical facilities which the genius of mankind has made the patrimony, as it were, of every civilization in order to insure an easier and better life and to preserve the bodily health and safety of mankind.

Training for Responsibility

17. The formation of the local clergy, as Our same predecessor, Benedict XV, wrote, must enable them in compliance with the first requirement of their divine calling, "to assume rightly the rule of their people" (31)—to lead their people, by the influence of their teaching and their ministry, along the path to eternal salvation. To this end, We highly recommend that everyone, whether local or foreign, who contributes to the formation in question, do his conscientious best to develop in these students a sense of the importance and difficulty of their mission, and a capability for wisely and discreetly using the freedom allowed to them. This should be done so that they may be in a position to assume, quickly and progressively, all the functions, even the most important ones, pertaining to their calling, not only in harmonious cooperation with the foreign clergy, but also on an equal footing with them. (32) Indeed, this is the touchstone of the effectiveness of their formation, and will be the best reward for the efforts of all those who contributed to it.

Missiology

18. Indeed, in considering all the elements pertaining not only to the right intellectual and spiritual formation of the students for the priesthood but also the needs and to the special mentality and emotional make-up of their own people, this Apostolic See has always recommended, both to the foreign and to the local clergy, that they should study the discipline of missiology. Our predecessor Benedict XV established chairs of this discipline in the Pontifical Urban Athenaeum of the Propagation of the Faith; (33) and Our immediate predecessor, Pius XII, remarked with satisfaction on the founding of the Institute of Missiology in the same university; "not a few faculties and chairs of missiology," he said, "have been established in Rome and in other places." (34) Therefore, in the curricula of the seminaries of mission countries, there will be no lack of studies pertaining to the various missiological disciplines, nor of technical training in all the practical skills which are considered useful for the future work of the clergy in those countries. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that their training not only conform to the best ecclesiastical traditions of a solid and undiluted education, but also that it open up and sharpen the minds of the seminarians in such a way as to enable each individual to evaluate correctly his own and his country's particular kind of culture, especially as it pertains to philosophical and theological teachings and their relation to the Christian religion.

The Church and Cultures

19. "The Catholic Church," stated Our same predecessor, "has never fostered an attitude of contempt or outright rejection of pagan teachings but, rather, has completed and perfected them with Christian doctrine, after purifying them from all dross of error. So, too, the Church, to a certain extent, consecrated native art and culture..., as well as the special customs and traditional institutions of the people...; she has even transformed their feast days, leaving unchanged their methods of computation and their form, but dedicating them to the memory of the martyrs and to the celebration of the sacred Mysteries." (35) We Ourselves have already expressed Our thoughts on this matter as follows: "Wherever artistic and philosophical values exist which are capable of enriching the culture of the human race, the Church fosters and supports these labors of the spirit.

On the other hand, the Church, as you know, does not identify itself with any one culture, not even with European and Western civilization, although the history of the Church is closely intertwined with it; for the mission entrusted to the Church pertains chiefly to other matters, that is, to matters which are concerned with religion and the eternal salvation of men. The Church, however, which is so full of youthful vigor and is constantly renewed by the breath of the Holy Spirit, is willing, at all times, to recognize, welcome, and even assimilate anything that redounds to the honor of the human mind and heart, whether or not it originates in parts of the world washed by the Mediterranean Sea, which, from the beginning of time, had been destined by God's Providence to be the cradle of the Church." (36)

Conversion of the Learned

20. If native priests are well instructed in these practical matters and serious disciplines, and if they overcome difficulties and are equipped to take the right course of action, they will be able, under guidance of their bishops, to make highly valuable contributions. In particular, they will find a more sympathetic audience among the educated citizens of their own countries and will be able to attract them to the Christian truth, in the manner of the famous missionary, Matthew Ricci. This will happen especially in those countries which possess an ancient and highly developed civilization of their own. Indeed, local priests are entrusted with the mission of "bringing every mind into captivity to the obedience of Christ," (37) as Paul, that incomparable missionary and apostle of the people, affirmed; thus, they will also be "held in great honor by the members of the intellectual elite of their country." (38)

Study Centers

21. Therefore, making use of their judgment and cooperation, bishops will take care to establish, at opportune moments, study centers to meet the needs of one or more regions in order to make basic doctrine known and understood. In these, both foreign and local priests can employ their learning and experience to benefit the particular countries in which they were born or in which they have chosen to spread the Christian truth. In this connection, We should also like to quote the teaching of Our immediate predecessor Pius XII, expressed in these words: there must be promoted "the publication and dissemination of Catholic books of every description"; (39) and care must be taken to advance "the use of modern means of communication in spreading Christian doctrine. No one can ignore the importance of gaining the good will of native peoples and making them favorable to Catholicism." (40) Certainly, all methods cannot be employed in all places; all opportunities must be taken, however, to fulfill different needs, whenever they arise, even though, sometimes, "one sows, another reaps." (41)

Social Welfare Work

22. To propagate the truth of Jesus Christ is the truest function of the Church. Indeed, "it is the solemn duty of the Church to impart to... peoples, so far as possible, the outstanding blessings of her life and her teaching, from which a new social order should be derived, based on Christian principles." (42) Therefore, in mission territories, the Church takes the most generous measures to encourage social welfare projects, to support welfare work for the poor, and to assist Christian

communities and the peoples concerned. Care must be taken, however, not to clutter and obstruct the apostolic work of the missions with an excessive quantity of secular projects. Economic assistance must be limited to necessary undertakings which can be easily maintained and utilized, and to projects whose organization and administration can be easily transferred to the lay men and women of the particular nation, thus allowing the missionaries to devote themselves to their task of propagating the faith, and to other pursuits aimed directly at personal sanctification and eternal salvation.

Universality

23. If it is true, as We said, that in order for the apostolate to bear abundant fruits, the most important requirement the native priests must meet is that they should know, and carefully evaluate, everything connected with the institutions peculiar to their countries, what Our predecessor said of the whole world will remain even truer: "the prospects and plans of the Church, which embrace the whole world, will be the prospects and plans of their daily Christian lives." (43) To this end, the native clergy not only will be bound to know the affairs and developments of the universal Church, but must also be guided by, and filled with, that charity which embraces all the faithful. This is the reason why St. John Chrysostom said of Christian liturgical celebrations: "When we approach the altar, we pray, above all, for the whole universe and the common good"; (44) and St. Augustine uttered a beautiful sentence: "Extend your charity to the whole world, if you want to love Christ, because the members of Christ's body cover the whole world." (45)

Ultra-nationalism

24. Indeed, it was in this spirit that Our predecessor Benedict XV, in order to preserve the integrity of the concept of Catholic unity, which must inspire all missionary work, sternly warned of a danger which he did not hesitate to define in these words, and which must be avoided by missionaries in their thoughts, lest it jeopardize the effectiveness of their actions: "It would be a sad thing if any missionary should appear to be so oblivious of his dignity as to think of his country on earth rather than of his fatherland in heaven, and be excessively concerned with increasing the power and the glory of his own nation above all other nations. Such conduct would greatly impair the cause of the apostolate, and would cut the sinews of charity in his heart, while lowering his prestige in the eyes of the public." (46)

25. This danger, in different ways and forms, could arise again in our time, especially since several countries already enlightened by the light of the Gospel have been aroused to seek freedom and self-government. The acquisition of political freedom can sometimes be accompanied by disorders and excesses which are detrimental to the common good and are the opposite of the spirit of Christian charity.

26. We feel perfectly confident, however, that the native clergy is animated by lofty purposes and sentiments which conform to the general principles of the Christian religion and entirely correspond with the teachings of the Catholic Church, which embraces all men with the same love; We are also certain that they contribute their share to the real interests of their own nations.

In this connection, Our Predecessor very aptly uttered the following words of warning: "The Catholic Church is not a stranger among any people or nation." (47) No Christian community anywhere will ever achieve unity with the Universal Church, from which emanates the supernatural life of Jesus Christ, if the local clergy and population succumb to the influence of a particularist spirit, if they arouse enmity in other nations, and if they are misled and perturbed by an ultra-nationalism which can destroy the spirit of universal charity—that charity upon which the Church of God is built and is called "Catholic."

III

27. Our predecessor Benedict XV, as We mentioned above, stressed particularly the necessity of a scholarly, intensive, and adequate formation of the native clergy, which must be equal to current circumstances. Undoubtedly he was aware of another need, equally important: the need to educate and indoctrinate the laity of each nation in such a way that they will not only be worthy of their Christian calling in their private lives, but will also engage in active apostolic work. Our immediate predecessor Pius XII dealt with the subject well and significantly, (48) and recommended again and again that today this cause be attended to with great fervor and be carried out to the greatest degree and as soon as possible.

Need for Lay Help

28. Our predecessor Pius XII—and this redounds to his special credit and praise—exhorted the laity, with eloquent and abundant doctrine and repeated admonitions, willingly and zealously to enter the apostolic field and give their active cooperation to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in the same way in which, since the times of the early Church and throughout the centuries, the faithful have cooperated with their bishops and their clergy, to enable them to carry out their tasks more easily and with greater efficacy, in religious and social fields. Our times require this effort, not less, nay, even more, since requirements of this kind have grown, and the greatly increased multitudes are hungry for the spiritual food of true doctrine. Indeed, their circumstances have become more difficult and complex. And, wherever the Church fights her peaceful battles, she must be able to count on a complete organization, including not only the different grades of the hierarchy, but also the ranks of the laity proper. It is also necessary that her work of salvation be carried out equally by all. (49)

Numbers Not Enough

29. In order to achieve this purpose, it is hardly sufficient for new Christian communities to convert men to the Catholic religion and, after purifying them with the water of Baptism, to number them among the members of the Church; it is altogether necessary, after giving the individual a Christian education suitable to his circumstances and times, to make him capable of promoting, as much as he can, the present and future good and growth of the Church. The sheer number of Christians means little if they lack virtue; that is, if, while enjoying the name of Catholic, they do not stand firm in their determination; if their spiritual life does not flourish and fails to produce wholesome fruits; if, after being reborn to divine grace, they do not excel in that spirit of vigorous and sensible youthfulness which is always ready to perform generous and

useful deeds. Their profession of faith must not only be a statistic in a census, but must create a new man, (50) and give all his actions a supernatural strength, inspiring, guiding, and controlling them.

Need for Planning

30. Nevertheless, men recruited from the ranks of the laity will find it difficult fully to achieve their goal, if the clergy, either foreign or local, will not plan, at the right time, the program which We mentioned above, and which the first Vicar of Jesus already outlined in the following words: "You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may proclaim the perfection of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (51)

Education for the Apostolate

31. Indeed, a Christian formation and education which would only consider teaching the faithful the formulas of the Catechism and inculcating in their minds the principal precepts of moral theology, with a brief list of possible cases, without inspiring their souls and wills to act according to the instructions received, would run the serious risk of acquiring for the Church a passive flock. On the contrary, it is necessary that the sheep of the Christian flock not only listen to their Shepherd, but also know his voice, (52) and that the faithful willingly follow him to the pastures of eternal life, (53) so that one day they may receive from the Prince of Shepherds the "unfading crown of glory." (54) These sheep as We said, recognizing and following the Shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep, (55) will give themselves entirely to him, and, obeying the Divine Will with the most ardent zeal, will lovingly and actively strive to bring into the one and only true fold all the other sheep, who not only are not following him, but have long been straying away from him, who is "the way, and the truth, and the life." (56)

32. Profession of the Christian faith is not intelligible without strong, lively apostolic fervor; in fact, "everyone is bound to proclaim his faith to others, either to give good example and encouragement to the rest of the faithful, or to check the attacks of unbelievers," (57) especially in our time, when the universal Church and human society are beset by many difficulties.

Arousing Zeal

33. To make a full and effective Christian education possible, it is absolutely necessary that administrators and teachers find ways and means by which they will be able to understand and approach the minds of others and their characteristic temperaments, their inclinations and their intentions. This should be done so that the new followers of Jesus Christ will assimilate the precepts of the truth of the Gospel, together with its norms and requirements and will be wholly formed by them. Our Redeemer did, in fact, entrust each one of us with compliance with this great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." (58) Indeed, the sublimity of the Christian calling should shine in all its splendor before the eyes of those who embrace the Catholic religion, so that their hearts will be fired with the desire, the strong resolution to lead a life adorned with all the

Christian virtues and distinguished by apostolic activity: a life, We say, modeled on the luminous example of Jesus Christ, who, taking upon Himself our nature, commanded us to follow in His footsteps. (59)

Witnesses to the Truth

34. Anyone who deems himself a Christian must know that he is bound by his conscience to the basic, imperative duty of bearing witness to the truth in which he believes and to the grace which has transformed his soul. A great Father of the Church has said: "He (Christ) left us on earth in order that we should become like beacons of light and teachers unto others; that we might act like leaven, move among men like angels, be like men unto children, and like spiritual men unto animal men, in order to win them over, and that we may be like seed, and bear abundant fruits. There would be no need for sermons, if our lives were shining; there would be no need for words, if we bore witness with our deeds. There would be no more pagans, if we were true Christians." (60)

35. All Christians all over the world must fulfill this obligation; yet it is easy to see that if it were carried out in the mission territories, it would bear special and abundant fruits, particularly valuable for extending the Kingdom of God among those who do not know the wonderful gift of our Faith and the supernatural power of grace. Thus Jesus Christ admonishes us: "Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven"; (61) and St. Peter exhorts the faithful to "abstain from carnal desires which war against the soul. Behave yourselves honorably among the pagans, that, whereas they slander you as evildoers, they may, through observing you by reason of your good works, glorify God in the day of visitation." (62)

Union in Charity

36. The testimony rendered by individuals must be confirmed and enlarged by the testimony of the whole Christian community, in the same way in which the newly established Church enjoyed the unanimous backing and close-knit support of all the faithful, who "continued steadfastly in the teaching of the Apostles, and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers." (63) Their unity in the practice of the most generous charity gave them profound joy and mutual edification; in fact, they were "praising God and being in favor with all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their company such as were to be saved." (64)

37. Union in prayer and in active participation in the mysteries of the sacred liturgy enormously enriches and completes the Christian life of individuals and of the whole community, and it greatly helps educate the soul to charity, which is the distinguishing mark of the true Christian; a charity, We say, which overcomes all differences between languages and nationalities, and amicably embraces all men, whether brothers or enemies. In this connection, We like to repeat the words of Our predecessor Pope Clement: "When they (the pagans) hear from us that God says, 'You have no merit if you love those who love you, but you have merit if you love your enemies and those who hate you' (65)—when they hear this, they admire the grace of your charity; but when they see that we not only do not love those who hate us, but do not even

reciprocate the love of those who love us, they will mock us and God's name will be blasphemed." (66) The greatest missionary of all, St. Paul the Apostle, at the time when he was on the point of bringing the message of God's word to the people, as far as the farthest reaches of the Western world, wrote to the Romans and exhorted them to practice "love without pretense." (67) Earlier, with sublime expression, he had praised that virtue—without which a Christian is nothing. (68)

Material Help

38. Charity also becomes visible through material help; as Our predecessor Pius XII stated: "The body also requires a multitude of members, which are joined together for the purpose of helping one another. If in our mortal organism one member ails, all the other members suffer with it; and those members which are sound, come to the help of the sick one; by the same token, in the Church, the individual members do not live only for themselves, but also to help the others, and all of them help one another for their mutual comfort, as well as for a better development of the Mystical Body." (69)

39. The material necessities which affect the faithful also affect the life and structure of the Church. It is therefore necessary that native Christians become accustomed to supporting, spontaneously and within the limits of their means, their churches, institutions, and clergy, who are entirely devoting themselves to them. It does not matter whether they can give much, but it is of the greatest importance that what is contributed is proof of a conscience that is practicing Christian discipline.

IV

40. The Christian faithful, members of a living organism, cannot remain aloof and think that they have done their duty when they have satisfied their own spiritual needs; every individual must give his assistance to those who are working for the increase and propagation of God's kingdom. Our predecessor Pius XII reminded all of their common duty in these words: "A principal note of the Church is catholicity; consequently, a man is no true member of the Church unless he is likewise a true member of the entire body of Christian believers and is filled with an ardent desire to see her take root and flourish in every land." (70)

The Duty of Teaching the Faith

41. In this matter, therefore, all Christians must compete in pious rivalry, and give constant proof of their concern for the spiritual well-being of other people by defending their Faith and teaching it to those who either do not know it at all, or do not know it well enough and therefore misjudge it. It is necessary that priests, families, and local apostolic organizations instill this religious duty in the young, from early childhood and adolescence, even in newly established Christian communities. Nor is there a dearth of favorable opportunities for stressing, in a suitable and effective manner, this duty of an apostolate: as for example, the preparation of children or newly baptized adults for the sacrament of Confirmation, through which "new strength is granted to the faithful courageously to guard and defend their Mother Church and the Faith they received from

her." (71) This preparation is especially suited for populations who have in their local customs special initiation rites, through which adolescents are officially received into their tribal groups.

Catechists

42. We cannot neglect here to give credit to the work of catechetical organizations, which, in the course of the long history of the Catholic missions, have always given them special, necessary help. There was never a time when catechists were not excellent assistants to missionaries, sharing their labors and relieving them. Our predecessors have openly affirmed that "for the propagation of the Gospel, it is important that their numbers be multiplied," (72) and have stated that their function was "perhaps the most shining example of the apostolate to be carried out by the laity." (73) We, too, while again giving catechists Our warmest praise, exhort them to meditate even more attentively on the happiness of soul which this work brings, and never to cease from making the greatest efforts, under the guidance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, to cultivate better the study of religion and their own spiritual formation. Catechists must learn from the hierarchy not only the rudimentary elements of the Faith, but also the practice of virtue and a fervent, sincere love for Christ. Instrumental in the establishment and subsequent abundant growth of new Christian communities is the care devoted to increasing the numbers of those who effectively help the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and to perfecting their formation for any other labors they may have to perform in order to carry out their task in the most effective and perfect manner.

Catholic Action

43. In Our first Encyclical Letter, We already recalled various important reasons which make it imperative, in our time, to recruit in all parts of the world "the laity to the ranks of a peaceful militia, Catholic Action, so that the laity should cooperate in the apostolate of the hierarchy." (74) We commented on this with the following words: "It gives Us great comfort that, over the years, in lands that are still mission territories, these valuable aides to bishops and priests have worked so hard for the success of their projects." (75) And now, impelled "by the love of Christ," (76) We wish to renew urgently the exhortations and appeals of Our predecessor Pius XII: "It is necessary that laymen give their generous, zealous, and active cooperation, joining the clergy in their apostolic work and swelling to large numbers the ranks of Catholic Action." (77) The bishops of mission countries endeavored to do their best to carry out the directives of the Supreme Pontiff, together with the regular and religious clergy, and the most generous and well-trained laymen; We can state that splendid successes in this field are being achieved all over the earth.

Adaptation to Local Conditions

44. However, it is necessary—and We can never warn sufficiently of this—that this form of apostolate be carefully adapted to local conditions and needs. What has been done in one country cannot be carried over indiscriminately to another. The people concerned, submitting in all things to the directives of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and willingly obeying their pastors, must beware of defeating the purposes of the apostolate by carrying the burden of an excessive

number of activities. For thus they thwart valuable efforts and dissipate valuable energy through compartmentalized and overly specialized projects, which, while satisfactory elsewhere, may be less useful where different conditions and needs prevail. In Our first encyclical, We also promised to deal with the subject of Catholic Action in more detail and at greater length; when We do, We trust that the mission territories will receive additional support and a new incentive. In the meantime, let everyone work in perfect harmony and with supernatural inspiration, in the certainty that only thus will they be able to say that they are serving the divine cause and the common good of their people.

Training for Leadership

45. Catholic Action is an association of laymen "who are entrusted with certain duties, which involve executive responsibilities, to be carried out in submission to the hierarchy"; (78) thus laymen do hold executive offices therein. For this reason it is necessary to train men who are capable of enkindling different organizations with apostolic zeal and insuring their most efficient operation; men and women, We say, who in order to be worthy of managerial and executive roles in these organizations, entrusted to them by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, must furnish convincing proof that they possess a solid Christian formation, both intellectual and moral, in order that "they may impart to others what, with the help of God's grace, they have won for themselves." (79)

The Christian School

46. It can rightly be said that the natural seat and, as it were, the training ground, where these lay executives of Catholic Action are prepared for their functions, is the Christian school; and this school will achieve its purposes, and fulfill its task, only insofar as its teachers, whether priests, religious, or laymen, educate and turn out true Christians.

Schools of the Apostolate

47. Everyone is aware of the great importance, present and future, of the mission country schools, and of how much effort and work the Church has devoted to establishing schools of every description and level and to defending their existence and well-being. It is obviously difficult to add to school curricula a program of formation for Catholic Action executives, and therefore it will often be necessary to resort to extracurricular methods to bring together the most promising youths, and train them in the theory and practice of the apostolate. The local ordinaries must, therefore, use their prudent judgment in assessing the best ways and means for opening schools of the apostolate, in which, obviously, the type of instruction will be different from that in ordinary schools. Sometimes the task will be to preserve from false doctrine children and adolescents who must attend non-Catholic schools; in any event, it will always be necessary to balance the humanistic and technological education offered by the public schools with a formation based on spiritual values, so that the schools may not turn out falsely educated men, swollen with arrogance, who can hurt the Church and their own people instead of helping them. Their spiritual education must always be commensurate with their intellectual development, and must be planned to make them lead a life inspired by Catholic principles in their particular social

and professional environments; in time, they must be able to take their places in Catholic organizations. To this end, if Catholic youths should be forced to leave their communities and attend public schools in other towns and cities, it will be expedient to open social centers and boarding houses, in which Christian life and morals are safely preserved, and the talents and energies of the young people are directed toward lofty apostolic ideals. By thus entrusting to the schools the special and highly useful tasks of preparing Catholic Action executives, We do not, however, intend to exempt families from their responsibilities, or to minimize in any way their influence, which at times equips them even better for nurturing apostolic fervor in the souls of their children, for instructing them in Christian precepts, and for preparing them for action. The home is, in fact, an excellent and irreplaceable school.

Problems in Public Life

48. The "good fight" (80) in the cause of the Faith is fought not only in the secrecy of the individual conscience or in the privacy of the home, but also in public life in all of its forms. In all the different parts of the world there exist nowadays problems of various kinds. There is no solution to these problems in exclusively human advice nor in principles which are often in contrast with the precepts of Christian law. Several mission countries are now "undergoing such speedy changes in social, economic, and political life that their entire future appears to depend on the outcome of those changes." (81) Indeed, problems which some countries have already solved or are solving with the help of their experience and traditions, are urgently in need of solution in other countries. There the problems are beset by serious dangers, inasmuch as they could be approached with deplorable levity, by resorting to certain doctrines which disregard, or even oppose, the religious values of individuals and nations. In order to safeguard both their private interests and those of the Church, Catholics must not ignore such problems, or wait until they are given the wrong solutions, which would thereafter require a much greater expenditure of energy in order to correct them and would place further obstacles in the path of the propagation of the Christian religion in the world.

Christians in Public Life

49. The laymen of mission countries exert their most direct and effective influence in the field of public activity, and it is necessary that Christian communities take urgent, timely measures to bring laymen into the public life of their countries for the common good—men who not only acquit themselves creditably in their professions and trades, but are also an asset to the Church which re-created them in her grace. Thus may their pastors praise them with the words which we read in the writings of St. Basil: "I thanked the Most Holy God for the fact that, even though busily attending to public affairs, you did not neglect the interests of the Church: on the contrary, each one of you has been solicitous of her affairs just as though they had been your own private affairs, and, indeed, as though your life depended on it." (82)

50. Particularly in the field of education, in organized public welfare, in trade unions, and in public administration, will the talents of local Catholic experts play a paramount role, if they, following the duty imposed by their consciences—a duty whose neglect would be traitorous—base their thinking and action on Christian principles. These, as we learn from experience

acquired in the course of many centuries, possess the highest power and influence for the pursuit of the common good.

Aid to Missions from Catholic Groups

51. Everybody knows how the mutual assistance which is exchanged among Catholic organizations established all over the world can be—as Our predecessor Pius XII has pointed out—of great use and much value to the apostolate of the laity in mission territories. On the educational plane, these organizations can help by devising Christian solutions to current problems, especially social problems, in the newly established nations; on the apostolic plane, they can help by recruiting and organizing a body of laymen, willing to serve under Christ's banner. We know that this has been done, and is being done, by lay missionaries who chose to leave their countries, either temporarily or for life, in order to contribute, by manifold activities, to the social and religious welfare of mission countries. Let us pray fervently to God that the numbers of these generous Christians be multiplied, and that God's support will never be absent in their difficulties and labors, which they are meeting with truly apostolic spirit. The Secular Institutes will be able to give the local laity in mission territories generous and loyal help, if, by their example, they attract imitators, and if they place their talents and work, promptly and willingly, at the disposal of the local ordinaries, in order to speed the growing-up process of the new Christian communities.

Lay Help From Afar

52. We appeal especially to all Catholic laymen everywhere who are distinguishing themselves in their professions and in public life to consider seriously how they can help their newly acquired brethren in the Faith, even without leaving their countries. They can do this by giving them the benefit of their advice, their experience, and their technical assistance; they can, without too much labor or grave inconvenience, sometimes give them help that will be decisive. Good men will surely find a way to fulfill this fatherly desire of Ours. They will make Our wish known to those whom they find favorably disposed, in order first to arouse good will, and then to channel it into the most suitable work.

Students from Abroad

53. Our immediate predecessor exhorted the bishops "with the same affectionate interest that shares work with others in fraternal harmony and excludes all selfish considerations" to provide for the spiritual assistance of young Catholics who come to their dioceses from mission countries to study and to acquire the necessary experience for assuming leadership in their own nations. (83) All of you, Venerable Brethren, are aware of the intellectual and moral dangers to which they will be exposed in a society which is not only different from their own but also, alas, may be unfavorable ground for the growth of their Faith, and not capable of attracting them to the practice of Christian virtue. Each one of you, moved by the missionary spirit which is a conscientious duty of all pastors, will meet this situation with the greatest charity and zeal, using the most suitable means. It will not be difficult for you to find these students and entrust them to the care of priests and laymen who are equipped for this task. It should not be difficult to assuage

their spiritual needs, and, last but not least, to have them experience the sweet consolations of Christian charity in which we are all brothers, ministering to one another's welfare. Therefore, to the many kinds of help which you are now giving the missions, add this particular one, which brings close to your hearts those regions of the world which, although far away, are entrusted to your care.

54. To these students We would like not only to reveal the affection We feel for them, but also to exhort them, urgently and lovingly, to carry their heads high and proud, marked with the sign of Jesus' blood and with the sacred chrism; We would like to exhort them during their stay abroad never to bypass an opportunity not only to acquire the right professional training but also to achieve perfection in their religious education. Although they will be exposed to dangers and evils, they will nevertheless have a wonderful opportunity to share in many spiritual advantages while living in Catholic countries, if all the faithful remember that, whoever and wherever they are, they must be a good example to others and bring mutual edification to one another.

V

55. After conversing with you, Venerable Brethren, on the most important and typical needs of the Church in mission countries, We cannot fail to express Our heartfelt gratitude to all those who are toiling for the propagation of the Faith in the farthest reaches of the earth, without sparing any efforts. For the missionaries from both the religious and the regular clergy; for the holy virgins who are fruitfully and actively helping the missions; and for the lay missionaries, precious allies of the clergy, who have been diligent in helping to advance the cause of religion—for all of them, We offer Our daily and special prayers, and every kind of help that lies within Our power. The success of their work, which is apparent in the spiritual vigor of newly established Christian communities, is an indication of God's favor and a proof of the solicitude and wisdom with which the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the Congregation of the Oriental Church are carrying out their work.

A Call for Help

56. We exhort all the bishops, the clergy, and the faithful of the dioceses of the whole world, who are contributing to relieve the spiritual and material necessities of the missions by their prayers and offerings, to increase voluntarily their badly needed contributions. Despite the scarcity of priests which besets even the pastors of the oldest dioceses, there should be no hesitation in encouraging missionary vocations and in releasing the very best and most useful laymen, that they may be placed at the disposal of the new dioceses; heavenly consolations will soon be derived from this sacrifice, made for the furtherance of God's cause.

57. Indeed, just as such needs constantly increase, so in equal measure increases the generous effort in which the faithful of the whole world are engaging to cooperate with missionary organizations which, under the guidance of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, are channeling contributions received from every source toward the most suitable and urgent destinations. Willing help and material contributions readily and copiously offered by their brethren will encourage the members of newly established Christian communities, to live in

the service of their religion, and will bring them the warmth of supernatural affection, which is nourished in the human heart by grace.

Perseverance

58. Many dioceses and Christian communities in mission territories are being harassed by difficulties and sometimes even by active persecution. We therefore exhort everyone to persevere courageously in the battle which he is fighting for God's cause: the pastors who are giving their children in God the example of a faith which does not falter even in mortal danger; and the faithful who are being so grievously tried by adversity and are therefore so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who promised beatitude and abundant rewards to those who suffer persecution for justice' sake. (54) God, in His inscrutable but always merciful designs, will sustain them with heavenly favors, consolations, and joy. The whole Church is united with the persecuted in a communion of prayer and sorrow, with the certainty that final victory will be hers.

59. From the bottom of Our heart, We call down upon the missions the worthy protection of their patrons and martyrs, and, first and foremost, the intercession of Mary, Mother and Queen of the Missions. With the greatest affection We impart to each one of you, Venerable Brethren, and to all those who in any way contribute to the propagation of God's kingdom, Our Apostolic Blessing. May it be a token and a pledge of the supernatural favors of the Eternal Father, who appeared to the world through His Son, the Savior of mankind, and may it kindle and multiply missionary zeal in the hearts of all.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on November 28, 1959, the second year of Our Pontificate.

JOHN XXIII

NOTES

LATIN TEXT: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 51 (1959), 833-64.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: *The Pope Speaks*, 6 (Spring, 1960), 123-45.

REFERENCES:

(1) 1 *Peter* 5.4

(2) Cf. *John* 21.15- 17.

(3) Cf. *Homilia in die Coronationis habita*, AAS 50 (1958) 886; TPS (Spring 1959) v. 5, no. 2, 140.

- (4) Cf. *La propagazione della fede*, Scritti di A.G. Roncalli, Rome, 1958, p. 103 ff.
- (5) Cf. AAS 11 (1919) 440 ff.
- (6) Cf. Pius XI's encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae*, AAS 18 (1926) 65 ff.; Pius XII's encyclical letters *Evangelii praecones*, AAS 43 (1951) 497 ff., and *Fidei donum*, AAS 49 (1957) 225 ff.
- (7) Encyclical letter *Ad Petri Cathedram*, AAS 51 (1959) 497.
- (8) Cf. *John* 10.16.
- (9) Cf. *Matt.* 13.19.
- (10) *Acts* 16.9.
- (11) *Acts* 2.5.
- (12) *Matt.* 28.20.
- (13) *John* 16.33.
- (14) AAS 11 (1919) 440 ff.
- (15) Encyclical letter *Evangelii praecones*, AAS 43 (1951) 507.
- (16) Cf. *Matt.* 9.38.
- (17) Pius XII's Christmas broadcast, AAS 38 (1946) 20.
- (18) *Luke* 10.2.
- (19) *Ibid.*
- (20) Letter of Pius XII to Cardinal Adeodatus Piazza, AAS 47 (1955) 542; TPS (Autumn 1955) v. 2, no. 3, 253-4.
- (21) *Acts* 20.28.
- (22) *Acts.* 4.32.
- (23) Cf. *John* 13.34 and 15.12.
- (24) AAS 11 (1919) 445.
- (25) *Ibid.*

- (26) Pius XII's apostolic letter *Menti Nostrae*, AAS 42, (1950) 677.
- (27) Cf. *Matt.* 5.13-14.
- (28) Pius XII's apostolic letter *Menti Nostrae*, AAS 42 (1950) 686.
- (29) *Ibid.*
- (30) *Ibid.*, p. 687.
- (31) Apostolic letter *Maximum illud*, AAS 11 (1919) 445.
- (32) Cf. Pius XII's apostolic letter *Menti Nostrae*, AAS 42 (1950) 686.
- (33) Cf. apostolic letter *Maximum illud*, AAS 11 (1919) 448.
- (34) Encyclical letter *Evangelii praecones*, AAS 43 (1951) 500.
- (35) *Ibid.*, p. 522.
- (36) Cf. "Address to Participants in Second World Congress of Negro Writers and Artists," AAS 51 (1959) 260. Brief summary in TPS (Summer 1959) v. 5, no. 3, 290-1.
- (37) *2 Cor.* 10.5.
- (38) Pius XI's encyclical letter *Rerum Ecclesiae*, AAS 18 (1926) 77.
- (39) Encyclical letter *Fidei donum*, AAS 49 (1957) 233.
- (40) *Ibid.*
- (41) *John* 4.37.
- (42) Encyclical letter *Fidei donum*, AAS 49 (1957) 231.
- (43) *Ibid.*, p. 238.
- (44) *Hom. II in 2 Cor.*, Migne, PG 61.398.
- (45) *In Ep. Ioan. ad Parthos*, Tr. X, c. 5, Migne, PL 35.2060.
- (46) Apostolic letter *Maximum illud*, AAS 11 (1919) 446.
- (47) *Ibid.*, p. 445.

- (48) Encyclical letter *Evangelii praecones*, AAS 43 (1951) 510 ff.
- (49) Pius XII's Encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943) 200-01; Pius XI's Encyclical letter *Rerum Ecclesiae*, AAS 18 (1926) 78.
- (50) Cf. *Eph.* 4.24.
- (51) *1 Peter* 2.9.
- (52) Cf. *John* 10.4 and 14.
- (53) Cf. *John* 10.9-10.
- (54) *1 Peter* 5.4.
- (55) Cf. *John* 10.11.
- (56) *John* 14.6.
- (57) St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae II-II*, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2.
- (58) *Matt.* 22.37.
- (59) Cf. *1 Peter* 2.21; *Matt.* 11.19; *John* 13.15.
- (60) St. John Chrysostom, Hom. X in *1 Tim.*, Migne, PG 62.551.
- (61) *Matt.* 5.16.
- (62) *1 Peter* 2.12.
- (63) *Acts* 2.42.
- (64) *Acts* 2.47.
- (65) Cf. *Luke* 6.32-35.
- (66) F.X. Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, v. I, p. 201.
- (67) *Rom.* 12.9 ff.
- (68) *1 Cor.* 13.2.
- (69) Pius XII's encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943) 200.

- (70) Pius XII's encyclical letter *Fidei donum*, AAS 49 (1957) 237.
- (71) Pius XII's encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis*, AAS 35 (1943) 201
- (72) Pius XI's encyclical letter *Rerum Ecclesiae*, AAS 18 (1926) 78.
- (73) Sermon by Pius XII to participants in the World Congress for the Lay Apostolate, AAS 49 (1957) 937; TPS (Autumn 1957) v. 4, no. 2, 132.
- (74) Encyclical letter *Ad Petri Cathedram*, AAS 51 (1959) 523.
- (75) *Ibid.*
- (76) *2 Cor.* 5.14.
- (77) Pius XII's encyclical letter *Evangelii praecones*, AAS 43 (1951) 513.
- (78) Cf. Pius XII's *Epistola de Actione Catholica*, October 11, 1946, *Discorsi e radiomessaggi di S.S. Pio XII*, v. VIII, p. 468.
- (79) Encyclical letter *Ad Petri Cathedram*, AAS 51 (1959) 524.
- (80) *2 Tim.* 4.7.
- (81) Pius XII's encyclical letter *Fidei donum*, AAS 49 (1957) 229.
- (82) Ep. 288, Migne, PG 32.855.
- (83) Encyclical letter *Fidei donum*, AAS 49 (1957) 245
- (84) Cf. *Matt.* 5.10-12.

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