

Exhortation by Pope Pius

ROME, Feb. 12 (AP)—Following is the official English text of Pope Pius' apostolic exhortation:

The conflict between the good and the wicked, in whose ever tangled strands of human actions and motives history is woven, has seldom if ever, been so acute as it is today.

While, on the one hand, no matter where we look out upon the world from this Vatican citadel, we are filled with admiration and joy at the sight of the good people resplendent with those virtues, which, particularly in the glorious fortitude of martyrs, recall the early ages of Christianity: Yet, on the other, we are overcome by grief and anguish as we perceive the iniquity of the unrighteous reach a degree of impiety that is incredible and without parallel. Venerable brethren, we shudder at the mere mention of this wickedness, but the duty of the apostolic office compels us to speak.

That proud neglect and disdain of divine things which was man's original crime when he ignored God's command, is the most pernicious source of all evils and at the present time is insidiously spreading its ravages almost all over the world like a virulent disease; it is producing evils without number, especially in those countries where a conspiracy has been formed "against the Lord and against His Christ" (Ps. 11, 2). It deprives man of God and thereby robs him of his spiritual dignity, makes him the ignoble tool of materialism and utterly destroys all traces of virtue, love, hope, and beauty of soul within him. We speak of atheism or, rather, hatred of God.

Ridicule of God Disseminated

With supreme insolence, the enemies of the name of God avail themselves of every kind of help and advantage, books, periodicals, the press, the radio, organizations, public meetings and private interviews, education and culture, all are at their service to spread ridicule of sacred things. "The smoke of the pit arose as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit." (Apoc. IX, 2.)

Let nothing give more concern to you, to the priests and people committed to your care than battling to defend the name of God, which the angels revere trembling with awe, raise aloft the standard of St. Michael Archangel and renewing the cry "who is like to God?" Oppose to the blasphemers of the Divine Majesty your energetic purpose to proclaim, to love and to preach His name.

Those who cast scorn on the name of God, not only are guilty of an heinous crime, since "hatred of God is especially a sin against the holy spirit" (S. Thomas, Summa Theol. 2-2 Q. XXXIV, Art. 2 Ad. 1) and brings down upon them the severest punishments, but obviously prove themselves utterly ungrateful. For what is more necessary and salutary than to adore and worship God? From Him we receive both our soul and body, our strength and gifts of mind; the light of the sun, the air, the produce of the earth, our food, the joys of life, and what is more important, divine grace, spiritual helps, truth and salvation are from Him. Everything good we have is His gift.

Alliance Steps Praised

"O how good and sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, in all things!" (Sap. XXI, 1). But Thou, our God, art gracious and true, patient not far from each of us:

nestness and care God's loving presence in the sanctuary of a pure conscience; for the way to grow in virtue and perfection is to withdraw ourselves from exterior things and turn to things interior and thence raise our minds to dwell on heavenly truths.

Return to God Besought

Let the memory be filled with His most sweet presence; let the intellect be enlightened, the souls rejoiced and the will strengthened to act with purity, energy and piety: "For to know Thee (i. e. God) is perfect justice." (Sap. XV, 3.) All who have erred from the path of justice are to be aroused by prayers, by word and deed, but especially by the example of a life in which the reflection of the fatherly goodness of God shines forth, that they may expiate and atone for their faults. Let sinners turn their thoughts back to the most merciful Father "who calls home His prodigal son and gladly welcomes him when through want he is brought to repentance, sacrifices the fatted calf, and crowns his joy with feasting. Why not? He has found the son He had lost. The son He has regained He esteems all the more. Whom are we to understand by that Father? God, of course: none so fatherly, none so loyal as He." (Tertullianus, De Poenit. 8, M.L. 1, 1353) Whoever is strong in faith and rich in the treasures of a religious life, should share these goods, as far as possible, with others.

If we wish to promote still further this religious fervor and prepare protection and a remedy for the criminal impiety that contaminates our times on the part of these who revile God, we have most efficacious means at our disposal.

Prayer Shield of Faith

Is there anything that prayer cannot accomplish? What cannot the confident prayer of an innocent or repentant soul obtain when it is said in the name of Christ and is accompanied with good works?

"Prayer is the wall of faith, our shield and weapon against the enemy who studies us from all sides" (Tertullianus, De Oratione XXIX, M. L. 1, 1304) (but all religious worship and cult yields pride of place to the eucharistic sacrifice, which continues in an unbloody manner the immolation of Christ in a bloody manner on the gibbet of the Cross and applies its abundant sating fruits to men.

The heavenly and eternal Father is honored, is rendered propitious, is appeased by the precious blood on the spotless lamb, whose voice is more efficacious than the voice of the innocent blood of Abel, and of all the just because it has infinite dignity and value; this blood He assumed from one of us, it is offered for us by the Son of God Himself, the author of our peace and reconciliation, the ever tireless giver of every heavenly gift.

"When through sin we provoke the vengeance of the Judge, may we be protected by the presence of the blood speaking for us; then let the host of oncoming evil retreat." Hymnus in Primis Vesperis Festi Pretiosissimi Sanguinis D. N. I. C.). The same sacrifice which is "truly propitious" (Conc. Trid. Sess. XXII, Cap. 2 is offered efficaciously for sin, atonement, satisfaction and other necessities." (Conc. Trid. Sess. XXII, Cap 3.)

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"O how good and sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, in all things!" (Sap. XXI. 1). But Thou, our God, art gracious and true, patient not far from each of us: "For in Him we live and move and are." (Acta. Ap. XVII, 28). He is most wise and merciful, at one time delighting us with His consolations, at another correcting us by His punishments. But we are treated justly, when He punishes us, for "we receive the due reward of our deeds;" (Luke XXIII 41) and even suffering, through God's providence, becomes a training school of virtue and yields a harvest of eternal happiness. Prosperity or adversity mean little to him who has God as his inheritance and possession; and nothing is to be considered lost, if God is not lost.

There is, moreover, another benefit which love of God brings to men, while, on the other hand, rejection of God brings about disaster. Who does not fear and abhor strifes and civil discords, and wars which in the future with new weapons will cause immense destruction? That such disaster be warded off we welcome with approval the steps that have been taken to unite states together in ever closer alliances.

But this will be a faltering attempt founded on quicksand, unless there prevails everywhere a strong sense of the brotherhood of men, which renders mutual contracts sacred and secure, strengthens pacts and welds communities together. Experience clearly teaches that men do not look upon one another as brothers unless they recognize that they are all sons of the same Father. Without reverence for the Supreme Lawgiver and Divine Judge, right and wrong are mere words; the moral law collapses; if there is no sanction to be feared, iniquity in its greed goes to all extremes in deeds of daring and arrogance; men like wild beasts engage in mutual slaughter and their one joy is the base pleasure they take in practising in these cruelties. Now it is to our advantage to serve God. Let us worship with the greatest ear-

all the just because it has infinite dignity and value; this blood He assumed from one of us, it is offered for us by the Son of God Himself, the author of our peace and reconciliation, the ever tireless giver of every heavenly gift.

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If atheism and hatred of God, which contaminates our times and merits a truly fearful punishment, is a grievous sin, we can, in the fount of Christ's blood, which the chalice of the New Testament contains, wash away the abominable crime, efface its consequences, implore pardon for the guilty and furthermore provide a splendid triumph for the church.

Second Mass Invoked

After mature thought and deliberation we have decided to permit and exhort you and all priests to celebrate for our intention on Passion Sunday of this year a second mass which will be the votive mass for the remission of sins, unless this mass must be said for the intention of the Bishop or the people.

Those who for any reason do not use this privilege shall say the mass of the Sunday and at least earnestly commend our intention to God during the eucharistic sacrifice.

Since the faithful, in keeping with their reciprocal ties as members of the mystical body of Christ, should always share the sorrows and joys of the church, let them be invited by you to the altars on that Sunday in as great number as possible, and as they ponder over the gravity and the importance of the hour let them pray and beseech God with greater fervor, and let them all receive Holy Communion.

We have no doubt that you will all comply with our wishes the greatest zeal and devotion imploring God with united prayers that evils may be removed, and that the breath of divine charity may renew all things in Christ and thus happily realize the universal desire for peace. Finally, filled with confidence that our desires will be fully realized, to you and to the beloved priests and faithful confided to your vigilant care who in keeping with the duty we have explained will prove their love for their brethren, we impart the apostolic benediction as a pledge of divine grace.